

Chapter 7

“Perhaps it is the case that in our context imagining a different political future is well inspired by seeking first the kingdom of God”⁷

Conclusion

Faith-based organizations in Bishop Lavis are unable to fulfil a particular part of their role and in effect are unable to influence the reduction of crime and violence. While they have significant power and yield the potential to act as democratic advocates within a crime-ridden community, they, instead, face risks and barriers that render their faith to only operate in the general and most common sense- in acts of charity and in religious broadcasts. When atrocious crimes are committed and communities are bound by fear, residents and faith communities live in stealth-like hiddenness guarding their lives and that of their families against gangsterism. While their faith tenets reveal a call for action, the real-life consequences of doing so could mean dire consequences that are simply not worth the risk.

There has long since been a debate about the separation of state and church, most notably challenged by the Reformation movement (National Geographic, 2017). This debate has continued for centuries and while literature has shown the enormous value that spirituality and religiosity can play within political spaces it remains a contested space. This thesis has highlighted a transdisciplinary attempt at trying to understand the way in which a theological space, with every ability to, flounders within the political. The merging and blending of these two, the researcher argues, should become inseparable. The theological space cannot advocate for justice and then not be willing to enact it leaving only for words and solemn sermons on the sufferings of those that bear pain brought about by crime and violence. Instead, their role, when viewed through the lens of Piper (2009) compels them to act, occupy spaces and influence people by their faith to bring about an alternative end to the ever-increasing rates of crime.

Dr Allan Boesak, a Dutch Reformed Church Cleric, politician and anti-apartheid activist in a recent talk at the Cornerstone Institute in Cape Town asks key questions regarding the role of faith in reconciliation. One of them asks “Have we been able to honestly deal with the truth that for Christians, reconciliation is not an option among other options, where we weigh the risks, consider the probabilities for success or failure, and then, with cautious optimism feel

⁷ Piper, L. (2010). From Religious Transcendence to Political Utopia: The Legacy of Richard Turner for Post-Apartheid Political Thought. *Theoria: A Journal of Social and Political Theory*, Berghahn Books in association with the Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Vol. 57, No. 123, pp.77-98.

