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The development of an icon for a Reformed liturgy in a South African context

By

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Lefapha la Thutatumelo le Bodumedi

“Experiences of beauty, whether in nature or in art, are among the most precious and powerful given to us. Beauty has the strange effect of at once beckoning us to itself and pointing beyond itself to that which seems tantalizingly unattainable. It draws us to itself and through itself…If God is the giver of all good gifts and contains within Himself all possible perfections, then He must be beauty as much as He is goodness and truth.”

− Richard Harries

Dedicated to

Anna-Marie Bands

Gifted iconographer, teacher and mentor

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Soli Deo Gloria!

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ABSTRACT

The last decade has been characterized by a changing ritual landscape which inevitably brings about a change in the expression of worship and liturgy. This changing landscape can be seen in the growing interest in Orthodox icons. The Reformed tradition runs the risk of becoming irrelevant should it ignore this changing landscape and the needs it brings about regarding other forms of spirituality and ways of experiencing God. For this reason the researcher wished to explore the importance and place of icons in the liturgical and spiritual life of the Orthodox tradition, so as to develop an icon that can be used in a Reformed liturgy. The Practical Theology framework of Richard Osmer guides this research. The importance of rituals and symbols in the liturgy is discussed keeping liturgical inculturation and the significance of aesthetics and art in people's religious experience in mind. The research explores iconography and the role icons play in the Orthodox spirituality and liturgy at length. Using a well-known icon as example the process of reading and writing icons is explained. The research also attends to icons from the Coptic and Ethiopian Orthodoxy. The research attempts to give a comparison regarding the liturgies of the Reformed and Orthodox tradition. With all this in mind an icon-enriched Reformed liturgy is proposed. With liturgical inculturation and the South African context in mind an icon and accompanying liturgical element is developed in this study. The researcher is of opinion that the icon and creed that is presented in this study will enrich a Reformed liturgy in South Africa.

KEY TERMS

1. Practical Theology
2. Liturgy
3. Orthodox tradition and liturgy
4. Reformed tradition and liturgy
5. Icons and iconography
6. Iconoclasm
7. Iconostasis
8. Liturgical inculturation
9. Dynamic equivalence
10. Creative assimilation
11. Bricolage liturgy
12. Convergence liturgy
13. Shweshwe
14. Ubuntu

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 PREFACE

My pilgrimage with icons began in 2013 while I attended an ecumenical conference. In one of the presentations the speaker referred to the 6th century icon *Christ and friend* also known as *St. Menas*. I was mesmerized by the projected image. On my visit to the Louvre a year later I spent a considerable amount of time staring at that same icon. Then on a retreat at the Taizé Community in France I once again encountered that identical icon. Everything about this icon spoke to me. I returned from Taizé with a small reproduction of this icon that still has a special place in my study.

In September of 2016 I attended an icon workshop and under the gifted guidance of Anna-Marie Bands I wrote[1] my first icon. Writing that icon was like nothing else I have ever experienced. As the icon's layers grew, my own layers seemed to be stripped away. Since then I have written other icons and although each experience is profound, none can surpass that first icon. To my surprise many of those attending the icon workshop with me were Afrikaans and from the Dutch Reformed tradition.

I think it is safe to say that, on this still very short pilgrimage, I have in the words of De Gruchy (2008:10) "come to a Reformed appreciation of icons". In saying this I do not pretend to understand the role icons play in the Orthodox tradition and liturgy, on the contrary, and this is why I am pursuing this research.

After using an icon in my personal time of prayer I am sometimes left with a slight feeling of discomfort as if I am cheating on my own tradition. These feelings of discomfort led me to a few questions – would it be possible to remain rooted in the Reformed tradition and yet benefit from the riches of the Orthodox tradition? Could our Reformed liturgy incorporate icons and still retain its identity? And if the answer to both these questions is yes, would existing Orthodox icons work in the Reformed tradition and liturgy? The thought arose that perhaps the Reformed tradition in South Africa could develop and

[1] The technical term for painting icons.

write icons that spoke not only to our tradition, but also our context. And this seems to be the next step on my pilgrimage with icons.

1.2 A CHANGING LANDSCAPE

The last decade has been characterized by a changing ritual landscape. According to Post (2003:78) and Wepener (2011:259) there is a growing tendency whereby individuals give expression to their personal faith with personally orientated rituals and personalized content. For De Klerk (2016) the global growing interest in ancient rituals such as pilgrimage and labyrinths can be directly linked to this changing landscape. Niemandt (2007:138) is of the opinion that the new ways of worship that many church members are exploring are nothing more than contemporary forms of ancient customs. This changing landscape will inevitably bring about change in the expression of worship. According to Barnard (2000:5-9) worship is embedded in culture and therefore a change in culture will influence worship. Niemandt (2007:137; 2013:43) goes as far as to say that the Church needs a new style of leadership that is willing to investigate and accommodate new ways of worship.

This changing landscape can also be seen in the growing interest in Orthodox icons (De Gruchy 2008, Forest 1997). Baggley (2000:2) ascribes this growing interest to the diaspora of Orthodox Christians from Russia to Western nations since the 1917 Revolution. This interest seems to coincide with a hunger for spirituality. This hunger is met in different ways, some through the exploration of different faith traditions, while others adopt contemporary practices based on traditional Christian forms of spirituality. According to De Gruchy (2008:21) workshops and seminars on icons seem to attract mainly people from the latter, which includes believers from the Reformed tradition. In my own experience such participants are not interested in icons for aesthetic or artistic reasons. Icons appear to meet the above-mentioned spiritual hunger, which the secular world and traditional forms of religion do not seem to be able to. According to Bartholomew (2004:202) the Reformed tradition runs the risk of becoming irrelevant should it ignore a phenomenon like pilgrimage. The researcher believes the same is true of icons.

For this reason the researcher has explored the importance and place of icons in the liturgical and spiritual life of the Orthodox tradition, so to write an icon that can be used in

Reformed liturgy. The pragmatic task of this research is the creation of a preliminary praxis theory regarding icons for the Reformed tradition (Osmer, 2008). The researcher realizes the need for a detailed liturgical praxis theory for the writing of Reformed icons for future use. Unfortunately the scope of this study will not allow for the development of such a theory. The researcher hopes to develop a more detailed praxis theory in a next study. Therefore the research theme is formulated as:

The development of an icon for a Reformed liturgy in a South African context.

With this theme in mind the follow research questions are explored:

- What is meant with the term liturgy? And what factors play an important role in our understanding and experience of liturgy?

- What role does aesthetics play in peoples' religious experiences and what influence does it have on liturgy?

- Icons are described by some as the fifth Gospel. Why do some traditions consider icons a means of grace and what role do they play in the Orthodox tradition?

- What are the characteristics of the Reformed and Orthodox liturgies?

- Is it possible to incorporate elements of other liturgies into the Reformed liturgy? If it indeed is possible - how can it be done?

1.3 LITERATURE OVERVIEW AND RESEARCH GAP

Extensive research has been done on the history of icons (Solovyova 2006) as well as the different schools of iconography (Evseyeva 2006, Laurina 2006). Several studies can be found concerning the theological principles of icons and iconography (Yazykova & Luka 2005). Numerous books have also been written on the theme: praying with icons (Forest 1997, Nouwen 1987). Moreover, a number of sources endeavour to introduce

and explain icons to Protestants and Roman Catholics (Zelensky & Gilbert 2005, De Gruchy 2008), but it seems no research has been undertaken concerning the development and writing of icons for the Reformed tradition and liturgy.

1.4 METHODOLOGY

This research was done in the form of a literature review. According to Cronin (2008:38) a literature review is an objective, comprehensive summary and critical analysis of available relevant research as well as the lack thereof. A literature review not only brings the researcher up to date with the current literature on the topic, but also justifies further research on the specific topic.

In this study the researcher has made use of the traditional or narrative literature review. The primary purpose of this type of review is to provide the reader with a comprehensive background for understanding existing knowledge and highlighting the importance of new research (Cronin et al. 2008:38). This research was primarily guided by the Practical Theology framework of Richard Osmer (2008). Although this study is primarily a literature study it contains a creative and artistic element. Much of the researcher's time was spent training in the art of iconography, after which the researcher was able to write an icon, that she developed and designed, in accordance to the insights gather through the literature review.

1.5 OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH STRUCTURE

Chapter 1 is a summary of the current situation, globally but also specifically within the Reformed tradition in South Africa in regards to the changing spiritual needs of believers. It is the researcher's perception that there is a growing interest in other traditions' spirituality and spiritual disciplines. One of the growing interests, the researcher has first-hand experience of, is Orthodox icons. The central question of this research is whether it is possible to write an icon and accompanying liturgy that can enrich a worship service in the Reformed tradition in South Africa, and if this is possible, what would such an icon and liturgy look like?

Chapter 2 of this research addresses Practical Theology, liturgy and liturgical inculturation. In the fields of theology, Practical Theology gives the most attention to

studying and engaging the present context directly, according to Osmer (2014:61). It strives to learn from the present context, in order to potentially guide and transform it. Although the Practical Theology framework of Richard Osmer (2008) will guide this research, the work of other practical theologians such as Miller-McLemore (2012) is kept in mind.

The study focuses on liturgy. Barnard (2014:6,11,12) states that one way of worshipping is through rituals and symbols, which may have different dimensions, functions and meanings at the same point of time because of the dominance of individualism. A symbol creates the space for individual interpretation and has the ability of bridging differences into one space of synergy for worship (Lukken, 1999:20). This insight is important for this study as the Reformed liturgical tradition is not only Word-centred, but also has a strong focus on auditory communication.

Liturgical inculturation will always endeavour enrichment, either within or in relationship with those outside the local community by sharing and learning from one another (Ryan, 2000:8). Liturgical inculturation is discussed in the last part of chapter two.

Chapter 3 addresses the importance of aesthetics and art in the religious experience of people, and particularly as it is expressed in liturgy.

Chapter 4 explores icons and iconography. The chapter begins with the emergence of the Orthodox tradition, as icons are embedded in this tradition and reflect its theology and spirituality. The question whether God can be portrayed, especially in the light of the Reformation and the phenomenon of iconoclasm, is discussed. The chapter further explores the classical icons of Byzantine. With our South African context in mind the study will also include icons from the Coptic and Ethiopian Orthodoxy. The researcher discusses the process of writing and reading icons using a Byzantine icon as an example.

Chapter 5 delves into the liturgies of the Eastern Orthodox and Reformed traditions in a modern South African context. The role of icons in the Orthodox liturgy is discussed at length.

Chapter 6 ponders the possibility of an icon-enriched Reformed liturgy.

Chapter 7 proposes an icon and accompanying liturgical element for a Reformed liturgy by which the researcher believes the liturgy of a Reformed service will be enriched.

In this chapter the research theme, research questions as well as the methodology, that the researcher has chosen for this specific study, is discussed. The researcher has used Osmer's (2008) approach to Practical Theology as a route marker for this study. With this introduction and research plan in mind the researcher will now move to chapter two in which her research methodology as well as other important concepts, with regards to this study, will be discussed.

CHAPTER 2
THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 METHODOLOGY

Two questions, as stated by De Klerk (2016:42), played an important role in formulating the outcome of this study: “Why do you want to carry out this project?” and “What questions do you want to be able to answer at the end of the project?” The researcher has embarked on this study because of her personal experience regarding Reformed congregants’ growing hunger for and interest in spirituality, meaningful rituals from different traditions and icons. The researcher hopes at the end of the study to be able to answer the question whether an icon and an accompanying liturgical element could not only meet this spiritual hunger, but also enrich Reformed liturgy in the South African context.

This research is traditional in one sense and ground-breaking in another: traditional in making use of a literature study model and ground-breaking in the development of an icon and accompanying liturgical element that can be used during a Good Friday service in a Reformed congregation.

A particular methodology will be used in answering the question regarding the use and development of an icon and accompanying liturgical element that could enrich a Reformed liturgy in a South African context. Firstly the approach of Practical Theology as understood by Osmer and Miller-McLemore will be discussed, after which Liturgical Studies will serve as the theological platform for the study.

2.2 PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

Practical Theology, according to Wepener (2014:17), should not be seen as opposing Theoretical Theology, but rather as the theological reflection of all that takes place in the practical field. Lartey (2000:131) warns against reducing Practical Theology to a mere method through which theological information is gathered. With his approach he endeavours to study practices of faith by asking what the content of people’s faith is, which leads to the realization that context, tradition and experience have a formative influence.

According to Root (2014:55-56) Browning was of the opinion that Theology, and specifically Practical Theology, must move from the practice to theory and then back to the practice. Only when one has moved from practice to reflection can one find oneself in a place of refined action (Root, 2014:55-56).

Woodward et al. (2000:12) says that all activity in Practical Theology starts with a theoretical or practical challenge that needs to be explored. According to Woodward et al. (2000:13) some practical theological studies start with an idea and the implications of that idea for the practice are examined. On other occasions the research starts with the praxis and how it could influence ideas or concepts.

The Practical Theological understandings of Richard Osmer (2008) and Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore will guide this study. The researcher hopes that the approaches of Osmer and Miller-McLemore will enable her not only to structure this study in a meaningful way, but also to make sense of the current movements in the spiritual experience of Reformed congregants.

Osmer's (2008) approach to Practical Theology consists of four tasks, the first being the descriptive-empirical task that asks: "What is happening?" This stage not only gathers information regarding a particular situation, but also entails what Osmer (2008:4) calls "priestly listening". The researcher has already discussed this task in chapter 1.

The second is the interpretive task. This stage asks: "Why is this happening?" This question seeks to analyse the information that has been gathered through the descriptive-empirical task (Osmer 2008:4). Osmer (2008:29) explains this stage as "a form of wise judgment, grounded in a spirituality of sagely wisdom". The interpretive task draws on the knowledge of other disciplines in understanding and explaining patterns and dynamics. This task will be attended to in this chapter.

Osmer (2008:136) calls the third task a spirituality of prophetic discernment. The normative task asks the question: "What ought to be happening?" This stage uses theological concepts to interpret a specific context, event or situation (Osmer 2008: 4, 8). According to Osmer (2008: 152) there are three approaches to normativity. The first is theological reflection. Theological reflection utilises theological concepts to interpret a

context or situation. Ethical reflection follows theological reflection. It aims to coach behaviour towards moral ends by utilising ethical norms and rules, which brings us to good practice. This approach searches for new understanding and good practical models. Chapters five and six will pay attention to this task.

The fourth task is the pragmatic task. This stage focuses on the establishment of response strategies by asking the question: "How might we respond?" This question will be answered in chapter 7.

For Miller-McLemore (2012:101-105) Practical Theology is more than a discipline. It is an understanding of faith or theology in practice and how it manifests in daily life. Miller-McLemore's (2012:1) redefinition of Practical Theology consists of three parts. She starts with the concept of the "living web", a method of recognizing the many ways in which people understand their faith or the many ways in which God makes Godself known to humankind. The second part of her redefinition is practical wisdom as a way of knowing and understanding external factors such as cultural and social frameworks. Lastly she cites gender and the important role it plays in understanding the human situation.

The researcher recognizes that the context of this research is influenced by the above-mentioned factors in Miller-McLemore's redefinition of Practical Theology. The researcher is also fully aware that this research takes place in a context that is constantly changing and that it is Practical Theology's aim to make sense of Christian faith and worship in this changing context. With this in mind Miller-McLemore's definition of Practical Theologians seems fitting for this research: "those preoccupied with everyday concerns that evade and disrupt traditional categories, doctrines and loci in the theological and religious study" (Miller-McLemore, 2012:18).

2.3 LITURGICAL STUDIES

2.3.1 Introduction

Practical Theology as a field of study can be understood as a web comprised of many different threads. According to Vos & Pieterse (1997:15) liturgical study is one of those many threads. Flynn (2015:1) explains that as Practical Theology is a subdivision of Theology, so Liturgy is a subdivision of Practical Theology.

Wepener (2009:13) describes the objective and study of liturgy as the development of celebration in the congregation that in turn creates a space in which the gospel can be communicated effectively. Müller (1990:52) warns that liturgy should never be reduced to the mere order of a worship service, it should rather be seen as an encounter between God and people. Liturgy is based on the human need to worship. Long elaborates on this: "…we need to be in communion with God, to belong to God, to be in a right and loving relationship with God." Wepener (2009:21) stresses that, although this encounter is made possible by people's participation in rituals and symbols, God's action is still the dominant action.

The last few years have seen a major shift in Liturgical Studies, from a theological one-dimensional understanding to the inclusion of a cultural-anthropological dimension (Barnard & Wepener, 2014). This shift enriches the understanding of worship (and liturgy) as having a multi-disciplinary character that includes social, psychological, ethnic and ritual dimensions (Klomp, 2011:7). According to De Klerk (2016:60) current research in Liturgical Studies will do well to follow the route of a multi-disciplinary approach.

Osmer (2008:161-164) emphasizes the significance of cross-disciplinary dialogue between different approaches, theories, art, science, etc., in saying: "Cross-disciplinary dialogue is a special form of rational communication in which the perspectives of two or more fields are brought into conversation". The above-mentioned dialogue between theology and other fields of related interest can be seen in Paul Tillich's work, where arts and science will put questions to theology to answer from a normative perspective (De Klerk, 2016: 61). Osmer (2008:166-172) differentiates between two models of cross-disciplinary dialogue, namely the Transformational model and the Transversal model. The Transformational model describes the dialogue between people from totally different worldviews, languages and cultures leading to difficulties in translating meaning between them, while the Transversal model is person and perspective specific as it explores areas of overlapping as well as deviations (Osmer, 2008:170). This study will make use of the Transversal model of cross-disciplinary dialogue.

2.3.2 The influence of the liturgical movement in South Africa

The liturgical movement began with a Benedictine monk's lecture at the *Congrès national des oeuvres catholoques* in Belgium in 1909. In his lecture Lambert Beauduin

advocated for laity not only to actively participate in liturgy, but also in Church life and ministry on the whole. Beauduin leaned heavily on work done by Pope Pius X regarding greater participation in the liturgy (Pecklers, 2005:91-92).

The liturgical movement soon caught on in Germany when Benedictine Ildefons Herwegen invited students to celebrate the Holy Week of 1914 with his monastic community. During this week they celebrated the "dialogue Mass" for the first time. This experience led to a discussion regarding the further promotion of liturgical renewal in the German Church. A few years later Odo Casel, an early disciple of Herwegen, together with Cunibert Mohlberg, Romano Guardini, Franz Dölger and Anton Baumstark began what became the German liturgical movement (Pecklers, 2005:93-94). The advocacy of German liturgical reformers, such as Johannes Pinsk and Hans Anscar Reinhold, stretched far beyond liturgical science to social activism in the form of criticism against the Third Reich.

At the same time liturgical movements could be seen in Austria, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and France. Generally speaking, according to Pecklers (2005:101), Roman Catholic countries such as Italy, Malta, Portugal and Spain did not experience the same level of liturgical renewal in this time. Soon the movement spread from Europe to the United States and Brazil. The toil of liturgical pioneers on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean started producing some noticeable results by the end of the 1940s. Liturgical experiments and movement continued through the 1950s up to today.

According to Burger (2003:165) the first real signs of liturgical awareness in the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa only became apparent in the 1950s. The South African theologians that were involved in this movement were G.M. Pellissier, H.D.A. du Toit, A.C. Barnard and B.A. Müller. This liturgical awareness was facilitated by the formation of the General Synod in 1962 and its accompanying commission for liturgy that was brought to life to deal with liturgical issues. Burger (2003:165) highlights three noteworthy achievements of this commission. Firstly, the publication of the report concerning the theological foundations of Reformed liturgy aptly named *Rondom die Erediens*. Secondly, *Die Kerkboek* (The Church Book) was published in 1976. This publication contained classical as well as alternative liturgical forms for various services. Lastly, a new combined Psalter and Hymnbook was published in 1978. This publication almost doubled the number of hymns that could be used in a worship service. Burger

(2003:166) points to the irony that the growing liturgical awareness coincided with the separation between the white, black and so-called coloured divisions of the Dutch Reformed Church.

Wepener (2011:13) is of the opinion that the work and influence of the liturgical movement has only really reached South Africa in the last decade or two, bringing with it liturgical creativity and diversity. During the last two decades two divergent trends have arisen in Dutch Reformed Church congregations which need to be addressed with liturgical sensitivity and creativity. On the one hand there is an upsurge of evangelical spirituality influenced by American neo-evangelicalism. The choice for this theology has a huge impact on a congregation's worship style and liturgy (Burger, 2003:167). This is most evident in the lengthy "praise and worship" sessions that precede the rest of the service. According to Burger (2003:167) the second trend seems to be moving in the opposite direction by working towards the enhancement of the traditional liturgy. This movement endeavours not only to create a connection with ecumenical movements, but also to renew Reformed liturgy by making more use of liturgical traditions from the early church.

According to Wepener (2009:70) the above-mentioned diversity eventually also called for some measure of uniformity, and the General Synod's 2007 liturgical handbook was an attempt to do just that. Some might say it was an attempt to stimulate dialogue on what precisely Reformed liturgy is. The researcher is of the opinion that this dialogue needs to continue.

The shifting South African landscape challenges all churches, none so much as the Reformed tradition with its sad history in regard to apartheid. The researcher agrees with Burger (2003:173) that the Reformed tradition, perhaps more than any other tradition, can rise to the challenges of our context. The Dutch Reformed Church, in particular, needs to keep reflecting on liturgical issues and be willing to rethink our Reformed tradition in a radical way. The Reformed tradition also needs to modestly learn from the early church, other traditions and one another, so that we can be more sensitive to the context in which we are called to be church (Burger, 2003: 173).

2.3.3 Liturgy, culture and globalisation

Liturgy and worship are embedded in culture and therefore any change in culture will have an effect on worship and thus on Liturgical Studies (Barnard, 2000:5-9). According to Barnard and Post (2001:22-23), due to immigration and tolerance between cultures because of exposure, new inter-religious rituals are being developed that in turn lead to growing mutual relationships and the formation of a new symbolic order.

Globalisation has a major impact not only on how Christians perceive their faith, but also on their spiritual experience and the way they worship. De Klerk (2016:63) describes the effect of globalisation on spirituality: "individuals now create their own meaning and understanding with access to information, technology, networking and communication". Globalisation has made it easy for different cultures to influence one another, because of modern technology (Klomp, 2011:3). According to De Klerk (2016:64) globalisation enables the formulation of a new definition for spiritual experience, because of the accessibility of information, modern technology and social media and exposure to different ways of worship.

With this in mind, perhaps the Reformed tradition should pay more attention to the broader context and trends of the time. In saying this the researcher is not implying that the Reformed tradition's emphasis on the Word should be discarded, but rather that rituals and symbols from other traditions, such as the Orthodox tradition, could help create a space for worshippers to worship God in different and fresh ways.

2.3.4 Rituals and symbols

According to Miller-McLemore (2012:19-20) the understanding of Practical Theology and how it materialises in faith on a daily basis can be influenced by rituals and symbols. Defining the term "ritual" proves to be more complex than initially thought.

The anthropologist Victor Turner (1976:506) defines the concept of ritual as: "…part of a society's communication code for transmitting messages to one another about matters of ultimate concern and about those entities believed to have enunciated, clarified and mediated a culture's bonding axioms to its present members."

Lukken (2005:38) is of the opinion that rituals are symbolic actions that can also play a role in the social environment. He emphasizes that ritual can only be understood within

the particular culture in which it takes place and in a mutual relationship with theory. Rituals reflect on human communication, making the concepts of symbolization and semiotics relevant.

Stringer (1999:218) understands Christian ritual as follows: "…the act of worship itself, with its actions and its words, is best understood as being a space without meaning in its linguistic sense, and that the individuals who come to worship have no need or imperative to fill that space with meaning in any but an experiential, significant kind of way."

One could conclude that ritual is an action[2] that is special (Grimes, 2014:187), transformative (Grimes, 2014:188) and communicating something on a deeper level (Lukken, 2005:46). According to Lukken (2005:46) it is a repetitive action, but needn't be performed in an identical manner each time.

Lukken (2005:13) states that the essential components of ritual are symbols, symbolic actions as well as symbolic language. A symbol is a sign with multiple options of meaning that are determined by three dimensions: participation, acceptance within culture and faith conventions, and the status of an icon (Post, 2001:134-135; Vos, 2014: 130).

Lukken (2005:18-19) describes a symbol as a conventional object that is part of our immediate environment. Thus it is not something that is created and it doesn't have to be reflected upon. According to Lukken (2005:20) three elements play an important role in symbols: objects, words and actions. He also explains that symbols are loaded with meaning and can have various meaning options. Lukken quotes Goethe in this regard: "The symbol is the thing without being the thing, and yet is the thing."

A symbolic action, on the other hand, is loaded with meaning and shares this meaning with the reality it calls upon (Lukken, 2005:22). Symbolic language differs from symbols and symbolic action in the new realities and horizons that these words create (Lukken, 2005:25-26).

[2] Ritual is more than an action. "Ritual is not a 'what', not a 'thing'. It is a 'how', a quality, and there are 'degrees' of it." (Grimes, 2010:526).

It seems that rituals and symbols have become popular in both popular culture and the Reformed tradition. In saying that, the researcher believes that in spite of the growing popularity of rituals and symbols in the Reformed tradition it still remains a neglected aspect in Reformed liturgy. Many reasons can be given for this growing interest in rituals and symbols. Wepener (2009:196) is of the opinion that postmodernism influences how individuals think about life and that obviously has an effect on individuals' spiritual lives, in that people are more inclined to investigate the mysterious and non-rational. A second reason can be found in the exploration of alternative ways of communication between believers and God, almost a yearning for a more personal relationship with God as a way of dealing with modern-day realities in a postmodern society (De Klerk, 2016:79).

Whatever the reason may be, the reality is that the Reformed tradition needs to take ritual and symbols seriously. According to Barnard (2000:17) the Reformed tradition's choice to make the Word the focus of the liturgy as the instrument of grace led to the Word becoming the symbol of God and preaching the ritual. This created a tradition where salvation and faith experiences became focused on the verbal and rational, which led to de-ritualisation (Kavanagh, 1993). In the light of the above-mentioned the Reformed tradition must become comfortable and skilled with symbols and rituals in a non-verbal way (Barnard, 2000:17-18). Barnard (2000:19) also states that participation in rituals stimulates a vibrant process of renewed meanings which in turn forms a network of meaning because of the individual appropriation by individuals.

According to Barnard (2000:9) the neglect of rituals and symbols in the Reformed liturgy calls for "aggiornamento", which means modernising rituals. The researcher hopes to do just that by taking a very old Orthodox ritual and symbol and breathing new "Reformed" life into it. The researcher also hopes to enrich the Reformed liturgy with a symbol that will communicate on a verbal and non-verbal level.

2.3.5 Moving forward

It is clear that liturgy has to constantly renew itself, creating alternative ways of worship which Long (2001:13) calls a "third way of worshipping". According to Long this "third way of worshipping" will amongst other things create space for the experience of mystery, express the sense of drama inherent in Christian worship, have music that is

both exceptional and diverse, and creatively adjust the space in which worship takes place.

It seems that the church is poised on the threshold of an exciting time of renewal in regard to liturgy and worship. De Klerk (2016:68) is of the opinion that rites and rituals, as a way of participating in worship, will become more important in the future, making a reverend more of a facilitator than a performer of religious acts.

2.4 LITURGICAL INCULTURATION

2.4.1 Introduction

Liturgical inculturation as a branch of liturgical study has a wide scope. According to Chupungco (1992:11) it includes amongst others the areas of liturgical and cultural principles, process and methods, sacraments and sacramental, the liturgical year, liturgical arts and furnishings etc.

Liturgical inculturation is a well-known concept within a wide number of theological traditions, including both the Roman Catholic and Reformed traditions. The Roman Catholic theologian Shorter (2006:11) defines liturgical inculturation as the "on-going dialogue between faith and culture or cultures…" Father Pedro Arrup SJ defines the concept of inculturation in a more detailed manner:

> The incarnation of Christian life and of the Christian message in a particular cultural context, in such a way that this experience not only finds expression through elements proper to the culture in question (this alone would be no more than a superficial adaptation) but becomes a principle that animates, directs and unifies the culture, transforming it and remaking it so as to bring about a "new creation".

Chupungco (1982) explains the distinction between acculturation and liturgical inculturation as follows. Acculturation is where Gospel (A) and culture (B) become AB. With liturgical inculturation Gospel (A) and culture (B) become C, which in terms of a church means a new identity arising, bringing with it a new way of worship and interpreting the Bible.

2.4.2 Historical development of liturgical inculturation

According to Chupungco (1982:84) the first example of liturgical inculturation can be seen in Jesus's reinterpretation of the pre-Christian rituals of baptism and the Eucharist. Other examples of inculturation can be seen in the New Testament in the form of the anointing of the sick, Jewish feasts, the imposition of hands and the reinterpretation of the Scriptures in regard to the mystery of Christ.

The concept of liturgical inculturation entered the Catholic tradition during the Second Vatican Council in 1962 and has grown since. Church history shows that liturgical inculturation originated from the aim of the Church to obey its command of taking the Word to the world in a changing context (De Klerk, 2016:175).

Since the 1970s this concept has been described by many different words: "…adaptation, accommodation, revision, incarnation, indigenation, contextualisation, acculturation and enculturation…" (Lukken, 1994:8; Lukken, 2005:180). The term "adaptation" seems to be used in situations where Western Theology was "transplanted" into another culture, while "acculturation" is used where two cultures influence each other. The total integration of two cultures is called "assimilation" (Wepener & Meyer, 2012:306). According to Wepener & Meyer (2012:306) liturgical inculturation takes place when culture and liturgy grow into each other creating a new identity enriched by the process. It seems that the term "interculturation" may be a better term by which to describe the reciprocal relationship between liturgy and culture (Wepener & Meyer, 2012:307).

In October 1993 the Lutheran World Federation's study team on worship and culture convened in Cartigny to discuss the biblical and historical foundations of the relationship between Christian worship and culture. This consultation resulted in the "Cartigny Statement on Worship and Culture: Biblical and Historical Foundations". The second consultation, in March 1994 in Hong Kong, explored amongst others the relationship between the world's cultures and Christian liturgy, church music, and church architecture and art. The Nairobi Statement was the result of the third consultation held in Nairobi in January 1996 and builds upon the Cartigny Statement. The Nairobi Statement begins by acknowledging that worship is the heart of the Christian Church and is always celebrated

within a particular local culture. According to the statement Christian worship relates dynamically to culture in at least four ways:

> Firstly, it is transcultural, the same substance for everyone everywhere, beyond culture. Second, it is contextual, varying according to the local situation (both nature and culture). Third, it is counter-cultural, challenging what is contrary to the Gospel in a given culture. Fourth, it is cross-cultural, making possible sharing between different local cultures.

For the purpose of this study the researcher will discuss the Nairobi Statement's thoughts on worship being contextual and cross-cultural. The Nairobi Statement not only expresses the need for contextualization, but also recommends two methods for contextualization – dynamic equivalence and creative assimilation. The method of dynamic equivalence seeks to find cultural components that can re-express the Gospel and the different elements of the liturgical ordo, while creative assimilation seeks to enrich the liturgical ordo – not by culturally re-expressing its elements, but rather by adding new elements from local culture. The statement gives important criteria for both dynamic equivalence and creative assimilation:

> …sound or accepted liturgical traditions are preserved in order to keep unity with the universal Church's tradition of worship, while progress inspired by pastoral needs is encouraged. On the side of culture, it is understood that not everything can be integrated with Christian worship, but only those elements that are connatural to (that is, of the same nature as) the liturgical ordo. Elements borrowed from local culture should always undergo critique and purification, which can be achieved through the use of biblical typology.

Both of the above-mentioned methods will serve as guidelines in the researcher's development of an icon and accompanying liturgical element. Dynamic equivalence will guide the design process of the icon especially in regard to the colours used in the icon. The researcher hopes to create an icon that can serve the Reformed tradition of the rainbow nation, taking colours and elements into account that speak of and to the rich diversity found in South Africa. The researcher realizes that she will not be able to create an icon that speaks to and of all the cultures in South Africa, but hopes to at least create an icon that speaks less of a Russian context and more of an African context. The method of creative assimilation will be taken into account in the development of the accompanying liturgical element. The researcher hopes to be able to add concepts such as "ubuntu" to the accompanying liturgical element.

The Nairobi Statement also describes Christian worship as cross-cultural. The statement emphasizes that there is one Church due to the Baptism, and that the unity of the Church is revealed by believers living in a faithful response to that Baptism. By sharing worship elements such as hymns and art across cultures the whole Church is not only enriched, but also strengthened in unity. The Nairobi Statement underlines the fact that the architecture, art, music, gestures, postures and other elements of different cultures must not only be understood, but also respected when being used by churches elsewhere. The statement's emphasis on the importance of cross-cultural sharing in multicultural congregations and member churches will be an important criterion in the researcher's development of an icon and accompanying liturgical element for the Reformed tradition in South Africa.

Thus far the researcher has primarily mentioned Western scholars from the Roman Catholic tradition. An important contribution regarding liturgical inculturation comes from a South African Reformed scholar in the person of David Bosch.

2.4.3 David Bosch on liturgical inculturation

In his book, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Mission*, David Bosch writes at length on the concept of liturgical inculturation. For the purpose of this study the researcher will briefly reflect on aspects of Bosch's work that are relevant to the study on hand. Bosch indicates that incarnation is the best model for liturgical inculturation. In the incarnation paradigm the Church does not expand, but is rather born anew into each new context and culture (Bosch, 2014:465).

Liturgical inculturation, Bosch (2014:464) argues, differs from its predecessors, in terms of role-players. In the past the church hierarchy controlled the process, while in liturgical inculturation there are two primary agents – the Holy Spirit and the local faith community, particularly the laity. The diversity of role-players extends further to take the broader context of the region's context and culture into account. According to Bosch (2014:464) the critical consideration might not be whether a church is Reformed or Orthodox, but rather whether it has its home in Africa, Asia, or Europe, making regional differences more decisive than confessional ones.

Another aspect of Bosch's work that is worth mentioning is in regard to paradigms. In Natural Sciences one paradigm is replaced by another that proves the previous one wrong. Once the new paradigm has been accepted it is unthinkable to return to the previous one. In theology (and the arts) "old" paradigms seldom disappear. Not only do "old" paradigms live on or make comebacks, they also continue to exist simultaneously with new paradigms (Bosch, 2014:190). According to De Klerk (2016:181) the liturgical inculturation paradigm is complicated further by the diversity and presence of fundamentalists, moderates, conservatives, liberals and radicals in one congregation. Bosch (2014:190), using Küng's Paradigm Theory, points out that people can be committed to more than one paradigm at the same time, Martin Luther being a prime example in breaking away from the Roman Catholic Church, but still retaining certain elements in this new paradigm he chose to create. The researcher is of the opinion that this commitment to two paradigms can be seen in Dutch Reformed congregants' interest in the spirituality of other faith traditions while still being grounded in their own Reformed tradition.

2.4.4 Postmodern challenges to liturgical inculturation

When thinking about liturgical inculturation, the impact of the cultural and social shift we know as postmodernism must be taken into account. In Stanley Grenz's description of the postmodern ethos he mentions pessimism, holism, communitarianism and relativistic pluralism as its main characteristics (Phan, 2003:59). These characteristics shape the postmodern worldview. For postmodernism there is no such thing as a single objective world of which one can construct a unitary true view. What modernism would refer to as the "real world", postmodernism understands as nothing more than our own ever-shifting social creation (Phan, 2003:59). This understanding leads postmodernism to think of the word as a "symbolic" world that is created by our language and where knowledge is replaced by interpretation. While modernism focuses on facts and rules, postmodernism is concerned with meaning. This meaning is often found in metaphors (Freedman & Combs, 1996: 22).

Phan (2003:59) refers to Stanley Grenz's explanation of the postmodern epistemology. He points out that the postmodern epistemology is built on two main assumptions. Firstly, postmodernism views "all explanations of reality as constructions that are useful but not objectively true" and it denies that "we have the ability to step outside our

constructions of reality". This view rejects the correspondence theory of truth and adopts a pluralistic view of knowledge.

In terms of culture, postmodernism brings an end to meta-narratives (Phan, 2003:60). The term meta-narrative was brought into prominence by Jean-Francois Lyotard who claimed that postmodernism is characterized by a distrust of the grand narratives, such as progress and enlightenment emancipation, which had shaped an essential part of modernity. Postmodernism also refuses to allow meta-narratives to lend a social legitimation. In a postmodern context meta-narratives are replaced by local narratives which are constructed within a local community of knowers (Freedman & Combs, 1996:20).

In his article *Liturgical Inculturation: Unity in Diversity in the Postmodern Age* Peter Phan describes the challenges postmodernism poses to liturgical inculturation. Two of the challenges described by Phan and the questions he asks regarding these challenges will be mentioned.

According to Phan (2003:66) Christian liturgy re-enacts the great biblical narratives. If one concurs that postmodernism brought an end to meta-narratives this has huge implications for liturgy, especially in contexts where Christianity competes with other religious meta-narratives. Phan asks whether liturgy can be completely inculturated without using religious rituals and sacred texts of other religions. Liturgical inculturation extends beyond sacred texts and rituals to include music, songs, musical instruments, gestures, dance, art and the architecture of the local culture. Phan (2003:66) asks:

> Should liturgical inculturation embrace the postmodern preference for juxta-position, bricolage and collage, with pastiche as the result, and the "aesthetics of absence"? How far can and should it go in adopting classical or traditional art forms without falling into archaelogism and nostalgia? On the other hand, how much of postmodern art forms can it adopt without succumbing to ephemeral fads and passing trends? If liturgical celebrations are performances, how far can the community and the presider experiment with improvisation, group authorship and audience participation, and still preserve the unity of faith and worship?

Phan (2203:67) also argues that the fact that liturgical inculturation cannot be separated from theology opens liturgical inculturation up to the scrutiny of postmodernism. Phan

(2003:67) asks intriguing questions such as how liturgy can justify the use of anthropomorphic and anthropocentric (and very often sexually exclusive) language for God. Moreover, how can inculturation, through liturgy, create a church that is truly local while postmodernism leans towards globalization? From the above-mentioned it is clear that postmodernism poses many challenges to liturgical inculturation.

In closing, if God Himself became a Jew, surely the Church must become native in the various countries she finds herself. According to Chupungco (1982:87) this truth should underlie the theological reflection, catechesis and sacramental life of the Church around the world. Chupungco argues that to refuse adaption is to deny the universality of salvation. The researcher hopes that, by taking both culture and liturgy seriously, she can create something new and enriching.

2.5 CONCLUSION

The theological and theoretical framework for the research to take place, was constructed in this chapter with the parameters as set by Practical Theology and Liturgical Studies. It is clear from this chapter that both Practical Theology and Liturgical Studies provide the space to accommodate cultural changes and new ways of expressing faith. In chapter three the importance of aesthetics in the religious experience of believers will be discussed.

CHAPTER 3
THE IMPORTANCE OF AESTHETICS IN THE RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

3.1 Aesthetics and Theology

Aesthetics is being rediscovered and appreciated as fundamental theology or as Van Erp aptly describes it: faith in search of images (*fides quaerens imaginem*; cf Van Erp 2003:15f). Although many theologians will not dispute the importance of theological aesthetics, there seems to be uncertainty on how it is meant to function within the field of Theology (Howes, 2010:165).

There also seems to be a great deal of suspicion and objections regarding aesthetics in a large part of the more traditional theological world. Cilliers (2012:48) attributes these objections and suspicions, particularly in Reformed circles, to misconceptions and stereotypes regarding aesthetics. One such misconception is that theological aesthetics will veil the gospel rather than indorse it (Webber, 1985:23). Others fear that aesthetics as source of theology will steadily replace the Scripture as source of revelation (Cilliers, 2012:48). One cannot dismiss the heritage of iconoclasm, especially in the Reformed tradition, when speaking of the misconceptions regarding aesthetics (Michalski; 1993:76).

According to Brown (2000:3) the Church has a negative attitude towards those who keep themselves busy with "such 'trivial' things as taste and aesthetics".[3] Individuals interested in aesthetics are seen as dismissive of the important matters to which the Church ought to be attending, for example caring for the poor and marginalised.

Although it is not at the core of our religion, the importance and power of aesthetics and art in the religious experience of people should not be underestimated (Cilliers, 2012:48). Leo Tolstoy said that "the function of art is to make that understood which in the form of an argument would be incomprehensible" (Neufer Emswiler, 1980:57). According to Brown (2000:11) art can sometimes facilitate a sense of grace and of the mystery that we call God.

[3] To which Farley (2000: IV) would ask whether the ethical excludes beauty.

This chapter will explore aesthetics and art within a theological framework. The importance of aesthetics and art in liturgy will also be discussed. For the purpose of this study the concepts aesthetics and art need to be clarified.

3.2 Clarification of terms

3.2.1 Aesthetics

The term “aesthetics” was originally coined by the German philosopher Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten when establishing a new science in which he wanted to research sensory experience in a disciplined manner (Farley, 2001:X). To name his new science he used the Greek term *aesthesis* (observation) and the associated noun *aesthetika* (indicating the observed objects) as roots (Cilliers, 2012:50). The term was soon broadened to include *beauty* and before long aesthetics was linked to the arts. By the end of the eighteenth century aesthetics was considered the philosophy or theory of the arts (Farley, 2001:X). In the twentieth century beauty as the foundational concept of aesthetics became more marginalised, because the term “beauty” gradually lost its place in the way art itself was understood (Cilliers, 2012:50). Beauty, as one of the key aspects of aesthetics, is still battling for survival especially in an increasingly postmodern culture. Farley (2001:5) goes as far as to say that for the postmodern, beauty is a beast. In recent times the idea of aesthetics has moved away from the belief that beauty is located within a specific object or image. Postmodernism no longer thinks of beauty as a universally accepted set of qualities, but rather as culturally specific (Sturken; Cartwright, 2002:48). Beauty is also threatened by a hermeneutical tradition that propagates a separation between ethics and aesthetics, and religion and art (Cilliers, 2012:52). Over recent decades Practical Theology has undergone many changes, but according to Farley (2001:8) it still is not preoccupied with beauty. Farley (2001:8) notes:

> It does not even play a minor role in Protestant conservative, neo-Reformation confessional, hermeneutic, correlational, or deconstructive and post-structural theologies. Nor do we find it in what may be the most globally widespread theological movement of the late twentieth century, the praxis or political theologies of liberation: African-American, womanist, South American, Minjung, radical feminist and Asian.

According to Cilliers (2012:52) the concept of aesthetics contains several elements. From Baumgarten’s intention to research the experiences of sensitivity it is clear that the notion of aesthetics includes the concepts of observation and interpretation. Further

developments emphasised that the interpretation of beauty would have an ethical transforming dimension, that overflows to a self-transcending disposition of benevolent caring which Cilliers (2012:52) suggests is preceded by the anticipation that others can profit from such caring.

In turn Farley (2001:117) describes his understanding of aesthetics as:

> An aspect of human experience evoked by an immediate relation to what is beautiful – that is, with what draws human beings into self-transcending and non-useful satisfactions. Aesthetics refers to a branch of philosophy or art criticism whose task is to understand the unity and features of works of art and the experience of art. Beauty occupies a central or defining place in aesthetic inquiry and only a secondary and non-defining place in aesthetics.

3.2.2 Art

Defining a rich and diverse term such as "art" proves to be an almost impossible task. Any possible description on the researcher's account only seems arrogant. For this reason the researcher chooses for the definition suggested by Cilliers (2012:54). Cilliers' definition was chosen above a variety of divergent definitions because it not only takes the four key concepts of aesthetics, as already mentioned, into account but also makes provision for the three theories of art − the naturalistic, functionalist and formalist theories.[4] Cilliers' definition (2012:54) reads as follows: "Art is the observation of reality with all your senses, interpreting it through play and lament, and transforming it with anticipatory images of healing alternatives."

3.3 Aesthetics and art within a theological framework

In the context of this study it will be useful to mention some representative twentieth-century theologians and their thinking regarding the relationship between aesthetics (and art) and theology. Howes (2010:156), following the work of John Dillenberger[5], places these theologians on a threefold continuum.

Karl Barth is placed on the one end of the continuum where "no relation is seen between the arts and theological work". According to Howes (2010:157) Barth was adamant that

[4] The naturalistic theory explains art as humanity's substitute for reality. According to the functionalist theory art is appreciated as a medium of self-expression. The formalist theory sees art as creations with autonomous criteria and intrinsic values (Cilliers, 2012: 54).
[5] *A Theology of Artistic Sensibilities (*1986).

images and symbols have no place in a building designed for Protestant worship. He was also suspicious of any art that claimed to act as a human point of contact with God. In Barth's mind there was no inherent or systematic relationship between art and theology.

Rudolf Otto's work, *The idea of the Holy*, represents the midpoint of the continuum where "a positive relation is articulated, sometimes successfully and sometimes not". Otto draws a comparison between religious experiences of the mystical and aesthetic experiences of the beautiful – a relationship he believed was more than a mere analogy (Howes; 2010:157-158).

On the furthest end of the continuum we find three theologians that played an important role in the mapping of a theological aesthetical profile, namely Gerardus van der Leeuw, Paul Tillich[6] and Hans Urs von Balthasar. Their contributions can be summarised as: imagination as a result of being created in God's image; the function and meaning of art itself; and beauty as analogy and form (Van Erp, 2003:18-24). According to Van Erp (2003:18-24) these three foci have had a profound influence on the current theological-aesthetical landscape. Cilliers (2012: 59) suggests that these three concepts can be translated into the following questions: What is the significance of the biblical images of God for the autonomy and functioning of human imagination? How does aesthetics give expression to a particular religious understanding of life, i.e. search for meaning? And how is divine Beauty mirrored through beauty in the world? Regarding the above-mentioned questions Cilliers (2012: 59) notes that it is:

> …essential that theological questions are posed within an aesthetical framework. An aesthetical theology goes beyond the mere phenomenological comparison of aesthetical and religious experience, or the tendency to use aesthetics (especially art) merely as illustrative material for certain theological arguments. On the contrary, essential theological questions are posed that intrinsically belong to the academic discipline of theology – whilst they could simultaneously be called aesthetical questions in their own right.

It is important to note that aesthetics should not be understood as a second-rate partner serving only as an addendum to, or illustration of, theology. Howes (2010:147) is of the opinion that theology and aesthetics – and especially the visual arts − are not two

[6] Karl Rahner's work was built on Tillich's approach to art. In his essay *"Theology and art"* he asks whether or not the visual arts can be left out of theological activity (Howes, 2010:160).

isolated entities, but rather twin media by which the world is understood and embodied. In aesthetics and art, theology finds a complement and not a rival in its task of understanding and giving expression to all created forms. Aesthetics should be appreciated for what it is – an independent source for theology (*locus theologicus*). As in the case of all other sources for theology, aesthetics offers different and interesting perspectives that can enrich the Church's understanding of the Bible and the Spirit's revelation of God.

According to Cilliers (2012:60) aesthetics carries dimensions of meaning (both cognitive and affective) that contribute to the communication of the Word of God. In Saint Bonaventure's (1978:72) words it is an aid to the "sluggishness of the affections…for our emotion is aroused more by what is seen than by what is heard".

Aesthetics enables us to both draw and cross the borders between that which is transcendent and that which is immanent, helping us not only find meaning in them, but also in the subtleties of the relationship between them. Aesthetical practical theology can thus be summed up as the imaginative deciphering of meaning in beauty (Cilliers, 2012:65-66).

It is clear that aesthetics is a means of theological and spiritual formation and thus an aid to worship (De Gruchy, 2001:213), making an aesthetical approach to liturgy of great importance if one is serious about liturgical renewal. Perhaps it is time that the Reformed tradition in South Africa should think anew about the potential aesthetics has for liturgy.

3.4 Aesthetics and liturgy

With the intention of a better understanding of the importance of aesthetics for liturgy, it is necessary to refer to Cilliers's assessment thereof. Cilliers (2012:69-107) provides five reasons why fresh thinking regarding the relationship between aesthetics and the Reformed liturgy is needed − the inescapability of aesthetical expression; the rediscovery of our corporality; the upsurge of a culture of images; the neurocognitive integration of imagination; and the Bible as image-book.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher is of the opinion that the inescapability of aesthetical expression as well as the upsurge of a culture of images needs to be taken into account.

3.4.1 The inescapability of aesthetics

In terms of the inescapability of aesthetics Cilliers argues that aesthetics is present in everything. He challenges his reader to consider even the plainest Reformed church building as being aesthetic, because of the presence of space, music, pulpit cloths, christening fonts, chalices etc. (Cilliers; 2012:70). People can't live without art as it is a God-given gift and part of being human. Cilliers (2012:71) argues that when art is suppressed in one place, it pops up in a different place. He notes the example of the Puritan preachers that in their war against the use of art in the worship service became *word artists* themselves. It is also worth noting the Reformed tradition's compensation for the lack of aesthetical expression in church buildings, in the form of portraits of reverends in the consistory of practically every Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa. It is clear from Cilliers and Wepener's (2004:341) analysis of the portraits of reverends in Dutch Reformed congregations that despite devout piety even the Reformed tradition needs and uses images to express our convictions.

3.4.2 The upsurge of a culture of images

We inhabit a world filled with visual images. These images are central to how we make meaning and communicate in the world we live in. According to Cilliers (2012:87) images[7] have taken over our existence and if something is to be considered of importance, it must be made visible. Howes (2010:15) aptly describes our society as one where hearing takes place through the eyes. Over the last two centuries Western culture has been transformed from a culture dominated by oral or textual media to visual media. Even the stronghold of the printed word, the newspaper, has turned to images. According to Sturken and Cartwright (2002:1) people's attitudes, beliefs and values are increasingly being shaped by the many forms of visual culture by which they are surrounded, none of which is quite as powerful as the film industry. Films not only entertain, but also have the ability to widen horizons and bring new perspectives. For this

[7] The researcher's understanding of images coincides with that of Cilliers. Cilliers (2012:83) understands images as functioning on four levels: as unexpressed presentations that appear in the human brain; as verbalized in language; as visual images and as images that are found in texts.

reason Cilliers (2012: 85) is of the opinion that the Church needs to take note of aesthetic expressions such as the film industry, as well as television games and the religious yearnings often found in them. The Church and theology need to take this image-saturated context into account especially when thinking about liturgy.

3.5 Conclusion

It is clear that aesthetics and art are not only part of how we perceive and understand our reality and ourselves, but also play an integral part in religion and our most intimate religious experiences. According to Howes (2010:147) good art and good theology are agents in the rebirth of expressive celebration. I will conclude with the words of the twentieth-century architect Frank Lloyd Wright. Wright is quoted as saying: “We shape our environment, then our environment shapes us.” If this is true then our places of worship and the liturgy that leads us in worship should be full of art and beauty. In chapter 4 the researcher explores icons and iconography at length with the objective of enriching the Reformed liturgy.

CHAPTER 4
ICONS AND ICONOGRAPHY

4.1 Introduction

Icons[8] neither developed nor exist in a vacuum, but in the religious culture of the Eastern Orthodox Church, and have evolved over nearly 2000 years (Black, 2000:1). These sacred pictures play a central role in the above-mentioned church and are venerated as part of the Orthodox liturgy (Haustein-Bartsch, 2008:8). To truly appreciate and understand icons one must understand the tradition in which they are so deeply imbedded. For this reason the emergence of the Orthodoxy will be outlined in order to trace the story of icons within it. A study of icons is not complete without taking into account what is referred to as the Iconoclastic Controversy, as well as the iconoclasm of the Reformation. A brief history of Byzantine icons as well as icons from the Coptic and Ethiopian Orthodoxy will be presented, after which the reading of icons will be explained in the light of a classical Byzantine icon. The chapter will conclude with the writing of icons.

4.2 The emergence of the Orthodox tradition and the place of icons within it

By the middle of the second century the Christian movement had spread from Palestine throughout the Roman Empire, entering a cultural milieu shaped by this empire's many philosophies and religious cults. This melting pot of ideas, known as Hellenism, was the landscape in which the early Christian church had to find her identity (De Gruchy, 2008:58). It was in this time that the Christian movement became known as the "catholic"[9] or universal Church (Innes, 1972:58).

By the end of the third century Antioch in Syria, Alexandria in Egypt and Rome were known as "apostolic sees" because of the bishops who had their seats in these cities. These bishops were known as Patriarchs, and in Rome and Alexandria also as Pope or "Father". Rome was accepted as the chief of the apostolic sees (De Gruchy, 2008:59). In 330 Emperor Constantine, who declared Christianity a legal religion in 313, built

[8] The word, as we know it, is derived from the Greek word *eikon* which can be translated as image or depiction. According to Cunningham (2002:101) one could define the word *eikon* as a representation of the artist's vision of reality, imagined or real.

[9] At this time in the history of the Church the word "catholic" referred to those that held the doctrine of the Trinity. It did not refer to Catholic as opposed to the Orthodox Church (Innes, 1972:58).

Constantinople at Byzantium (McGrath, 1999:54). The shift of his capital to Constantinople eventually divided the empire into two parts: the Western, still centred in Rome, and the Eastern, centred in Constantinople also known as Byzantium (Innes, 1972:58). Thence the description “Byzantine” originated, that referred to the new variant of Hellenistic culture in which Christianity now became the driving force. Latin remained the language of the Church in the West, while Greek became the language of the Church in the East (De Gruchy, 2008:59). With the sacking of Rome by the Huns and Goths in 410 and the eventual collapse of the Western Empire in 470, Constantinople became the “new Rome” and Byzantine Christianity the main social and cultural force in the region (Innes,1972:58).

According to De Gruchy (2008:60) Alexandria and Antioch were the centres of Christian theological endeavour from as early as the middle of the second century. Both were known as centres for biblical interpretation although their approaches to interpretation differed. While Antiochene exegetes’ approach was more linguistic and historical, the theologians of Alexandria chose a typological and allegorical approach to interpretation. The Alexandrian methodology played an important role in the development of iconography. It is also worth mentioning that the theologians in Alexandria sought to understand the Christian faith through the wisdom tradition of both the Bible and mystical neo-Platonism, which led them to emphasize the divinity of Christ. According to De Gruchy (2008:60) the Alexandrian theology also had a great influence on Christian iconography.

May 20, 325 brought a turning point in the Christian church. On that day approximately 230 bishops gathered at Nicaea for the first ecumenical council of the Church (Noll, 2012:40). The outcome of this gathering was the adoption of the Nicene Creed which affirmed that Jesus Christ was “fully God and fully human”. Even though both the Second Ecumenical Council of 381 and the third of 431 reaffirmed this, the debate on how these two natures were related continued. On May 23, 451 the Roman Emperor Marcian called for an ecumenical council of bishops that he hoped would end this debate. The council met at Chalcedon, just across the Bosporus from Marcian’s capital, Constantinople (Noll, 2012:60). The council concluded that the humanity of Christ was inseparable from his divinity, but that the two natures were not to be confused. The council also acknowledged that Mary the mother of Jesus was to be understood as *Theotokos* or “God-bearer” and therefore in this sense the “Mother of God”. According to

De Gruchy (2008:61) this decision was of great importance for the development of the place of Mary in the life of the Church and of icons. Although the decisions made at Chalcedon did not define the Church's doctrinal life indefinitely, nor did it bring an end to the hostile disputes that led to the council, its decisions were hugely significant. The Council of Chalcedon represents a turning point in the history of Christianity both because it clarified Orthodox Christian teaching and because of the way in which it reached that clarification (Noll, 2012:61).

According to De Gruchy (2008:61) the controversy surrounding the "two natures of Christ" led to the removal of the Patriarch of Alexandria by the Emperor, which in turn gave rise to the great schism[10] between what we now refer to as Eastern and Oriental Orthodoxy. The Eastern Orthodoxy included the churches that were led by Constantinople, and the Oriental Orthodoxy the churches led by Alexandria. This led to deviating loyalties between the two Patriarchs of Alexandria – one loyal to Constantinople and the other representing the Coptic[11] Church. The Eastern Orthodoxy included all the Byzantine churches from the Mediterranean through to the Baltic Sea, while the Oriental Orthodoxy included the Copts as well as the Ethiopian, Syrian, Armenian and Indian Orthodox churches. Although the Oriental Orthodoxy is very similar to its Eastern counterpart, these churches have developed their own spirituality as well as liturgical and iconic traditions (De Gruchy, 2008:61).

Despite Christianity's sensitivity to the dangers of images and the possibility that images could lead to idolatry, believers started expressing their faith in artistic terms with pictorial representations of Jesus and Mary by the end of the second century (Murray, 1993:216). These first representations looked very much like the contemporary Hellenistic art of the time, but soon Christian iconography moved away from using pagan figures and symbols to depict Christ and started developing its own style (De Gruchy, 2008:62). This was not without strong opposition as seen at the Spanish synod of Elvira in 306. The synod warned against the use of icons lest they should be painted on the walls of churches (Hussey, 1986:33).

[10] According to Innes (1972:58) the effect the great schism had on the artistic development of the Eastern Church was tremendous.
[11] Copt is the Arabic word for ancient Egypt (De Gruchy, 2008:61).

Despite the above-mentioned opposition iconography flourished. Many reasons can be cited as explanation, one of which was the vacuum that developed due to the rejection of pagan art as idolatrous. Another reason cited by De Gruchy (2008:62) was the illiteracy amongst Christians which caused icons to function as a "fifth Gospel" that conveyed the biblical narrative in pictorial form. This function of icons made them more than works of art. For many Christians icons were the embodiment of the revealed truth, and thus worthy of veneration alongside the Scriptures (De Gruchy, 2008:62). It was this veneration of icons that led to a critical response from people who, in the name of preserving truth, refuting paganism and honouring the first commandment, became known as iconoclasts, literally "the breakers of images".[12]

4.3 The Iconoclastic Controversy

The Iconoclastic Controversy was not only one of the greatest cultural and political crises of Byzantium, but also a defining moment in the history of Christianity (De Gruchy, 2001:21). Historians generally divide the controversy into two periods.

The first period began in 726 and ended in 787. During the first decade of the eighth century Muslim armies were marching towards Constantinople. Help came from the new North Syrian emperor named Leo. Leo had risen through the ranks in the army to become governor and then emperor in 717. According to Irvin and Sunquist (2001:360) by the time Leo became emperor a theological storm was brewing over the Greek Church. This storm concerned the devotional use of images or icons. As already mentioned icons had a prominent place in the devotional life of the people in the Greek East. For many they were a reminder of spiritual truths and thus a means of spiritual insight or grace. Icons also signified the glorification (theosis) of other mortal beings alongside Christ. These artistic representations of Christ, other biblical characters as well as the saints and martyrs were often used in personal devotion to help believers focus their meditations and prayers (Irvin & Sunquist, 2001: 360).

There seems to be uncertainty as to why the first movement against icons took official form under Leo III and his son Constantine V. Some scholars believe that when Leo III

[12] The iconoclasts' success can be seen from the fact that very few icons survived from before the seventh century. The survival of some older icons was due to their being hidden in remote monasteries like the Monastery of St Catherine on Mount Sinai (De Gruchy, 2008:63).

made his first move against icons in 726 he was motivated by the example of the Muslim ruler Yazid's edict against images. Others prefer to attribute the iconoclasm of the eighth century to Jewish, rather than Muslim, influence (Murray, 1993:215). In terms of the above-mentioned theories, while Semitic influence cannot be ruled out, there is no evidence of direct contact between Leo III and Yazid. Hussey (1986:36) cites Leo's fear regarding the loss of support from concerned iconoclastic church leaders as a more plausible ground for this movement.

The storm clouds of the Iconoclastic Controversy broke in 730 when the emperor issued an edict against icons (Irwin & Sunquist, 2001:361). This edict had widespread consequences. The Patriarch of Constantinople, who opposed the emperor on this, was replaced with a candidate that shared the emperor's view on icons. This time is characterized by riots as reaction to soldiers' attempts to remove icons from public places. In 743 Leo's son, Constantine V, became emperor and zealously continued his father's policies. In 753 a council condemned icons, and martyrdom soon followed. Imperial troops raided monastic houses, destroying icons and arresting resisters which in turn led to the deaths of many "icon-devotees"[13] (Irwin & Sunquist, 2001:361).

In 775 Constantine's son, named after his grandfather, became emperor. Although Leo IV held iconoclastic views, the persecution lifted somewhat during his reign. Not least among the reasons for Leo's moderate policy was the influence of his Athenian wife Irene, who was known to be a supporter of icons (Hussey, 1986:44). With Leo's death in 780, leaving only a son who was not yet of age, Irene not only asserted her right to act as regent for her son, but also took over the reins of government. According to Irwin and Sunquist (2001:361) she soon took to reversing the iconoclastic policy of her late husband and his predecessors. When her son, Constantine VI, came of age, Irene had herself declared co-emperor. Irene and Constantine VI called the 7th Ecumenical Council in 787 which met in Nicaea to formally settle the question of icons (Harakas, 1988:157). The council affirmed the veneration of icons to be an Orthodox practice, but emphasized that the veneration of icons and saints differed in nature from worship that is offered only to God (Irvin & Sunquist, 2001:362).The council also emphasized that such acts were not directed toward an image itself, but to the reality of the person that transcended its

[13] Also known as *iconodules* (Irwin & Sunquist, 2001:361).

image and that the honour given to the image passed on to the person it represented. Thus, the subject of the icon was revered and not the icon itself. The council ordered that icons of Christ, the saints and especially the Virgin Mary be placed in churches, on liturgical vessels, in private homes, and even on the sides of roads (Irvin & Sunquist, 2001:362). Unfortunately the council's decisions did not bring an end to the turmoil surrounding icons.

The second period of the controversy, some would say, began with the end of Irene's reign in 802. After the empress's death in 803 the supporters of the iconoclast position attempted one more movement against icons. This movement brought about a new imperial edict that imposed a round of restrictions on icons in churches under the reign of Leo V. In 815 thousands of monks, in defiance of their opponents, carried their icons through the streets of Constantinople in a Palm Sunday parade. This led to severe persecution in which many monks and bishops were tortured for their support of iconodulism (Irvin & Sunquist, 2001:362). In 840 the persecution started to wind down. It would seem that the iconoclastic emperors' opposition to icons had not extinguished, but rather motivated, the practice of venerating them amongst the general population (Irvin & Sunquist, 2001:362).[14] With the death of the last iconoclastic emperor, Theophilus, his wife Empress Theodora not only put an end to the persecution, but condemned it as an "abominable heresy" (De Gruchy, 2001:24). This period ended with the confirmation of the decisions of the Seventh Ecumenical Council by the Council of Constantinople in 842-3 (De Gruchy, 2008:63). The Patriarch of Constantinople preached a sermon in the Cathedral of Hagia Sophia, on the first Sunday of Lent in 843, in which he proclaimed icons to be reinstated in the Church. According to Irvin and Sunquist (2001:363) the 11th of March 843 is the date that the Orthodox celebrate as the end of the controversy. De Gruchy (2008:63) is of the opinion that very few bishops from the West attended the above-mentioned councils, making their outcome very much an Eastern affair and thus having little impact on what happened within the sphere of the Roman or Latin Church.

[14] De Gruchy (2008:65) is of the opinion that the Iconoclastic Controversy provided the breeding ground in which the iconophiles could develop a theology of icons that ensured that their veneration was not only an expression of people's piety, but also had a firm foundation within the liturgical life and spirituality of Orthodoxy.

4.4 The iconoclasm of the Reformation

Periodic outbreaks of iconoclasm were not uncommon at the beginning of the sixteenth century, but according to De Gruchy (2008:91) the Protestant attack on the papacy indisputably gave rise to the most radical iconoclastic movement since the Iconoclastic Controversy. To understand the iconoclasm of the Reformation it is perhaps useful to explore the thoughts and viewpoints concerning icons and iconography of a few prominent figures in the persons of Martin Luther, Huldrych Zwingli and John Calvin.

4.4.1 Martin Luther

Martin Luther, who is considered by most to be the founder and shaper of the Reformation, is easily and somewhat unfairly singled out as the culprit with regard to what some call the Reformation iconoclasm (Michalski, 1993:1). When Luther and his followers defiantly started questioning the structure of the Church, the problem of art was only marginal to their interest. According to De Gruchy (2008:91) Luther was neither an iconoclast nor an admirer of the visual arts. Michalski (1993:6) quotes Luther as saying that it would be better if less was given to the churches and altars and more to the needy. Luther is also cited as indirectly opposing any iconoclastic interpretation of the first commandment. One might rather refer to Luther as a reductionist. He felt that a crucifix in the sanctuary and an altarpiece depicting the passion, were enough visual aids to communicate the narrative of redemption. Luther recognized art as a teaching aid that served the gospel, but for him the Word remained the focus (De Gruchy, 2008:91).

4.4.2 Huldrych Zwingli

The great Swiss reformer Huldrych Zwingli was intensely patriotic and understood the gospel as a call to practical action (Stephens, 1992:13). He is described as the most political of all the reformers (Stephens, 1992:1). According to Michalski (1993:51) the most apt definition of Zwingli's theology would be "humanistic spiritualism". His spiritualism can be seen primarily in his doctrine on the Eucharist, but also in his doctrine of justification and his numerous reflections on the liturgy. He was of the opinion that nothing based on corporeal elements could lead to salvation and called for the complete eradication of the Mass (Michalski, 1993:51). Zwingli believed that images were against the first commandment as they weakened faith in one God (Michalski, 1993:54). In the summer of 1523 Zwingli publicly spoke out against the cult of images, which undoubtedly played a role in the iconoclastic incidents that took place at the same time in Zurich and

Stadenhofen. According to Michalski (1993:52) Zwingli was determined to stop any uncontrolled iconoclastic outbreaks and proposed a public debate on the question of images. The debate ended with no clear decision, but Zwingli was asked to write a statement on the issue which he did in November 1523. In December of the same year the participants issued a memorandum requesting donors to retrieve works of art donated to churches, as well as calling for the destruction of all altars and the eradication of processions. In July 1524 all Zurich churches were purged of "idolatry" leaving them, as Zwingli put it, beautifully white (Michalski, 1993:54).

According to Michalski (1993:56) Zwingli's spiritualism also played a significant role in the Christological context of the image controversy. Referring back to the arguments of the first iconoclasts Zwingli stated that no image of Christ or crucifix should be allowed in churches. Later he made a distinction between images in the home and in churches. He unequivocally stated that all art in churches, with the exception of "ornaments"[15], became an idol. The only exception he was prepared to make in this regard was stained-glass windows. Like Luther, Zwingli also encouraged people not to spend their money on images, but rather on the poor (Stephens, 1992:144).

4.4.3 John Calvin

The majesty and glory of God (*soli Deo gloria*) are fundamental in Calvin's theology (Michalski, 1993:62). Hence Calvin's pronouncement that the making of images is primarily a misunderstanding of the essence of God:

> We are similar to God only in our souls, and no image can represent him. That is why people who try to represent the essence of God are madmen. For even their souls of little worth cannot be represented. God is spirit – says the Scripture – and yet they want to give him a body…Since God has no similarity to those shapes by means of which people attempt to represent him, then all attempts to depict him are an impudent affront…to his majesty and glory (Michalski, 1993:62).

John Calvin writes in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* that the decline in early Christianity was linked to the introduction of images (De Gruchy, 2008:91). In several of his writings he is very negative towards images, calling them "fictitious worship" and "perverse". Calvin also adamantly rejected the distinction made between worship and

[15] Zwingli never specified his understanding of the word "ornaments" (Michalski, 1993:56).

veneration. According to De Gruchy (2008:91) Calvin understood images as symptomatic of all that was wrong with the Church of Rome. For Calvin images were objects of superstition and fear that prohibited people from knowing the true God through Jesus Christ. Images were attempts to replace the true God with false gods that could be misused by priests in order to keep people in the captivity of fear (De Gruchy, 2008:91). According to De Gruchy (2008:92) the Carolingian Divines'[16] pronouncements influenced Calvin's thoughts regarding art and may even explain his more positive approach towards art in the final edition of his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. For Calvin visual art was meant for human pleasure, but not to be venerated as sacred or sacramental in the sense of Orthodox icons, and had no place in a sanctuary (De Gruchy, 2008:92).

4.4.4 The iconoclasm of the Reformation

If one understands the term "iconoclasm" as a hostility towards religious images that expresses itself in their destruction through public acts, then some would argue that most of the events during the Reformation cannot be regarded as iconoclasm. Michalski (1993:75) contends that at most one could speak of the partial decrease of the use of images and sculptures in the churches of Lutheran countries, and their complete removal in Calvinist areas. Unfortunately this seems not to be the case. Although none of the major Reformation theologians explicitly praised the use of violence in regard to the removal of images it seems to have been the practice. Many regard the use of force and violence as a by-product of the demands of the Reformation process (Michalski, 1993:77). Whether one accepts the term in its strictest sense or not, the presence of iconoclastic incidents during the Reformation cannot be ignored.

The question of images went to the heart of Reformation theology and its criticism of Rome, and, by implication, of Eastern Orthodoxy. De Gruchy (2001:37) explains:

> The practice of indulgences may have sparked off Luther's protest, but it was the whole system of late medieval Catholic religion that was at issue. The cult of the Virgin, prayers to the saints and pilgrimages to their relics, passion plays, the endowments of masses for the dead, indeed, the mass itself, along with the veneration of images, were, for the Reformers, all part of the same popish parcel. During the two centuries that preceded the Reformation such practices reached a new level of intensity, and developed a character

[16] The Carolingian Divines were influential theologians and writers in the Anglican Church who lived during the reigns of King Charles I and, after the restoration, King Charles II (Latin: Carolus).

in sharp contrast to that of earlier times. Faith was fixed on images and salvation was bound up with a system of iconic signs.

The Reformation brought a shift in how God was to be perceived – God was to be heard, and not seen. De Gruchy (2001:39) quotes Aston in saying that during the Reformation Christians had to learn to find in the written word compensation for the forced deprivation of images that had been accumulated over generations.

According to Felix (2015:22) the interpretation by Reformed theologians such as Andreas Karlstadt, Huldrych Zwingli and John Calvin of the Decalogue's prohibition of idolatry and the manufacture of graven images of God, gave rise to riots in which statues and images were destroyed. According to Wandel (1995: 149) noteworthy riots took place in Zurich (1523), Basel (1529), Copenhagen (1530), Münster (1534), Geneva (1535), Augsburg (1537), Scotland (1559), Rouen (1560) and Saintes and La Rochelle (1562). In the summer of 1566 the seventeen provinces (now the Netherlands, Belgium and parts of Northern France) were disrupted by extensive Calvinist iconoclasm known as the *Beeldenstorm*. The *Beeldenstorm* started with the destruction of the statues of the Monastery of Saint Lawrence after a field sermon by Sebastiaan Matte. Hundreds of other attacks followed, one of which was the sacking of the Monastery of Saint Anthony. According to De Gruchy (2001:38) the most widespread iconoclasm was not conducted by the followers of the Reformed theologians, but under the reign of Henry VIII in England after his break with Rome.

De Gruchy (2001:47) argues that the Reformation's impact on art was not restricted to Protestant circles, but also led the Roman Catholic Church to reconsider the nature and role of sacred art. This reconsideration culminated in the reaffirmation by the Council of Trent of a commitment to the veneration of images of Christ, the Virgin and the saints in December 1563.

4.5 Orthodox icons

4.5.1 Introduction and brief history of Byzantine icons

The latter part of the ninth and the tenth century saw the Eastern Orthodoxy expand northwards, resulting in the establishment of the Byzantine Christian culture throughout large parts of Eastern Europe from Bulgaria and Serbia to the Baltic Sea (De Gruchy,

2008:66). As Orthodoxy expanded so did the popularity of icons. Icons became an important way of communicating the Christian faith to a mostly illiterate population. According to De Gruchy (2008:66) icons were more than teaching aids. They acted as guardians of the Orthodoxy handing down the tradition's unique spirituality. According to Uspensky (1982:147) legend has it that the decisive factor in Prince Vladimir's conversion to Orthodox Christianity was being shown an icon of the Last Judgment. Vladimir's conversion not only led to the adoption of Christianity by the Russian people in 988, but also had a significant influence on the development of Byzantine iconography (De Gruchy, 2008:67). In 1448 the Russian Church became independent of Constantinople, but even though Byzantium no longer existed as political reality, it was still deeply embedded in the Orthodox Church and her icons (De Gruchy, 2008:67).

The eleventh century was a period of extreme creativity for the Russian Orthodox Church (Uspensky, 1982:148). The early development of the Orthodox spirituality and icon writing in Russia was in great measure thanks to the Dormition Monastery in the Kiev caves founded in 1051 (Solovyova, 2006:10). The first reference to Russian iconographers is found at this monastery, namely two monks Alimpiy and Grigoriy who had been trained by Greek masters. Little is known about their work, but the *Perchery Virgin*[17] is attributed to Alimpiy (Uspensky, 1982:148). According to De Gruchy (2008:67) other noteworthy centres of iconography were established in Novgorod, Pskov and later Moscow in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. However it was the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries that brought significant growth in icon writing, especially in terms of new subtleties in form and colour. It was also in this period that the low partition of stone or wood decorated with a few icons was replaced with the Iconostasis[18] as it is known today (Solovyova, 2006:12).

According to De Gruchy (2008:68) Byzantine iconography flourished in Russia in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries because of the revival of Hesychasm[19] by St. Gregory and St. Sergius. In an attempt to bring healing and reconciliation to a Russia in turmoil, St. Sergius founded his Monastery of the Holy Trinity. Over the course of the fifteenth

[17] An icon of the Virgin Mary that included portraits of Saints Antoniy and Feodisy, abbots of the monastery (Uspensky, 1982:148).
[18] An icon screen that separates the sanctuary from the nave (De Gruchy, 2008:67).
[19] Hesychasm is a spirituality of inner silence, prayer and contemplation. According to De Gruchy (2008:68) it can be traced back to a pre-Christian Hellenistic philosophy that taught people to embrace a life of union with the divine.

century this monastery became the vessel for Russia's unity and creative vitality. With his wooden church, and later in 1422 his white stone Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, Sergius hoped to "dispel the fear and hateful divisiveness from this world" (Uspensky, 1982:153). It was at this monastery that Andrei Rublev, probably the most famous of all Russian icon writers, lived and worked. Rublev's famous *Icon of the Holy Trinity* is a masterly design in line and colour, and is regarded by the Russian Orthodox Church as the model for all icon writing, because of its beauty and content (Gardner, 1948:282; De Gruchy, 2008:68).

Orthodox iconography in the classical Byzantine sense thrived in Russia from the time of Rublev until the beginning of the seventeenth century when the Stroganov School was at its height (De Gruchy, 2008:77). Unfortunately under the reign of Czar Peter the Great, Russian Orthodox iconography became more westernized. Peter and his successors, lacking an understanding regarding the theological premises and spirituality of the Orthodoxy, sought to introduce a more western approach to iconography. The outcome of their policy was more realistic and life-like icons painted in colours and forms influenced by Western art. Sadly these icons became objects of art in galleries, museums and the homes of the wealthy (De Gruchy, 2008:77). Despite the above-mentioned, as well as other threats through the centuries, the original Byzantine iconographic tradition was kept alive within Eastern Orthodox Europe and beyond. According to De Gruchy (2008:93), due to the work of many iconographers and scholars, the twentieth century saw a significant revival in Orthodox iconography in the Byzantine tradition. The last fifty years also saw the emigration of many Orthodox believers from Eastern Europe, as well as Copts from Egypt, which led to the establishment of Orthodox churches in the West. The involvement of both the Eastern and Oriental Orthodoxy in the World Council of Churches has also played a pivotal role in the non-Orthodox Christian world's interest in and appreciation of icons.

4.5.2 Introduction and brief history of Coptic icons

The origin of the Coptic Orthodox Church[20] can be traced back to the Evangelist Saint Mark. According to tradition St. Mark established the church in Egypt in 62AD of which he was the first bishop and martyr. The Coptic Church shares its common roots with

[20] The name is derived from the Greek form of "Epypt" (Harakas, 1987:88).

Orthodoxy as a whole and is the result of missionary work amongst the communities dotted along the Nile (De Gruchy, 2008:78).

According to De Gruchy (2008:78) Coptic icons are indisputably Orthodox, but differ from Eastern Orthodox icons in many ways. Many Coptic icons depict the Flight of the Holy Family into Egypt as this story is central to the piety and identity of the Coptic Church. Other popular characters in Coptic iconography are St. Mark and St. George slaying the dragon.[21] Icons of the Patriarch Joseph were also a popular subject on Coptic textiles (Vikan, 1993:353).

Early Coptic icons differ from those of contemporary Byzantine in terms of character and colour. De Gruchy (2008:79) explains that in comparison with Byzantine icons their Egyptian counterparts have stocky bodies and exaggerated heads with very large eyes expressing an interior vision. De Gruchy (2008:79) quotes Quenot in describing Coptic icons as resembling popular or folk art.

Although the Copts were never involved in the Iconoclastic Controversy, Coptic iconography experienced a decline from the seventh to the eighteenth centuries. This decline could be attributed to an internal form of censorship as a reaction to the growing influence of Islam and its iconoclastic tradition in Egypt. In the last few centuries there has been a rebirth of Coptic iconography (De Gruchy, 2008:80).

[21] Saint George, or Mari Girgis as he is known, was a soldier in the imperial army. After his conversion to Christianity he was tortured in Egypt and later martyred for his faith in Palestine. There is no doubt that in the Saint George tradition legend and history are intertwined. Saint George is not only known as the prince of martyrs, but also represents the spiritual struggle against evil powers (De Gruchy, 2008:79).

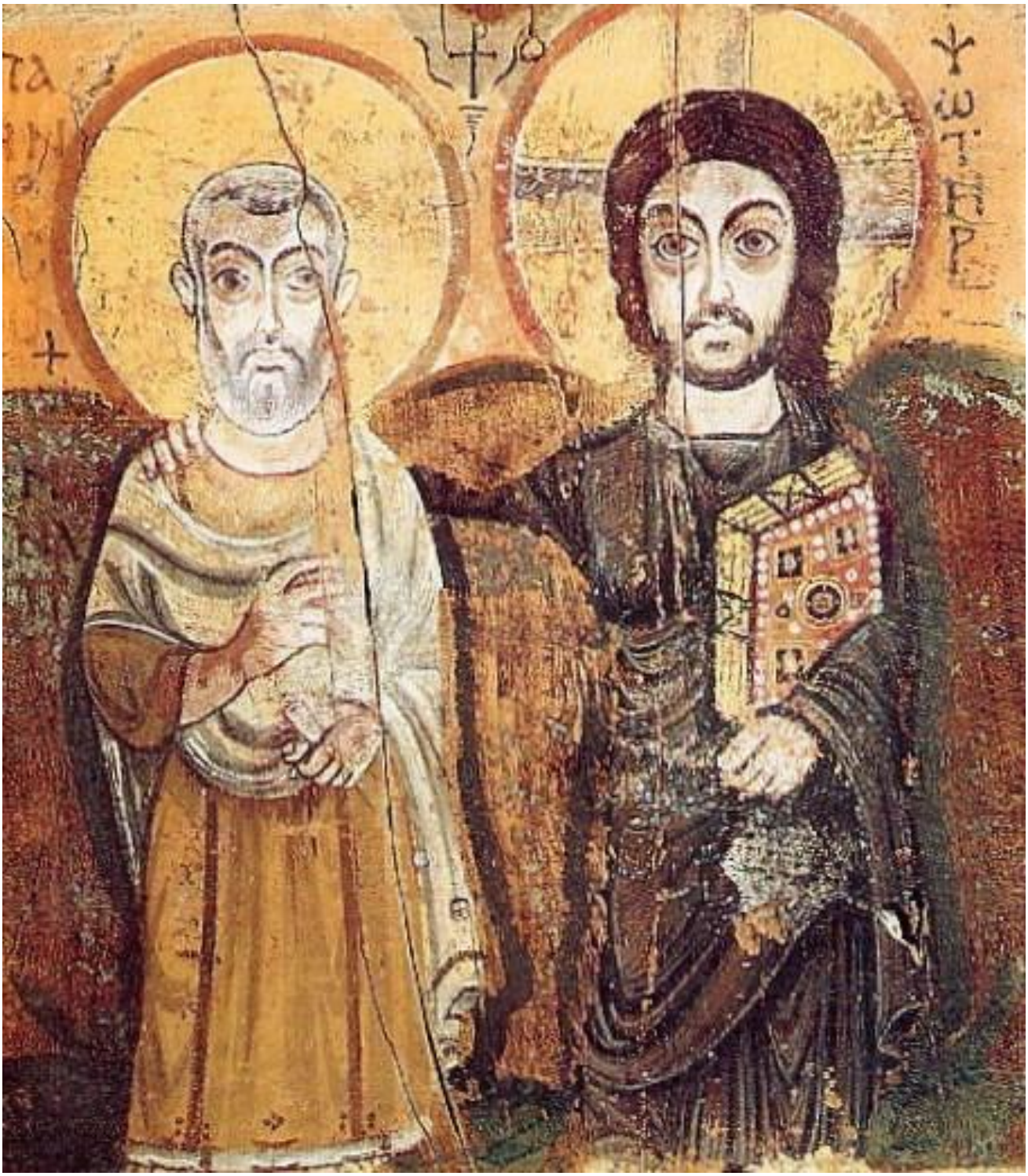

Figure 1: The icon of Christ and St. Menas *is an exceptional example of Coptic icons. This icon was found at the Monastery of Bawit in Middle Egypt, but is now housed at the Louvre Museum in Paris, France.*

4.5.3 Introduction and brief history of Ethiopian icons

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church has a strong Old Testament ethos which is embedded in the tradition of the Queen of the South's visit to King Solomon. It is believed that the monarch to which the book of Kings refers was Makeda from the city of Aksum. Makeda and Solomon's son was named Menelik I. Tradition has it that he moved the Ark of the Covenant from the Temple in Jerusalem to a church in Aksum, the ancient Ethiopian capital (De Gruchy, 2008:80). Whether the tradition is true or not, there is no doubt that there were Christians in Ethiopia from very early on in the Christian era.

According to De Gruchy (2008:81) the official conversion of Ethiopia was thanks to the leadership and witnessing of a young Syrian Christian, Frumentius. After being shipwrecked off the horn of Africa he became a teacher in the royal household of Aksum and later became the first bishop of Aksum. At the same time Constantine declared Christianity the religion of Byzantine, King Ezana made Christianity the official religion of Ethiopia. However, the majority of Ethiopians converted to Christianity because of the work of Egyptian monks that arrived in Ethiopia in the year 500. They established schools, translated the Bible and liturgy into Ge'ez and planted the monasteries that are still the foundations of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (De Gruchy, 2008:81).

With the rise of Islam in 640 came Ethiopia's Dark Age. This Dark Age isolated Ethiopia from the Christendom and lasted until the restoration of the Solomonic dynasty in 1270. This new age brought with it the revival of Christianity which gave rise to the reformation of monasteries and a cultural renaissance. In the fifteenth century under the reign of Emperor Zara Yakob, Amharic Christianity[22] developed which led to a renewed interest in Mary and her role in the Church (De Gruchy, 2008:81). Gnisci (2014:187) describes the fifteenth century as

> a period of great artistic fervour in Ethiopia. The arrival of Western artists and artworks encouraged the development of new stylistic trends and renewal of the iconographic vocabulary of local artists. At the same time, a period of political tranquillity allowed the ruling dynasty of the Ethiopian kingdom, the Solomonic dynasty, to pursue an ambitious political program that took advantage of the power of visual culture to overcome existing regional rivalries and reaffirm the divine authority of the negus, the Ethiopian

[22] A unique blend of Christianity, culture and nationalism that was influenced by contact with Italian artists (De Gruchy, 2008:81).

emperor. It was in this fertile artistic environment that the theme of the suffering or dead Christ on the cross, often referred to as *Christus Patiens*, appeared and established itself in Ethiopian art.

According to Gnisci (2014:212) the production of icons in Ethiopia is a fairly recent phenomenon that dates back to the reign of Zara Ya'eqob in the fifteenth century. The increase in icon writing in the fifteenth century is probably due to the renewed royal devotion to Mary in this period. The influence of Byzantine, Coptic, Syrian, Armenian, Italian as well as Arabic and African art and icons can be seen in Ethiopian iconography (De Gruchy, 2008:82; Gnisci, 2014:189). De Gruchy (2008:83) mentions the two differing styles of faces in Ethiopian icons as an example: the one Italianate in style, the other "Moon-like" that points to Coptic, Armenian and probably Arabic influence.

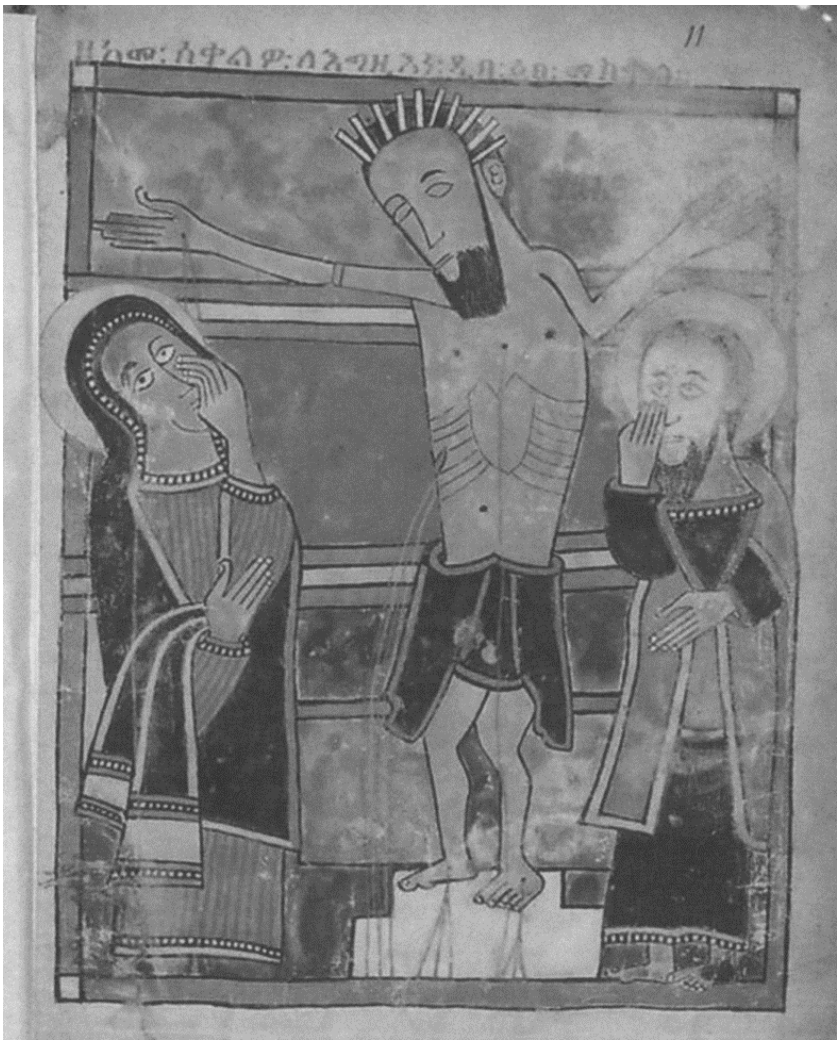

Figure 2: Crucifixion*. Ink and pigments on parchment. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France. Gnisci p218.*

4.5.4 Reading and understanding icons

De Gruchy (2008:46) describes icons as a means of grace. Elsewhere De Gruchy (2008:21) speaks of icons as the windows on the kingdom of God, a visual witness to a transfigured and transformed world and a means of contemplating the connection between heaven and earth. Baggley (2000:7) also brings a wonderful perspective on icons: "In our noisy word-battering world, icons have the power to create a different climate of heart and soul". Those of us not familiar with the Orthodox tradition could easily mistake praying with icons for praying to icons. To this Wiliams (2002: IX) answers: "We do more than just look at icons or talk about them; we pray with them".

Icons depict an array of people and themes (De Gruchy, 2008:46). Christ and the Mother of God are the most popular subjects and can be found in numerous variations. Christ is generally represented as the *Pantocrator* or the Ruler of All. The *Pantocrator* icon is modelled on depictions of Byzantine emperors: enthroned, standing or as a half-figure, with a closed or open book of Gospels in His left hand, while His right hand is raised in a gesture of blessing or communication (Haustein-Bartsch, 2008:13). Christ is also portrayed against the background of a cloth (Mandylion), as the dead Christ in the grave and in many other ways. There are also many representations of the Mother of God. In most of these representations she is portrayed with her divine Child, rarely alone. She is usually portrayed majestically standing, in half- or full figure; holding her Child on one arm, nursing Him, kissing Him or presenting Him to the beholders as we see in the *Hodegetria* (Haustein-Bartsch, 2008:13). Other popular figures are angels such as Archangels Michael and Gabriel.[23] Many of the saints that are venerated in the Orthodox Church and scenes from their lives are depicted in icons (Haustein-Bartsch, 2008:14). There are also many icons portraying scenes from the Old and New Testament such as the Transfiguration and the raising of Lazarus. When reading icons it is important to remember that icons do not simply tell the Gospel stories, but seek to draw us into the stories as participants. They invite us to see the kingdom of God (De Gruchy, 2008:47).

It is safe to say that most Orthodox Christians do not think about the icons in front of them – they pray with them, venerate them and allow them to employ a presence in the Church liturgy and in their private prayers at home (De Gruchy, 2008:48). Although it is

[23] On later Russian icons, guardian angels also became popular (Haustein-Bartsch, 2008:13).

not necessary to understand icons and their symbolism in order for them to be a means of grace, it is helpful, especially for people who have not been brought up in the Orthodox tradition, to have some understanding of their symbolism. For this reason some important aspects regarding the reading and understanding of icons will be discussed in the light of the well-known icon of Mary, the *Hodegetria*.[24]

In many icons of Christ He is holding the Word as Scripture in His hand, in the *Hodegetria* Mary is holding the "Word become flesh" in her arms. According to De Gruchy (2008:113) this icon communicates the core of a true Mariology,

> where Mary as the one who gives birth to Jesus is always the ultimate witness to the Incarnation and the Saviour of the world. She is the one who first presents Jesus as God's gift to humanity at the cradle, she is never separated from her Son, and she is there at the cross and the empty tomb. In so doing Mary becomes also the prototype of what it means to be a Christian and what it means to be the Church, namely a witness to Jesus Christ.

While in many instances Western art tries to depict holy persons and events in a naturalistic way, the perspective and forms in icons are deliberately not naturalistic (Harakas,1987:157). Icons point to a supernatural and eternal reality, and for this reason icons will never portray any earthly detail, spatiality or anything that points to a specific time (Haustein-Bartsch, 2008:11). The architecture and landscapes in icons only provide symbolic clues to the place of action. According to Haustein-Bartsch (2008: 11) perspective space is replaced with an immaterial golden or monochrome background that emphasizes the two-dimensionality of the scene portrayed. De Gruchy (2008:48) explains that the unadorned backgrounds against which many icons are painted reflect the spiritual struggles of believers who found themselves in the wilderness on many levels.

[24] According to the tradition the original *Hodegetria* or the "One who Points the Way" was painted by Luke and is central to the Triumph of Orthodoxy celebrations that are commemorated on the first Sunday of Lent (De Gruchy, 2008:113).

Figure 3: The early Byzantine icon: The Hodegetria (The One who points the way).

In contrast to Western art since the Renaissance, iconographers make use of reverse perspective, where the vanishing point lies in front of the picture and within the beholder of the image (Haustein-Bartsch, 2008:11). The sacred figures of icons are portrayed in representative attitudes, usually in a frontal or axial view, which creates a relationship between the figure and the beholder. It is also important to note that, because icons are meant to be timeless representative portraits, the sacred figures they portray never display any emotions such as laughter or tears (Haustein-Bartsch, 2008:11). In the *Hodegetria* Mary and the Christ Child are portrayed in a frontal view and no emotions can be detected.

When an icon contains a number of figures of different sizes one must keep in mind that less significant figures are depicted smaller than more important ones (Haustein-Bartsch, 2008:11). The central figure is always significantly larger than the rest even though they are all painted on the same plane. In icons there is no single point on the horizon where all the lines meet, and in which objects vary in size as they recede into the distance. The beholder's attention is rather drawn towards the main point of reference − the centre of the icon (De Gruchy, 2008:48). Important figures or details are never covered or overlapped by less important ones (Haustein-Bartsch, 2008:11). This can be clearly seen in the *Hodegetria*. Although Mary is the central figure, Christ's halo overlaps hers declaring Him the most important figure in the icon.[25]

One of the first things one notices when gazing upon an icon is the face, the mouth and especially the eyes. Icons look back at you. De Gruchy (2008:47) describes the experience of looking into an icon's eyes as "an invitation to engage in a conversation deep within the silence of your own being…as you seek to read the icon, the icon is actually reading you".

Scenes or figures on an icon are not illuminated by a source of light from the side outside the picture. In icons all light originates from the objects in the picture themselves. In contrast to Western art where objects or persons have lighted and shaded sides, the image and the source of light in an icon are identical (Haustein-Bartsch, 2008:12). The *Hodegetria* is an excellent example of light radiating from the person depicted in the icon. This radiant light reveals not only the divine in the picture, but also illuminates the

[25] According to Nouwen (2004:35) Mary's presence is exclusively for the Child. Her hand does not point, explain or teach. Her gesture simply offers the Child as the Saviour of the world and gently invites us to move closer to Him.

beholder. In icon-writing icon-painting there are no shadows, nor is there atmospheric depiction to blur distant objects (Haustein-Bartsch, 2008:11).

What gives icons their remarkable luminosity is the use of colour. For most icon writers colours carry meaning; however according to Bands (2016), quoting Leonid Uspensky, one should not attach meaning to every shade of colour in an icon. Christ is always depicted wearing a red tunic which indicates His humanity. His red tunic is covered by a blue outer garment signifying His divinity, as blue is symbolic of heaven and the mystery of God (De Gruchy, 2008:49). The *Hodegetria* differs here with the Christ Child wearing a blue tunic and bright red and gold outer garment. Mary is depicted wearing a blue inner garment indicating that she is the bearer of divinity, while her red outer garment represents her humanity. Life, beauty, martyrdom and spiritual renewal is symbolized by bright red. Green represents the earth, fertility, life and wisdom; and is often used in icons of John the Baptist. Brown can also represent the earth, as well as holy poverty (De Gruchy, 2008:49). Monks are usually depicted in brown (Bands, 2016:12). While purple points to power, both white and gold speak of sanctity and the uncreated divine light and glory of God. God's uncreated light is depicted by four means: with clouds, rays from heaven, garments and golden halos (De Gruchy, 2008:49). In the *Hodegetria* both Mary and the Christ Child are depicted with a golden halo.

Icons always include an inscription in order to guarantee the unmistakable identification of the depicted person or scene (Haustein-Bartsch, 2008:12). The Byzantine alphabet is used. On the *Hodegetria* the top two descriptions either side of Mary's halo read "Mother of God". The word just below the top inscriptions is the title "Hodegetria". The inscription above the Christ Child's halo reads "Jesus Christ", while the three letters in His halo read "The Being" (Bands, 2016). The three stars[26] on Mary's forehead and shoulders also carry a meaning. According to Nouwen (2004:33) the stars not only indicate her virginity before, during and after Jesus's birth, but also point to a divine presence that saturates part of her being. Nouwen (2004:33) explains:

She is completely open to the divine Spirit, making her innermost being completely attentive to the creative power of God. Thus being mother and being virgin are no longer mutually exclusive. On the contrary, they

[26] In some versions of the *Hodegetria* only two are visible, the third is covered by the Child she holds in her arms.

bring each other to completion. Mary's motherhood completes her virginity, and her virginity completes her motherhood. That is why she carries in Greek the highest title that a human being has ever received: Theotokos, "The Bearer of God".

4.5.5 Writing icons

Icons are rule-bound both in form and content. They are presented in a standardized form which builds on authorised models (Nes, 2004:12). An iconographer may never incorporate his/her own subjective interpretations into an icon. Because icons are an expression of the community's faith, the iconographer is obliged to work in line with the authorised models (Nes, 2004:12). For a representation to be classified as an icon it must reflect Orthodox characteristics. Icons must communicate the true teachings in visual form, just as the true teaching is communicated in verbal form by preaching (Nes, 2004:13).

Writing an icon according to the Byzantine tradition is a meticulous and time-consuming process (De Gruchy, 2008:42). A solid wood panel[27] without knots and cracks provides the base for the icon (Parry, 1999:243). The wood is coated several times with animal glue[28] to make it less absorbent. After this the panel is covered with thin canvas[29] and given a grounding of eight to ten coats of animal glue. The panel is then painted with white colour pigment and chalk. Before the grounding is applied the panel is heated to 70 degrees Celsius[30] (Nes, 2004:8).

The motif is either sketched directly on to the panel, or transferred to the panel, using a pencil. When the outline is complete, the next step is to start applying the paint. An icon is always painted systematically from the background[31] to the foreground. Icon painting is not done with conventional paint, but with egg tempera. Colour pigments are mixed with a binding mixture made of egg yolk, water and vinegar.[32] This emulsion results in a half-transparent colour making several coats necessary to cover the white ground.

[27] Plywood can also be used.
[28] Gelatine was used in the preparation of the panel used in the icon developed for this study.
[29] Should the quality and surface of the wood be good enough the motif can be painted directly on the wood after the surface has been grounded with animal glue (Nes, 2004:8).
[30] The panel that was prepared with gelatine was left overnight to dry.
[31] The background can be either gilded or painted. As the icon in this study will be painted, the gilding technique will not be discussed. See Nes (2004:9-10) for a complete explanation of different gilding techniques.
[32] In the early icons, found at St Catherine's monastery in Sinai, a wax encaustic had been used (Cunningham, 2002:101).

Because of the transparency the iconographer must work systematically remembering that the underlying colour layer will shine through and affect the next layer (Nes, 2004:10). Iconographers usually start with darker shades and then add brighter ones (Solovyova, 2006:55).

Figure 4: The first stages of writing the icon Christ Pantocrator[33]*.*
Orginal icon found at the 14th centrury Chilandery Monastery, Mount Ahtos, Greece.

Colours are mixed continuously on a porcelain or plastic palette. Most icons are painted using a rather limited colour spectrum of which the following colours form the basis: Titanium white, Yellow ochre, Burnt sienna, Light and Dark cadmium red, Indian red, Ivory black, Light cadmium yellow, Chrome oxide green, Cobalt green, Ultramarine blue, Cobalt blue, Raw umbra and Burnt umbra. The different colour pigments vary in absorbency and covering abilities (Nes, 2004:11). Some pigments are opaque or half-opaque, while others are transparent which explains why layer upon layer is applied (Solovyova, 2006:55). Finally, the icon's contours are defined and the contrasts between light and dark areas are intensified by applying a dark glaze to the darkest colours (Nes,

[33] The researcher has included photographs of the writing process in the hope that the photographs will further illustrate the process described. The photographs included in this research were all taken during the icon-writing course the researcher attended before this research was undertaken. This specific image illustrates the first few steps of the writing process: the motif has been sketched on to the prepared panel and the first few layers of paint have been applied around the frame of the panel.

2004:11). All that remains to be done is the necessary inscriptions and then the icon is sealed[34] (Solovyova, 2006:10).

Figure 5: Writing an icon is a long and complicated process in which colour pigments are mixed with water and egg. Layers of tempera are applied until the image is rich and glowing.

[34] Traditionally icons were sealed with a hot oily varnish made with linen oil (Solovyova, 2006:10). The icon developed in this study was sealed with a clear varnish.

Iconographers never sign icons, because

the emphasis is not on the art process, but on the truth it must mediate. The underlying message is: this work has a sacramental character; it points us towards a greater reality, namely the Son of God, and ultimately the God of the Son. It is about the mystery behind the image rather than the image itself (Cilliers, 2102:37).

4.6 Conclusion

It is clear that icons are not primarily works of art, though they are that as well, but an integral part of the Orthodox tradition and spirituality. As we have seen, icons, and the many controversies surrounding them, have over many centuries led to much conflict and even bloodshed. Despite many iconoclastic movements the “fifth Gospel” survived to remain a means of grace to many believers. For believers from other traditions it can be difficult to understand the Orthodox tradition’s relationship to and use of icons. To many believers from the Reformed tradition icons seem like strange images that Orthodox believers pray to, which is not the case. Icons are used in prayer, venerated and they play an important role in Orthodox liturgy. Although it is not necessary to understand icons and their symbolism, in order for them to be a means of grace, it is helpful to have some understanding of their symbolism. Writing icons is an art form in itself. The process of writing an icon is not only time-consuming, but also calls for precision and patience. An icon writer is not at liberty to incorporate their own understanding or interpretation of the subject matter. They should always paint from the perspective of the faith that has been handed down to them (De Gruchy, 2008:104).

CHAPTER 5
REFORMED AND ORTHODOX LITURGIES

5.1 Introduction

The goal of this study is not to discuss the history of the Reformed or Orthodox liturgies[35], but rather to shortly describe the relevant characteristics of both traditions' liturgies in order to determine whether icons, as liturgical element, can enrich the Reformed liturgy. To reach this goal some important aspects of both the Reformed and Orthodox liturgies will be discussed after which a cursory comparison will be made between the two.

5.2 Reformed liturgy

When trying to pinpoint exactly what Reformed liturgy is, one must first take the Reformed tradition and identity into account. According to Smit (1998:24) answering the question "What does Reformed mean?" is not a simple task. It means different things to different people. Should one wish to document the story of the Reformed tradition in South Africa, Smit says (1998:24), it would consist of many different stories. These different stories would have certain concepts in common. Burger (2001:54-126) discusses these overlapping concepts, which he calls the five drivers of the Reformed tradition, in his book *Ons weet aan wie ons behoort. Nuut gedink oor ons Gereformeerde tradisie*.

5.2.1 The five drivers of the Reformed tradition

5.2.1.1 To live before God (*coram Deo*)

The Reformation was not at its core an academic or theological movement, but a church movement. A good description would be a church-renewal movement. The logical question then would be why the Reformers felt it was necessary to bring change to the Church. From Luther's 95 theses it is clear that, from the Reformers' point of view, there were many problems in the Church (Burger, 2001:54). The first and most fundamental problem was that the good news, that all sinners have free access to God through Jesus

[35] The English word *liturgy* is a transliteration of the Greek word *leitourgia* which is derived from two Greek words, *leitos* and *ergon*, meaning "of the people" and "action" respectively. Therefore some say that the word *liturgy* originally meant *action of the people,* but Wolterstorff suggests that it meant "action for the benefit of the people" (Wolterstorff, 1992:274).

Christ enabling them to live a new life with God, was not taught in the church of that time. According to Burger (2001:55) the Latin expression *coram Deo* (before God) encapsulates the central message of the Reformation. For the Reformers this meant that all people had the right to appear before God and live in relationship with Him, something that was not necessarily the case in the Roman Catholic Church of that time. Thus for the Reformation the church was the space where people could know God personally and live in a relationship with Him. According to Strauss (1999:8) the Reformed liturgy seeks to mediate an encounter between God and God's congregation.

5.2.1.2 Bound to the Word (*sola scriptura*)

If we are called to live before God, the next question is before which God are we called to live. The Reformers would answer – before the real God we meet in the Bible. According to Burger (2001:74) Reformed believers' primary description of God is not God as loving, fair or even gracious, but rather that He is the living, speaking God Who comes to us, speaks to us, takes possession of us and renews us through his Word. The Reformation's protest was against the place tradition began playing in the Roman Catholic Church. For the Reformers the Word was above any other form of revelation and knowledge of God. For some it was the only valid source as seen in the well-known expression *sola scriptura* (Burger, 2001:74). Strauss (1999:8) stresses the emphasis on the Word in a Reformed service and that the Word, and not tradition, determines what happens in the liturgy. According to Old (1984:159) the Reformed theology has always made a very clear distinction between the Word and tradition. The authority of the tradition is secondary, derived from and dependent on the authority of the Word.

5.2.1.3 Aimed at life (*Vocatio*)

One could be led to believe that the above-mentioned emphasis on God is all the Christian faith is about, which is not the case. According to Burger (2001:89) God doesn't call believers away from this world, but rather directs them to life.

In contrast to the Roman Catholic Church of the time, the Reformation placed emphasis on the meaningful work of ordinary believers. The term *vocatio* was used to refer to the "calling" of ordinary believers (Burger, 2001:102). It is important to note that *vocatio* is not about the work in or at the church, but rather how people's faith is part of their lives on a daily basis.

5.2.1.4 Aware of our weakness and God's grace (*sola fide* and *sola gratia*)

Martin Luther's question "How can I find a gracious God?" and his answer "by faith alone" (*sola fide*), played an important role in the Reformation (McGrath, 1999:72). This became known as the doctrine of justification. This doctrine deals with the question of what an individual must do in order to be saved (McGrath, 1999:437). The Reformation taught that faith is not based on performance nor is it deserved, it is a gift. *Sola fide* and *sola gratia* became the lenses through which the Reformers read the Bible. According to Strauss (1999:9) the Reformed service and liturgy is characterized by humility and brokenness before God.

5.2.1.5 In the power of the Spirit and to God's glory (*soli Deo gloria*)

According to Burger (2001:117) believers can be honest about their lives, weaknesses and sins, because we know that God's grace and love is bigger than any weakness or sin. It is God's Spirit that is behind this grace and love. In Reformed circles one often hears the words *soli Deo gloria* (all honour to God alone). Although this term is not limited to the Reformed tradition, it has become a type of motto or slogan that encapsulates and describes the Reformed tradition's understanding of life.

5.2.2 Important aspects of Reformed liturgy

According to Wolterstorff (1992:274) liturgy has little currency in the Reformed tradition and therefore the necessary reflection thereon is seldom done. In his own reflection on Reformed liturgy he makes no distinction between Reformed liturgy and the Reformed church service.[36] He is of the opinion that although the physical setting within which the liturgy takes place is important, the liturgy "itself is a sequence of things done" (Wolterstorff, 1992:277). It would seem that this is one of the few definitions one might be safe mentioning in regard to a blueprint for Reformed liturgy.

Wepener (2012:5) discusses three theologians' understanding of the meaning of a Reformed service. Firstly he refers to Smit, who defines a Reformed service as dependent on the Holy Spirit while taking the ever-changing context of believers, as well as the message of the Word and tradition, seriously. For Smit the above-mentioned

[36] Reformed service and Reformed liturgy will thus be used as exchangeable terms.

considerations make a Reformed service a continuously reforming service (Wepener, 2012:194). This understanding is of the utmost importance for this study and will be returned to in chapter 6. Secondly Wepener (2012:194) quotes the American Reformed liturgist Old, in regard to the Reformed liturgy's most significant contribution as "its sense of the majesty and sovereignty of God, its sense of reverence and simple dignity, its conviction that worship must above all serve the praise of God". Lastly Wepener mentions the emphasis McKee places on Calvin's understanding of worship as both *pietas* (love for God) and *caritas* (love for others). Wepener (2012:195) concludes the discussion by recognizing that the meaning of the concept, Reformed service, is not as clean-cut as one would imagine.

With the above-mentioned in mind the researcher attempts to summarize some characteristics of a Reformed liturgy. In doing this she is not attempting to capture the essence of the Reformed liturgy, nor is she under the illusion that this summary encapsulates all that can be said about Reformed liturgy. The researcher hopes that this summary will be helpful in the development of a liturgical element that can enrich a Reformed liturgy.

- The most important characteristic of the Reformed liturgy is God's Word and the preaching that is done from it. For Reformed believers hearing God's will as given in the Word is of the utmost importance (Farris, 1993:70). This Word is always an interpreted word for a specific context.
- The Reformed liturgy is characterized by an encounter between the living God and the congregation. For this reason, according to Strauss (1999:8), the liturgy must take God's presence, and how expression is given to it, very seriously.
- The Trinity is at the centre of the Reformed service and liturgy. According to Burger (2001:34) the Reformed service is about hearing and taking to heart the will of the Holy Trinity.
- The sacraments of the Holy Communion and the Baptism play an important role in the Reformed liturgy. The Reformed tradition understands the sacraments as actions of God, and that our worship and gratitude are merely the means by which we answer (Farris, 1993:72).

- The Reformed tradition sees the liturgy as a dialogue between God and the congregation (Vos & Pieterse, 1997:8).
- The Reformed tradition has a very strong emphasis on service. This service is rendered out of gratitude to God (Vos & Pieterse, 1997:8). According to Farris (1993:75) this focus on service should not only be part of believers' everyday lives, but also of the liturgy.
- Another characteristic of the Reformed identity and liturgy is simplicity (Farris, 1993:74). This simplicity is not only seen in the aesthetics of Reformed church buildings, but also in liturgical elements such as the music and worship.
- The Reformed service is seen as a celebration where believers' salvation is celebrated (Vos & Pieterse, 1997:8).
- There is a growing awareness in the Reformed tradition regarding the importance of corporeality within the liturgy. Cas Wepener explains the significance of this physical participation in his book *From Fast to Feast*:

> Liturgy is the encounter between God and man in which God and man move out toward one another, a movement in which God's action has primacy, so that in a theonomic reciprocal fashion a dialogical communication in and through rituals and symbols is established in which man participates in a bodily way and can in this way reach his highest goal in life, namely to praise God and enjoy Him forever.

According to Cilliers and Wepener (2004:334) corporeality refers to the use of a person's whole body, which includes all five senses, in the liturgy.

5.3 Orthodox liturgy

De Gruchy (2008:123-124) describes an Orthodox liturgy beautifully in his account of attending a local Orthodox Church service on the Greek island of Skiathos:

> Soon after I entered the service began but there were only a handful of people scattered around the large domed building. Already I was aware of a symbolic space that was different from most non-Orthodox church buildings, one that reflected cosmic order in which heaven and earth were united. Looming up in front of me was the Iconostasis dividing the nave from the inner sanctuary…I was reasonably familiar with the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, so I could follow what was happening. After a doxology the litany of peace began, interspersed with sung antiphons and further prayers led by the deacon. So the service proceeded with measured tone, and gradually the size of the congregation grew as more people

entered the church. As they did, each person gathered a few candles at the door and, before they joined those of us already seated or standing, they lit the candles in front of their favourite icons, genuflecting before and sometimes kissing them…By now candles were burning brightly in every nook and cranny, illuminating the icons. On the Iconostasis in front I could make out the serried rows of prophets and patriarchs, apostles and saints, Jesus and Mary, evangelists and angels, each in their appointed place gazing directly in my direction. The gospel was read as incense rose around the lectern. I do not recall a homily, but many prayers were offered, and eventually the liturgy of the catechumens came to a close. The liturgy of the faithful then began: more prayers, the Great Entrance, the Nicene Creed, the consecration of the bread and wine behind the Iconostasis and then the communion.

Unfortunately because of the limited scope of this research not all the facets of the Orthodox liturgy will be discussed. The research will refer to a few important aspects noted by De Gruchy in his account above, but most of the discussion on Orthodox liturgy will centre on icons and the role icons play within the tradition's liturgy.

5.3.1 Heaven on earth

Kallistos (1986:8) confirms De Gruchy's experience of the church building being a symbolic space. The interior of the church is regarded as a three-dimensional icon. Nes (2004:17-18) explains:

The church is a model of the universe, a vision of the redeemed, transformed cosmos, an architectonic *mimesis* of a divinely ordered universe. The Greek word *mimesis* means a reminder or copy of. The interior of the church is a reminder of God's constant and visible revelation in the history of mankind, at the same time as it is a copy, in the sense that it symbolises God's perfect kingdom "up there". The Lord's house is heaven on earth…In this way the liturgy celebrated by the Church on earth is an image – an icon – of the liturgy the saints celebrate in heaven.

According to Kallistos (1986:8) the Divine Liturgy[37], and the church building in which it is celebrated, is heaven on earth. Kallistos (1986:8) quotes St. Germano of Constantinople as saying, "The church is an earthly heaven, in which the heavenly God dwells and moves". The Divine Liturgy is seen as the undivided offering of the total Church, both visible and invisible. The Orthodox tradition believes that the Divine Liturgy makes those

[37] The Divine Liturgy is the primary service of the Orthodox Church. It is a Eucharistic service. The Divine Liturgy consists of two parts: the *Liturgy of the Catechumens* in which the Scriptures are proclaimed and explained; and the *Liturgy of the Faithful* which is sometimes called the *Liturgy of the Eucharist*. During the *Liturgy of the Faithful* the bread and wine are offered and consecrated after which the faithful partake in the sacrament of Holy Communion. The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom is one of the most well-known liturgical forms of the Holy Eucharist (Harakas, 1987:99-100).

on earth co-celebrants at the heavenly liturgy with Christ himself, as well as with the Mother of God, the angels and the saints (Kallistos, 1986:9). The church is decorated in such a manner that the earthly and the heavenly realms join in unity during the Divine Liturgy and in this, icons play an important role.

5.3.2 The placement of icons in the church

In contrast to the Reformed tradition the Orthodox tradition places words and images on an equal footing. It is said that the great theologian St. John of Damascus once said, "Just as words encourage hearing, so do images stimulate the eyes". He regarded words written in books as verbal icons (Nes, 2004:13). Icons not only have a dogmatic character, depicting visually what the church teaches verbally, but also a didactic and liturgical function. Icons are didactic in function as they illustrate and teach about events and people in the Bible and Church history. They not only mediate knowledge but also stimulate feelings that, according to St. John of Damascus, can lead to an awakening of belief (Nes, 2004:14). As a liturgical function icons play an integral part in a church service in the Orthodox Church. The church is usually decorated throughout with frescos and mosaics (Nes, 2004:13), but what strikes an outsider most is the Iconostasis. According to Solovyova (2006:12) the Iconostasis occupied a central position in the Orthodox Church from early on.[38] Its purpose was to demonstrate the essence of the liturgy and help believers follow and understand the service. The Iconostasis is a screen[39], decorated with icons, that separates the nave where the congregation meets from the sanctuary behind the screen where the altar is located and where the bread and wine for the Eucharist is consecrated by the priest (De Gruchy, 2008:84). The Iconostasis is arranged in a specific way to tell the story of redemption. The order is usually as follows (De Gruchy, 2008:85-86):

- The top tier consists of icons representing the Old Testament patriarchs and below them a row of great prophets.
- The next row of icons represents the twelve major festivals[40] in the Christian calendar, from the Annunciation to Pentecost.

[38] See Hausten-Barsch (2008:13-14) and Solovyova (2006:12) for an overview on the origin of the Iconostasis.
[39] According to De Gruchy (2008:85) this screen was similar to the stage screens at Byzantine theatres that had three doors through which actors would appear. The use of such doors in the church heightened the sense of the liturgy as an unfolding drama.
[40] A festival icon can also be placed on a stand in the church to remind the congregation of the specific celebration of that time of the year (De Gruchy, 2018:85).

- In the centre of the next row, just above the Royal Door, is an icon known as the *Deisis*.[41] This icon portrays Mary and John the Baptist standing in prayer on either side of Jesus, surrounded on both sides by a row of angels, archangels, apostles and saints praying for the world.
- The panels on either side of the two side doors depict icons of the four evangelists – Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Above the door there is an icon of the Last Supper, and on the panels of the door are icons of liturgists such as St. John Chrysostom, and the Annunciation which of course is the starting point for the Gospel story of redemption.
- At the apex of the Iconostasis is a cross.

Through the Iconostasis and other icons the church recreates in the present what Christ and the saints did and said in the past (Nes, 2004:14). When one understands the Iconostasis one cannot refute the fact that it tells the story of redemption. It starts with the patriarchs, such as Abraham, with whom God entered into a covenant, and the prophets that spoke of the coming Messiah. Then the Iconostasis reminds us of great moments as told in the New Testament which are celebrated in the church year. At the centre of all of this is Jesus the Christ, Saviour and Lord (*Pantocrator*). He is surrounded by Mary, John the Baptist, angels and praying saints. Then we meet the four evangelists – the writers for liturgy in which this story is celebrated. Finally we see the Last Supper. According to De Gruchy (2008:86) the presence of these icons during a church service constitutes a feeling of literally being surrounded by a "great cloud of witnesses"[42] that are all pointing to Jesus. This, together with reciting the Scripture and other holy texts, praise and prayers, all constitute the liturgy of the Orthodox Church.

[41] *Deisis* meaning prayer.
[42] Hebrews 12:1-2

Figure 6: An example of a traditional Iconostasis

(www.agapesacredart.com/2015/02/iconostasis-as-raod-map-to-the-kingdom)

5.3.3 Icons, not idols

To many believers from the Reformed tradition, what De Gruchy describes with regard to the Orthodox congregation lighting candles in front of icons, genuflecting before them and even kissing them, may seem to be idolatrous. To this Ouspensky and Vladimir (1989:36) say:

> No matter how lofty in content and beautiful an icon may be it cannot be perfect, just as no word image can be perfect. In this sense both theology and iconography reach a limit of human possibilities and prove insufficient.

Icons in the Orthodox tradition never represent that which is invisible. For that reason one will never find an Orthodox icon that represents God the Father, as for the Orthodox

tradition He is the One who is an unknowable mystery.[43] Orthodox icons only portray that which has been revealed and has become visible through God's activity (De Gruchy, 2008:28). In the Orthodox tradition icons are not worshipped, but venerated.[44] According to Haustein-Bartsch (2008:9) the physical matter of the image is not venerated, but the holy prototype, or, as Basil the Great explained, "The honour given the image passes to the prototype" (Haustein-Bartsch, 2008:9).

The veneration of icons does not downplay the Holy Scriptures in the Orthodox tradition. The Bible plays an important role in the Orthodox liturgy. The liturgy overflows with Psalms and other parts of the Bible. In fact the whole Bible is read during the course of the year in the liturgy. Furthermore, the Holy Gospel lies open on the altar where it is venerated as the main icon of the living Word. It is important to note that in the icons of Christ He is often depicted with the Scriptures in his hands. In the Orthodox tradition Word and image complement each other as witnesses to the Word (De Gruchy, 2008:39).

De Gruchy (2008:29) rightly argues that there are many other things that all Christian traditions venerate such as the Bible, because it is the witness to the Word of God. In the same sense the Orthodox Church venerates icons, for they embody the image of God, as God became known to us in Jesus Christ, as well as the prophets that told of His coming, the apostles, saints and martyrs who testified to the Gospel, and Mary His mother.

There is a fine line between superstition and magic, and genuine faith in God. It is undoubtedly so that some people turn icons into talismans, just as others do with the Bible and other religious objects (De Gruchy, 2008:29). But these misuses of icons do not make them idols. In the Orthodox tradition they were never meant to be worshipped, but venerated.

[43] According to De Gruchy (2008:28) for this reason the Orthodox Church is uneasy about the Catholic Church's acceptance of Michelangelo's painting of God the creator on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.
[44] The word "veneration" (from the Latin *veneratio*) in its literal sense means to "show reverence or respect" for something or someone (De Gruchy, 2008:28). Sometimes the word "worship" (from the Latin *adoratio*) is wrongly used. It is important to mention that the Greek Church Fathers made a distinction between *proskenesis* (veneration) and *latreia* (worship).

5.3.4 The sacramental view of icons

According to De Gruchy (2008:32) in the Reformed tradition the Word and sacraments are seen as the means of grace. The Reformed tradition only celebrates the sacraments that were instituted by Christ, namely the Baptism and Holy Communion. For Reformed believers these are the "outward and invisible signs" of an inward and spiritual reality. In contrast to this the Orthodox tradition has a sacramental view of the world and life, which means they embrace more sacraments than the two practiced by the Reformed tradition. Because of this sacramental view icons are regarded as sacramental in appealing to sight (De Gruchy, 2008:32).

5.4 A comparison between Reformed and Orthodox liturgies

The researcher is aware that she has only touched on the surface concerning the liturgies of both the Reformed and Orthodox traditions. Because of the limited scope of this study only certain relevant aspects of both liturgies were discussed. She is also aware that the description of both traditions' liturgy is not only sparse, but does not do justice to either of them. With the above-mentioned information at hand a short comparison will be attempted. The comparison will be limited to three differences: the Word and sacraments in the liturgy, the use of images, and the inclusion of the use of various senses in the liturgy. The aim of this comparison is not to prove the superiority of one liturgy above another, because both the traditions' liturgies contain elements of beauty and worth.

The first difference between a Reformed and Orthodox liturgy is the place of the Word of God and the sacraments. In a Reformed liturgy the Word is central to everything that happens in the service. In the liturgy God comes to the congregation through his Word and Spirit (Webber, 2001:3). The reading of the Scripture and the sermon on the read Scripture takes up a large part of a Reformed service. As already mentioned the Bible also plays an important role in the Orthodox liturgy. Readings from parts of the Bible play a crucial part in the Orthodox liturgy. It would appear that the main difference between the two traditions' liturgies lies in the use of the Word. While in the Orthodox tradition the Word is one of the means of grace, icons being another, the Reformed liturgy understands the sermon on the Scripture as a very important means through which God's grace is communicated. As mentioned above only two sacraments, namely the

Baptism and Holy Communion, are celebrated in the Reformed liturgy. These sacraments are not traditionally celebrated on a weekly basis, but rather monthly or even three-monthly. In contrast, the Orthodox tradition recognizes and celebrates seven sacraments[45]: Baptism, Chrismation, Holy Eucharist, Penance, Priesthood, Marriage and the Anointing of the sick. The Holy Communion (or Holy Eucharist) has a central place among the sacraments of the Orthodox Church and is celebrated every Sunday (Harakas, 1987:99). It is important to note, for the aim of this study, that one of the most noteworthy differences between the two traditions is in regard to sacraments and the sacramental view of icons as a means of grace. Although the Reformed tradition has a growing appreciation for images and the use of images in the liturgy (Cilliers & Wepener, 2004:335), it does not and probably never will see images as a means of grace.

In the Orthodox tradition icons are unmistakably part of religious life and the church's liturgy. They are more than mere pictures or pieces of art. In their didactic and liturgical nature they teach biblical truths and convey God's grace (Nes, 2004:13). The last few years have seen a growing awareness amongst Reformed liturgists regarding the communicative power of images and art. Cilliers and Wepener (2004:336) have been challenging Reformed liturgists to think of art as a voice that calls them to search for the truth in a more metaphorical, playful and narrative way; in other words to practise theology through their eyes. This awareness has led to the growing use of images and Western art in the liturgy of some Reformed Churches. Although this is a positive step forward for a tradition that has rejected any use of images in the past, De Gruchy (2008:93) warns that the use of art in liturgy is not to be confused with the role that icons play in the Orthodox tradition. He argues that

> whereas Western art can be religious or secular, Christian in character or influenced by many other traditions and perspectives, the icons of the Orthodoxy were "sacred art" in which every gesture, every object, every colour and, above all, every character had significance both in themselves and in relation to the whole, determined by faith and theology.

[45] The Orthodox Church recognizes the same sacraments as the Roman Catholic Church, but the progression through the sacraments is different. The Orthodox tradition celebrates Baptism, Chrismation and Eucharist during one service, while the Roman Catholic Church celebrates all three services at different times in a person's life. Although the ceremonies differ, the main themes are the same (Harakas, 1987:285).

The Reformed liturgy places a great amount of emphasis on the reading of the Word and the sermon that follows. Thus hearing “the Word of God” is the main means of grace and salvation. This emphasis on hearing the Word downplays all the other senses (De Gruchy, 2008:32). While in the Reformed liturgy faith is evoked by hearing, in the Orthodox liturgy the congregants are invited to experience the risen Christ through “tasting and seeing”. This “tasting and seeing” takes place in their participation in the Eucharist while being surrounded by signs of God’s grace and beauty. De Gruchy (2008:32) quotes John Bunyan in saying that Protestants need to re-learn how to worship God with all their senses: hearing, seeing, tasting, touching and smelling. The Orthodox tradition can help us with that.

5.5 Conclusion

Both the Reformed and Orthodox traditions have rich liturgies, each with their own emphasis and beauty: the Reformed liturgy with its focus on the Word of God and the sound theological reflection on it; the Orthodox liturgy’s use of icons as a means of grace, as well as their understanding of the importance of worshipping God with all our senses. It is the researcher’s belief that both these traditions could learn from each other. The Reformed liturgy’s emphasis on sermons could enrich the Orthodox liturgy, while an understanding and appreciation of icons as a gift of God to His church could enrich the Reformed liturgy greatly. De Gruchy (2008:94) points out that a tradition does not need to discard what is good in their own tradition in order to accommodate what is valuable in another. In terms of this research theme the Reformed tradition does not have to discard our emphasis on the Word and the reflection on the Word in order to appreciate and perhaps accommodate icons in our liturgy and worship. The possibility of a type of convergence liturgy, where icons could be merged into a Reformed liturgy, will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6
THE POSSIBILITY OF AN ICON-ENRICHED REFORMED LITURGY

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter the possibility of an icon-enriched Reformed liturgy will be explored by taking two theories regarding the convergence of different liturgies into account. Both these theories aim to take elements from various traditions and bring them together into one new liturgy. The two theories that will be explored briefly are Marcel Barnard's bricolage liturgy and Johan van der Merwe's convergence liturgy. The researcher believes that these theories, with the insights gained from previous chapters, will shed some light on the possibility of including an icon in a Reformed liturgy.

6.2 Bricolage liturgy

The theologian Marcel Barnard identified four trends that are visible in the contemporary liturgies of churches in the Netherlands as well as in South Africa: a renewed interest in rituals and symbols, a mixture in systems of meaning, the recovery of the unity between the domains of art and liturgy and a re-contextualisation of liturgy (Barnard, 2008:16). In his article *Bricolage liturgy: Liturgical Studies revisited,* he examines a fifth trend he understands as complementary to the previous four, which he names bricolage liturgy. The term "bricolage" is not new. One finds the term in the work of Claude Lévi-Strauss and Jacques Derrida. According to Calitz (2011:18):

> Bricolage is used in several disciplines to refer to the construction or creation of a work from a diverse range of things that happen to be available, or a work created by such a process.

Bricolage liturgy can be explained as a "cut-and-paste" liturgy. Barnard (2008:18) describes the function of bricolage in Practical Theology as the compilation of religion and convictions from elements belonging to different cultures, religions, philosophies and convictions.

Barnard's description (2008:14-16; 2014:117-118) of a bricolage liturgy in a Protestant church in the Netherlands is applicable to this study. In the service he describes different

elements from different traditions that were “cut and pasted” into one liturgy. The outcome was a liturgy that consisted of different linguistic and musical styles.
What is important to note is that within a bricolage liturgy one tradition is not more important than another. Bricolage liturgy does not restrict a service to a set pattern, but rather makes Jesus Christ the point of departure for understanding the rituals of liturgy. This makes bricolage liturgy a-centrical and a-typical (Barnard, 2008:14).

From the researcher’s point of view the bricolage liturgy could be very useful in the possible convergence of Reformed and Orthodox liturgies. This way of thinking about liturgy not only takes our growing postmodern context, with its openness towards other cultures, traditions and styles, into account but also opens up the possibility for icons to enrich a Reformed liturgy.

The use of this theory could also be detrimental to Reformed liturgy, should parts of other traditions be “cut and pasted” into the Reformed liturgy without a thorough understanding of the role and meaning of each liturgical element. For this reason Calitz (2011:21) suggests “copying and merging” as an alternative to “cutting and pasting”. The act of merging implies that a new way of doing is developed. The researcher prefers this alternative, because merging takes integration and inculturation, as discussed in chapter two, seriously.

6.3 Convergence liturgy

Of the ten modern liturgical movements that Johan van der Merwe (2009:250-253) identifies and discusses, one is especially relevant for this study – convergence liturgy. According to Van der Merwe (2009:251) convergence liturgy is the convergence of liturgical sources and treasures from the wider Christian tradition with a contemporary form of expression.[46] These different sources join into one stream within a local congregation’s liturgy. The intention of this liturgy is to be more authentic, as it is rooted in tradition on the one hand and relevant on the other, because of the contemporary way in which it is expressed (Van der Merwe, 2009:251). Convergence liturgy is most

[46] Van der Merwe (2009:166) quotes Noordmans in saying that one should guard against the liturgy becoming a type of mixed salad where liturgists pick and choose elements at random. He feels that convergence liturgy could lead to cultic smuggling over different dogmatic borders and that liturgists would be surprised at what they have smuggled in, while trying to impress or please people.

commonly thought of and used in terms of worship and music.[47] Van der Merwe (2009:252) argues that it is a much broader approach that includes all liturgical elements. Convergence liturgy should be thought of as an *ethos* that is created, rather than a technique that has to be applied. Van der Merwe (2009:168) is of the opinion that convergence liturgy works well when all congregants take part in the liturgy and grant one another the space to enjoy the elements that speak to them personally. Van der Merwe (2009:169) emphasizes that convergence liturgy is not a mixed liturgy at random, but rather a holy conviction that we need both the old and the new to be able to practise community with believers across time and place.

According to Constance Cherry, as quoted by Van der Merwe (2009:166), convergence liturgy stands on four pillars. The first pillar is a commitment to the ecumenical consensus that liturgy consists of four movements, namely entry, the ministry of the Word, the service of the table and the sending away. This is already the basic structure of the Dutch Reformed Church's *Handleiding vir die erediens* (2010). Secondly there is a commitment to liturgy as the celebration of God's salvation and the prayerful experience of who God is. The third pillar of convergence liturgy is the commitment to a wide spectrum of musical content and styles which accommodates both traditional and contemporary expression. Lastly there is the commitment to rediscover the role of art in the liturgy, as well as how all of a person's senses can be involved in the liturgy.

Because, as mentioned above, the structure of most Christian liturgies consists of the same four movements and the content revolves around the Trinitarian worship, it should not be too difficult to let the liturgies of different traditions converge. An aspect one should take into account is the different styles of services that are determined by culture as well as convention (Van der Merwe, 2009:170). As mentioned above one must guard against making liturgical changes without good theological reflection.

6.4 Conclusion

Wepener (2006:4) is of the opinion that the Reformatory motto *Praedicatio verbi Dei est verbum Dei* is still exclusively understood as preaching being an auditory medium, which in most instances downplays something like *See / Smell / Feel / Taste verbi Dei est* and

[47] When understood in terms of the convergence of two styles of music (traditional and contemporary) it is known by the term "blended worship" (Thielen, 2000:15).

also *verbum Dei.* For most Reformed congregants there is no doubt that preaching plays the central role in the liturgy of the Reformed tradition (Wepener & Klomp, 2015:1). In his article, *A homiletic credo – a firm belief in the preaching event,* Müller argues that preaching is the most important revelation of the *praesentia Dei realis*. Müller (2013:3) regards preaching in the Reformed tradition as

> the womb and incubation chamber of Christian faith, nourishing the "optics of faith", defining the identity of the church as living, faithful and obedient body of Christ. Living faith is a question of seeing the face of God, thereby to live *coram Deo*.

Although the researcher agrees with Müller in regard to the importance and value of good and responsible preaching, it remains important to think critically with regard to the over-emphasis on preaching in the Reformed tradition. Wepener and Klomp (2015:1) suggest that serious thought should be given to the relationship between the two and especially the amount of consideration each should receive. By no means does this critical evaluation want to deny the importance of preaching, but rather it seeks to give the same amount of attention to other liturgical elements (Wepener & Klomp, 2015:2).

By taking the above-mentioned as well as the knowledge gained in this study into account, one could argue that the face of God is not only seen in the Word and the preaching from the Word, but through many other means of which icons are one. In this regard the researcher agrees with Tregubov (1990:4) that we need to rediscover icons, as they are buried

> under a heap of misconceptions which attempt to "explain" them away; we must learn their language, learn to see the true reality which they reveal. This reality is not an exotic embellishment added to the teaching of Christ; rather, it is the sacrament inseparable from the fullness of the life of the Church.

According to Engelbrecht (1961:279) the controversy surrounding *praesentia realis Dei*[48] revolved around the question, "How do contemporary believers experience Jesus Christ and all His means of grace in their present context?" If both Müller and Tregubov are to be taken seriously a liturgy containing both preaching and icons can serve to bring about the experience of Jesus Christ and *praesentia realis Dei*.

[48] Meaning "The real presence of God".

Smit (2009:90) warns that the Reformed tradition and liturgy is more complex than we often suspect and should not be understood as something that is untouchable or unchangeable. Smit (2009:94) reminds the reader of the Latin phrase *ecclesia reformata semper reformanda*. This phrase meaning "the church must always be reformed" has been originally ascribed to St. Augustine, but was greatly popularized by Karl Barth in 1947. This became the phrase by which the Reformed tradition understood herself. The Reformed tradition, which includes the liturgy, has always been determined by history and context. According to Smit (2009:95) *ecclesia reformata sempter reformanda secundum verbum Dei* calls the Reformed tradition to reconsider aspects that have always been understood as non-negotiable in the light of a specific context and the interpreted Word. This reconsideration, that is almost prophetic, should be performed by believers through reading the signs of the times within their own time, conditions and situation. Smit (2009:106) concurs that the church service is at the heart of the Reformed tradition. Without the service, the Reformed tradition, faith and life is empty. Smit (2009:107) describes the essence of the Reformed service/liturgy as the awareness of God's presence through his Word and Spirit and the surprising blessings hidden in the sermon, community, sacraments and prayer. Should one accept the awareness of God's presence as the essence of a Reformed liturgy then icons can definitely enrich a Reformed liturgy.

Taking Smit's understanding of a Reformed liturgy as continuously reforming into account, together with the insights of the bricolage and convergence liturgies, the researcher believes that it is possible to enrich the Reformed liturgy with icons without compromising the tradition. Bricolage liturgy already plays an integral part in many Reformed churches' liturgies in South Africa. This is especially true of the music and worship in many evening/youth services in the Dutch Reformed Church. These services are characterized by music from the charismatic or Pentecostal tradition. The researcher is of the opinion that if bricolage liturgy can be used in regard to the music within the Reformed tradition in South Africa, then it could also be useful in regard to the incorporation of icons as liturgical element in the Reformed liturgy. Should the bricolage liturgy be used care must be taken not to elevate one tradition above another. Convergence liturgy will make it possible to include an icon in a Reformed liturgy without losing the identity of either, but rather creating a new form of liturgy for the Reformed tradition in the South African context. When using convergence liturgy in merging

elements of the Reformed and Orthodox traditions the researcher will follow Calitz's (2011:21) suggestion regarding merging instead of pasting elements into a liturgy.

Not only are there vast differences between the liturgy and worship styles of the Reformed and Orthodox churches; the traditions also differ significantly concerning theological and dogmatic issues such as the clergy, the saints, the sacraments and the position of Mary, to name but a few. Some would argue that these differences prevent any compatibility between the two traditions' liturgies. Taking the bricolage and convergence theories into account it would seem possible for the Reformed tradition to incorporate certain liturgical elements, such as icons, without having to accept or agree with all that the Orthodox tradition believes and stands for. In saying this the researcher is not suggesting that Reformed churches start building icon screens or fill their liturgical space with many icons, but rather that icons make up a small part of the Reformed liturgy. The researcher would encourage congregants, as Luther said, to put their eyes in their ears (Cilliers & Wepener, 2004:336). The researcher suggests that more liturgical participation be encouraged and she believes that icons can play an integral part in this. If the Reformed tradition still attaches value to the slogan *Ecclesia semper reformanda* and sees herself as a church that chooses to keep reforming, then the use of icons in a Reformed liturgy should be understood as a gift that enables the Reformed Church to do exactly that. Chapter 7 proposes an icon and accompanying liturgical element for the Reformed liturgy.

CHAPTER 7
AN ICON FOR THE REFORMED LITURGY

7.1 Introduction

In the first chapter of this study the growing global interested in Orthodox icons was discussed. The next few chapters answered the question “Why is this happening?” by taking changes in the fields of practical theology and aesthetics into account. The researcher also made use of Osmer’s second task to explore the history of Orthodox icons as well as the place they have in Orthodox spirituality and liturgy. Chapters five and six focused on what Osmer (2008:136) calls prophetic discernment. With the South African context in mind the researcher searched for a new understanding of liturgy where different liturgical elements can be merged to create a new liturgy that speaks to its context. This leads to the final task which is the pragmatic task. This chapter will focus on the development of a reaction strategy by which the question “How might we respond?” can be answered. The question posed by Osmer’s last task will be answered with the development of an icon that the researcher believes can be used in the liturgy within the Reformed tradition in South Africa. An optional liturgical element to the icon, in the form of a creed, will also be provided. But before the icon and creed are presented a few explanatory remarks with regard to the development of the icon and creed must be made.

7.2 Important principles and concepts in the design of the icon

The following principles and concepts, which were gathered through the course of the study, directed the development and design of this icon.

7.2.1 Contemporary yet traditional

According to Smit (2009:94) the Reformed tradition was never meant to be and never should become essentialistic. The Reformed tradition should never think of their liturgy as something that is unchangeable. Smit (2009:94) warns that, should the Reformed tradition ever understand their liturgical elements as something that should be kept and protected at all costs, they no longer understand what it means to be Reformed. The Reformed tradition has always been and should always be determined by its context. In keeping with her Reformed roots the researcher opted to design a more contemporary icon that speaks to the current contemporary context in South Africa. The contemporary

icon, *Jesus accepts the cross*, by the South African iconographer Anna-Marie Bands was chosen as basis for the icon developed in this study. This icon was not only chosen because of its contemporary feel, but also because of its subject matter. In following Bands the developed icon will be named *Jesus Christ accepts the cross*. The subject matter is appropriate, as the researcher would like to incorporate the developed icon and accompanying creed into a liturgy for a Good Friday service.

Figure 7: Jesus accepts the Cross
Contemporary icon by Anna-Marie Bands (2013)

Although a choice for a more contemporary icon was made the researcher still wanted to keep, even if only in a limited manner, to the Orthodox iconographic tradition. This choice was a choice for liturgical inculturation where there is an interaction between the local culture/s and the liturgy. According to Vos and Wepener (2014:62) this new entity

can be called inculturated liturgy. The researcher's aim was to create a contemporary icon that speaks to a diverse context while remaining true to the tradition to which icons belong. The Orthodox iconographic tradition was honoured by using one element and two colours that are characteristic of traditional Byzantine icons. The element that was chosen was the golden halo with the Byzantine inscription *The Being*. According to Harakas (1987:159) halos have a specific meaning in the Orthodox tradition. They designate the presence of the Holy Spirit in the heart, mind and soul of a person. Halos indicate that the person in the icon is a holy and devoted person. This element was chosen, because it is unmistakably part of icons from the Orthodox tradition. The colours of blue and red that point to Jesus Christ's divinity and humanity were used, but in a different fashion. The use of these colours will be discussed with regard to the South African context. The background of the icon is deliberately painted a dark colour[49] in accordance with the demarcated colours[50] of the Reformed tradition's liturgical year (*Handleiding vir die erediens*, 2010:195).

7.2.2 African icons

In the development of the icon it was important to bring the Reformed tradition, the Orthodox tradition and the larger African context into conversation with one another. Liturgical inculturation teaches that in the above mentioned conversation something grounded and new comes into being. It was especailly important for the researcher to take African Orthodox icons into account when developing an icon for the South African context. The researcher attempted to portray Jesus Christ in a less Western manner by replacing the long flowing curls with shorter hair more characteristic of Ethiopian icons. As already mentioned in chapter four the faces of Ethiopian icons consist of two unique styles – the one Italianate and the other Coptic in style (De Gruchy, 2008:82). The researcher's choice against the moon-shaped heads of the Coptic-styled Ethiopian icons was solely based on person preference[51]. The hands have also been depicted as stronger − gripping the cross. In keeping with the above-mentioned the developed icon's face is based on an Ethiopian icon titled *Crucifixion* as seen in chapter 4.

[49] Some critics may comment that the icon is dark in colour. The researcher deliberately chose darker colours, as it is her understanding that Good Friday is a 'dark' day for believers.

[50] According to the Handleiding vir die Erediens (2010:195) the liturgical colour for Good Friday is black.

[51] In saying this the researcher realizes that 'personal preference' does not exist in a vacuum. Our personal preferences are influenced and shaped by our context. As the researcher is trained in the Byzantine tradition she naturally leans more to the longer, thinner faces that are characteristic of Byzantine icons.

7.2.3 Taking our South African context into account

South Africa is a diverse country with many cultures, eleven languages and a sad history of exclusion and discrimination. It is the researcher's perception that the wounds of apartheid still cause pain and ask for a great deal of sensitivity regarding race, language and culture. The Reformed tradition in South Africa played diverse roles in the apartheid regime as well as the fight against apartheid. The greater Reformed tradition in South Africa is a very diverse tradition that encapsulates many races, cultures and languages. It is not only important to keep the diversity of your context in mind, but according to Cilliers and Wepener (2004:336) the liturgy must be celebrated in a way that is true to a specific community's traditions and context respecting each distinct culture.

Developing an icon for the liturgy of such a diverse tradition proved challenging. The researcher has taken the concept of inculturation as well as the methods of dynamic equivalence and creative assimilation seriously in the development of the icon, but realizes that her identity as a white, Afrikaans woman serving in a predominantly white, Afrikaans, higher-class Dutch Reformed Church not only shapes her way of practising practical theology, but also her perceptions of life and Church (Miller-McLemore, 2012:1). The researcher realizes that as a white Practical Theologian she needs to be sensitive to the white racial bias in her theology (Beaudoin & Turpin, 2014:251) and the influence it has on the developed icon.

Taking dynamic equivalence, as discussed in chapter two, into account the researcher decided on two ways in which the icon could be re-expressed in terms of our South African context. Firstly, the Byzantine wording for *Jesus Christ* in the left-hand corner of the icon has been removed. In the first design of the icon the Byzantine wording was moved to the centre of the icon and replaced with English wording. With the writing of the icon the researcher decided against using the English wording for aesthetics reasons. The researcher is of opinion that that should this icon be copied, to be used in other contexts, the wording can easily be written into the icon. Should this done the language that is in use in that particular community and congregation should be used. The researcher also chose to paint the subject matter, which in this case is Jesus Christ, in a blue tone. By portraying the subject matter in this way the researcher hopes the icon will be accessible to believers from different races and cultures. The colour blue was

specifically chosen because of its meaning within the Orthodox iconographic tradition. As already mentioned in chapter four Christ is always represented wearing a red tunic which indicates His humanity. His red tunic is covered by a blue outer garment pointing to His divinity (De Gruchy, 2008:49). By painting Christ blue His divinity is emphasized. In keeping with the tradition regarding the colour red, Christ is portrayed with a gaping red wound[52] indicating His humanity.

In terms of the use of creative assimilation the researcher chose to incorporate one element. The icon's border[53] is covered with shweshwe[54] fabric. Shweshwe fabric, also known as seshoeshoe or isihweshwe, is a printed cotton fabric that is popular in South Africa (Pheto-Moeti, Riekert & Pelser, 2017:25). This fabric is manufactured in a variety of colours and printing designs, all characterized by intricate geometric patterns. This fabric has been described as the denim or tartan of South Africa. One finds many different motifs on shweshwe fabric. According to a study done amongst Basotho dressmakers that know the fabric well, very few Basothos attach a symbolic meaning to the motifs found on shweshwe fabric. Only three motifs were identified as having some sort of meaning to the Basotho people (Pheto-Moeti, Riekert & Pelser, 2017:32). These motifs are

> Hitler (because of the swastika symbol on the fabric), Basotho Hat and Horseman. Hitler is the memory of the participation of Basotho in World War II; Basotho Hat is the national identity and the Horseman symbolises trustworthiness of a horse as the most important form of transport for many rural Basotho.

The fabric for the developed icon's border was chosen for its simplicity and its red colour[55]. The above-mentioned article was only read after the shweshwe pattern had been chosen. The chosen pattern is similar to the background of the above-mentioned

[52] Not only the colour red, but also the wound points to Jesus Christ's humanity.
[53] According to Bands (2016:19) icons are never to be framed and placed behind glass. The border around the developed icon should not be confused with a frame. Many Orthodox icons have borders which separate the holy image from the outside world. The developed icon's border should be understood as such. Thus the shweshwe fabric border should be understood as a type of contextualization of the icon.
[54] Shweshwe fabric originated from the blue cloth or calico which was imported to Europe from India. The natural indigo dye was later replaced with synthetic dye that was developed in a German factory in 1890. The blue shweshwe fabric was brought to South Africa by German settlers in 1858/9 and from that time was imported to meet the demand of the German settler women. By the 19th century, the Xhosa women had replaced their traditional dress, which consisted of animal skins, with garments made of shweshwe fabric. Shweshwe fabric was also worn by Christian women in Lesotho during the 19th century. According to legend missionaries presented Moshoeshoe I, the king of the Basotho, with a gift of indigo printed cloth in the early 1840s hence the name given to this fabric (Pheto-Moeti, Riekert & Pelser, 2017:24-26).
[55] The name of the chosen motif, as printed on the back of the fabric, is 'Dolphin Double design No 108.

Basotho Hat motif. The researcher sees this as a happy coincidence. By using the shweshwe fabric the researcher attempted to enrich the icon with an element from local culture. The researcher is hopeful that the familiarity of the shweshwe fabric will bring the icon closer to home.

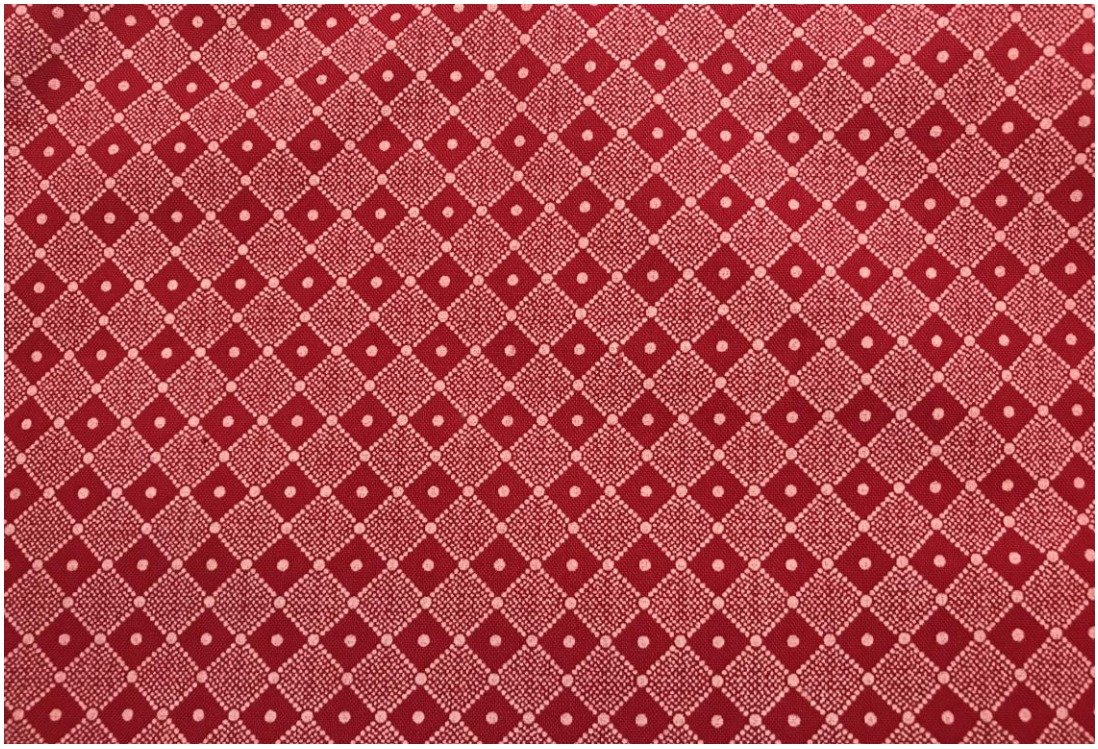

Figure 8: The shweshwe fabric that was used on the icon's frame

7.3 A few remarks regarding the creed

Considering icons are strange, and perhaps even a little frightening, to some Reformed congregants the researcher felt that an accompaniment of a familiar liturgical element might ease some of the uncertainty surrounding the use of icons in a Reformed liturgy. As creeds make out an important part of many Dutch Reformed Church's liturgies the researcher opted to make use of a creed to accompany the developed icon.

The following guidelines regarding creeds, as given in the *Handleiding vir die erediens* (2010:31), were used as markers in the development of the accompanying creed.

- A creed is always confessed before God, together with other believers and towards the world.
- The public nature of a creed is expressed better when being confessed out loud.

- Creeds can be spoken or sung. The Reformed tradition encourages creative forms and ways of confession.

In his discussion concerning convergence liturgy Van der Merwe (2009:170) states that the merging of different liturgies is possible because most Christian liturgies' content revolve around Trinitarian worship. With this in mind the developed creed uses the Trinity as a starting point. The researcher has chosen to lengthen the portion of the creed concerning Jesus Christ, not only because of the subject matter of the icon, but also because of the proposed time of the church year in which this liturgical element will be used – Good Friday. The portion of the creed regarding Jesus Christ deliberately ends with His death. This was done with the theology of Good Friday and Holy Saturday[56] in mind. The researcher would encourage the use of a creed regarding Jesus Christ's resurrection to be confessed during the Easter Sunday liturgy.[57]

The method of creative assimilation was also used in the accompanying creed by including the African concept of *Ubuntu*.[58] The term "*Ubuntu"* is difficult to define in a few sentences. *Ubuntu* is a Nguni term describing a person's connectedness to others (Crafford, 1996:11). The term is commonly understood as meaning "*I am what I am because of who we all are."* According to Louw (2014:41) the term *Ubuntu* and the notion *homo aestheticus* (the human being as the enjoyer of life) is fundamental to an African approach to anthropology. This term was included in the creed because it not only describes an African way of life, but also aptly describes the researcher's understanding of what a community of believers is.[59]

[56] Known as Holy and Great Saturday in the Eastern Orthodox Church. This day commemorates the day Christ "rested" physically in the tomb. The awareness regarding Holy Saturday has grown within the Dutch Reformed Church in last few years.
[57] See *Handleiding tot die Erediens* (2010) for beautiful examples of Good Friday and Easter Sunday liturgies.
[58] According to Crafford (1996:11-12) the anthropology behind *Ubuntu* leaves very little room for individualism. The individual and his/her needs are subservient to the needs of the community. This stands in contrast to the researcher's understanding of *ecclesia* that makes room for individualism. In this study the researcher chooses for a more positive understanding of the term *Ubuntu* as a concept that speaks of belonging and identity within this belonging. The researcher is of opinion that the term *Ubuntu* can be enriched by the Christian understanding of not only *ecclesia*, but also *koinonia*.
[59] Some critics may feel that it is arrogant for a white, female theologian to dare use the term *Ubuntu*. Although there is legitimacy in that opinion, the researcher would answer: "Africa is my home. I know no other home. I am an African and the concept of *'I am what I am because of who we all are'* speaks to my heart."

Wepener (2003:12) warns against the over explanation of symbols and rituals in the liturgy. When a symbol is over explained it is reduced to a sign and a reference to one meaning instead of a cluster of meanings and functions. Wepener further argues that should a symbol be explained it must never be at the cost of wonder. The above mentioned was kept in mind in the development of the accompanying creed. The researcher is of opinion that the creed does not over explain the icon or the symbolism of the icon, but rather contributes to the liturgical inculturation of the icon.

7.4 A possible icon and accompanying creed

With all the information gathered through Osmer's approach to Practical Theology in mind, the researcher proposes an icon and accompanying creed that she believes could enrich a Good Friday service in the Reformed tradition in the South African context.

A Good Friday Creed

LITURGIST: We believe in God almighty
CONGREGATION: The origin of all love and grace.
Creator of the universe.
Creator of all people – from every nation and place.

LITURGIST: We believe in Jesus Christ, the Son, and our Lord
CONGREGATION: God who became human, for all humankind.
Who came at a point in time, for all times.
Who came in one culture, for all cultures.
Who suffered rejection, pain and loneliness.
Who embraced the darkness, to bring us into the light.
The One who accepted the cross
and died...to give us life.

LITURGIST: We believe in the Holy Spirit
CONGREGATION: Who comes to us through the God the Father and the Son, Jesus Christ and through Whom we know them.
The One who comforts and carries us.
The One who gathers all believers into one body –
the body of Christ.

LITURGIST: We believe in the Church
CONGREGATION: That is universal but also local.
A community to belong to.
A place of Ubuntu.

LITURGIST AND CONGREGATION: Amen.

Figure 9: Developed icon: Jesus Christ accepting the cross

7.5 A few remarks regarding the use of the icon and accompanying creed

As already mentioned the researcher suggests using the icon and accompanying creed during a Good Friday service. These liturgical elements can be used during any part of the liturgy. Writing an icon is a costly and time-consuming venture, making it inaccessible to many congregations. A traditional prayer icon panel is 26x32cm making it too small to be used in most church buildings and painting a larger icon is not necessarily practical. For this reason the researcher advises that a photograph of the icon be projected on a screen. Another possibility is to have the icon printed on leaflets that congregants can take home with them.[60] The researcher suggests the liturgist invite the congregation to gaze upon the icon for a few moments. A time of silent reflection can be offered, after which the accompanying creed can be confessed out loud by the liturgist and congregation.

The researcher realizes that for many Reformed congregants the concept of icons is strange. To ensure acceptance by the congregation the liturgist may want to explain certain concepts concerning icons in the whole or the specific symbolism of this particular icon to the congregation. To prepare the congregation for this new liturgical element the researcher would suggest that the subject be raised at the beginning of Lent, perhaps even in the form of a question-and-answer session one evening. The diversity in the Reformed tradition in the South African context does not make it possible for the researcher to attempt to give fixed guidelines regarding the above-mentioned explanation. The context of each liturgist will determine how this explanation is given, but three broad route markers will be suggested.

- In Colossians 1:15 we read that Christ is the visible likeness (*eikoon*) of the invisible God. There is an argument to be made for a liturgical element that reveals this invisible God.
- Wepener and Cilliers (2004:334) emphasize that not only do humans have bodies, but we also are our bodies. Consequently scholars, such as Wepener and Cilliers (2004:334), increasingly emphasize the importance of physicality in the liturgy. The term physicality refers to the use of a person's whole body that includes all five senses. Kloppers (2003:80-88) argues that all senses should receive simultaneous attention in the liturgy. By including an icon into the

[60] Should this option be chosen the leaflet could contain a description concerning the particular symbolism and colours in the icon.

Reformed liturgy congregants are invited to take part in the liturgy and experience God through more than just hearing the Word, but in a sense also seeing it.

- We live in a world where images reign supreme (De Gruchy, 2008:19) and the Church cannot ignore the image-driven context in which it is called to minister and serve. Many times the old saying “a picture paints a thousand words” is true. By incorporating images, such as icons, into our liturgy the Reformed tradition is choosing to be contextual.

7.6 Possible future fields of study

The researcher is of opinion that this field of study presents many possibilities for future research. Firstly, the researcher is of opinion that a thorough study in regard to a meaningful convergence of the Orthodox and Reformed liturgies could be very fruitful. Secondly, the researcher realizes that this study is only a preliminary praxis theory and there is a need for a better developed liturgical praxis theory in regard to the writing of Reformed icons for future use. Further studies could explore and develop such a theory.

7.7 Conclusion

With this study the researcher once again became beware of the rich Reformed tradition to which she belongs, especially in terms of the tradition’s earnestness regarding the Word of God. This being said, one must also concur that the traditional Reformed liturgy is cognitive in character with an emphasis on words and listening, which leaves very little space for other means of experiencing God’s presence. Wolterstorff (1992:298) adds that the emphasis on the Word may be the reason for the artistic impoverishment and aesthetic plainness so characteristic of Reformed liturgy. The researcher is of the opinion that the above-mentioned emphasis does not take the changing ritual landscape and growing need for a broader spirituality into account. The researcher believes that this void could be partially filled by considering the incorporation of other traditions’ liturgical elements into the Reformed liturgy.

The research firstly attempted to get a glimpse of the role icons play in the Orthodox spirituality and liturgy. With this understanding, limited as it may be, the researcher is convinced that icons can enrich a Reformed liturgy. Taking the insights of the *Nairobi Statement on Worship and Culture* with regard to the contextualization of worship

seriously, the researcher realized that Orthodox icons cannot simply be “cut and pasted” into a Reformed liturgy. The statement emphasizes the importance of re-expressing worship in the “language” of local culture. Creating an icon for the “language of the local culture” of the diverse Reformed tradition in South Africa proved challenging. The main challenges were not only taking the different languages and cultures within the broader Reformed tradition into account, but also the political history of the South African context. With the above-mentioned in mind certain “local” elements such as *shweshwe* were incorporated into the icon. In so doing the researcher hopes that the icon will not only be accessible for the wider Reformed tradition, but will enrich Reformed liturgies in South Africa.

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