UNIVERSITY *of the* WESTERN CAPE

BLACK THEOLOGY AND UBUNTU THEOLOGY: ANTAGONISTS OR SOULMATES? A BLACK THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis delves into the well-documented link between Black Theology and liberation, particularly in the context of liberation theology in South Africa. Black Theology emerged as a direct response to the inadequacy of traditional Western theology in addressing the plight of Black oppressed communities living in racially stratified societies. As a root metaphor for Black theological reflection, liberation serves as a normative association, historically intertwined with emotions of anger and discontent.

Moreover, this investigation emphasises the importance of Allan Boesak's vision for authentic liberation and its resonance with the broader Black theological tradition. The study further elucidates how Boesak's theological framework has engendered meaningful discussions and critical reflections among theologians, scholars, and activists, as they endeavour to navigate the complexities of post-apartheid society.

Focusing on literature that assumes liberation as the basis for Black theological discourse, this study examines the relevance of Black Theology in the post-apartheid era, where some voices advocate for its abandonment in favour of theological approaches considered more suitable for the democratic context. However, this thesis argues for a comprehensive exploration of Ubuntu Theology as an emerging paradigm, drawing from African philosophical notions emphasising interconnectedness among human beings, irrespective of social markers that may separate them. Ubuntu Theology embodies the profound concept of 'I am because we are' and 'I am because you are.'

The work of Desmond Tutu, a prominent proponent of Ubuntu Theology, serves as a cornerstone for this research. Tutu's oeuvre offers invaluable insights into the understanding and concretisation of Ubuntu Theology's significance. By integrating Tutu's perspectives, this study seeks to illuminate the intricate relationship between Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology, offering a contextualised examination of liberation and connectedness within theological discourse.

DECLARATION

I, Chesnay Frantz, declare that this study, *Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology: Antagonists or Soulmates? A Black Theological Perspective* is my original work and has not been submitted to any other institution. I further declare that all sources cited and quoted are indicated and acknowledged by means of a comprehensive list of references.

Signed:

Date: 4 September 2023

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To my wife, Samantha; our children, Sarah Zintle and Noah Buhle; and my parents, Cavin and Mildred.

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As I place this dedication before the pages of my work, I do so with profound appreciation for the role each of you played in shaping this journey.

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KEYWORDS

Apartheid

Black Consciousness

Black Theology

Forgiveness

Imago Dei

Justice

Liberation

Rainbow nation

Reconciliation

Religion

South Africa

Ubuntu

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ANC: African National Congress

BCM: Black Consciousness Movement

DRC: Dutch Reformed Church

DRMC: Dutch Reformed Mission Church

SACC: South African Council of Churches

SASO: South African Students' Organisation

TRC: Truth and Reconciliation Commission

UCM: University Christian Movement

UWC: University of the Western Cape

WCC: World Council of Churches

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

The intersection between Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology presents a unique opportunity to explore the relationship between two theological traditions that have emerged within the African continent. While Black Theology has been shaped by the experiences of Black people and their struggle for liberation from racism and oppression, Ubuntu Theology has been shaped by the experiences of Africans and their quest for reconciliation and harmony. Despite their different historical contexts, appropriation, and theological emphases, both traditions share a commitment to the empowerment of marginalised communities and the promotion of social justice.

In 1975, Desmond Tutu delivered a paper, titled; Black Theology/African Theology-Soul Mates or Antagonist? (Tutu D. , 1975) in this paper, Tutu advocated for the convergence of these two distinct theological paradigms, emphasising a symbiotic and advantageous union. Reflecting upon the foundational premise expounded within that discourse, a comparable inquiry emerges concerning Black Theology's interconnection with Ubuntu Theology. This thesis seeks to explore the relationship between Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology and to consider the extent to which these two theological traditions are antagonists or soulmates. From a Black theological perspective, this study analyses the potential points of convergence and divergence between these two traditions and consider the implications of their relationship for the development of a holistic and transformative theology in the African context.

While both Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology emerged from the experiences of Black people in South Africa, they differ in their approaches and particularly their response to justice, which are interrogated in this thesis. Black Theology grounds itself in the root metaphor of liberation and Ubuntu Theology in the root metaphor of reconciliation, both in pursuit of righting the wrongs of past injustices within the South African context. These two theologies both have a particular response to justice and converge at that point – a quest for justice. The methodology of seeking or attaining justice, seems to be a point of divergence, which is explored further, when Black Theology chooses liberation and Ubuntu Theology, reconciliation. The question arises: are these two theological frameworks antagonistic or soulmates?

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1.2 Context and relevance of study

Theology has always been a critical discipline in analysing and interpreting the world. It provides a framework for understanding the complexities of the human experience and the divine forces that shape it. In the South African post-apartheid context, the need for a deeper appreciation of Black Theology in relation to Ubuntu Theology has become increasingly important. This study aims to explore how a synthesis of these two theological traditions can reconfigure root metaphors such as liberation and reconciliation for contemporary South Africa. The contestation lays in the perpetuation of a narrative that the emergence of democracy has become a crucial factor in contemporary proposals aiming to supplant the concept of 'liberation' with more fitting notions suitable for the democratic milieu. These notions encompass 'development,' 'social transformation,' 'reconciliation,' and 'nation building' (Solomons & Klaasen, 2019, p. 256). Liberation thus tends to go up against reconciliation, whereas one needs to explore whether they can complement one another rather than detract from each other.

Moreover, the debate surrounding the relevance and intellectual value of Black Theology has been ongoing. However, this study seeks to move beyond the mooted-ness of this debate and focus on the practical implications of re-imagining Black Theology. By revisiting key precepts such as liberation and reconciliation, practitioners of Black Theology have the opportunity to innovate and create new frameworks for understanding the world. One of the central arguments of this study is that a legitimate reading and understanding of Black Theology can enrich Ubuntu Theology's discourse on liberation and reconciliation. Ubuntu Theology emphasises the interconnectedness of all beings and the importance of community in shaping our understanding of the world. By reintroducing Ubuntu Theology to its rightful space, as demonstrated in this thesis, Black Theology practitioners can develop a more nuanced understanding of liberation and reconciliation that considers the interconnectedness of all people and the importance of communal action. Overall, this study aims to contribute to the ongoing dialogue about the relevance and intellectual value of Black Theology in the post-apartheid context. By exploring the intersection of Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology, this study hopes to provide new insights and reconfigure root theological metaphors in innovative ways.

The intrinsic link between the Christian church and politics in South Africa is a well-documented phenomenon. The church has played a critical role in shaping the political landscape of the country, particularly during the apartheid era. The church struggle against apartheid, as described by John de Gruchy (2004), highlights the complex relationship between the church and state in South Africa. The state often used the church to legitimise the racism and totalitarianism of the apartheid state (Pillay, 2017, p. 1), resulting in a particular brand of apartheid theology that propagated the fundamental irreconcilability of people based on racial and ethnic differentiation. This apartheid theology was in stark contrast to the emerging Black Liberation Theology, which served as a counterpoint to theologies aimed at justifying racial and ethnic separation (Solomons, 2021, p. 3). Allan Boesak (1977, p. 14) argues that Black Liberation Theology emerged as a response to the dehumanising effects of apartheid and the complicity of the church in perpetuating the system. Black Liberation Theology sought to reframe the Christian message in a way that challenged the prevailing notion of racial superiority and called for the full inclusion of all people in the community of faith.

The emergence of Black Liberation Theology marked a significant turning point in the relationship between the church and politics in South Africa. It challenged the notion that the church should remain neutral in the face of social and political injustices and called for active engagement in the struggle for justice and liberation. Black Liberation Theology also provided a theological basis for the anti-apartheid movement and played a critical role in mobilising communities to resist the oppressive system. However, the legacy of apartheid theology and its complicity in perpetuating racial and ethnic separation continues to shape the political and social landscape of South Africa. The church has a critical role to play in addressing the ongoing injustices and inequalities in the post-apartheid era. This requires a recommitment to the principles of Black Liberation Theology and a recognition of the critical role that the church can play in promoting social and political transformation.

The link between the Christian church and politics in South Africa continues to be a complex and contested one. The legacy of apartheid theology, which was prevalent for many years, continues to shape the discourse on race and identity in the country, but the emergence of Black Liberation Theology provides a counterpoint to these divisive narratives. Due to the church's emersion and exposure to apartheid theology, when offering an alternative, it has to be acknowledged that the church has a critical role to play in promoting justice and reconciliation in the post-apartheid era, as a means of correcting the wrongs of the past and this would require

a renewed commitment to the principles of Black Liberation Theology. The church's meaningful assistance lies in its ability to identify with those who are vulnerable through a prophetic, priestly, and kingly presence and action (Manala, 2010, p. 525).

More than merely focusing on the politics of apartheid, the system itself was theologically premised, moreover mandated by the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC), who, in the report *Ras, volk en nasie en volkeverhoudinge in die lig van die Skrif* in 1974, made its position clear regarding the relationship between the theology and its relationship with the politics of apartheid (Van der Merwe, 2013). The position itself was not new since the origins of apartheid theology were observed as early as 1881. *Ras, volk en nasie en volkeverhoudinge in die lig van die Skrif*, thus, was the culmination of developments over a period close to a century (Pauw, 2007).

In the context of apartheid-era South Africa, the Black population's racial identity was exploited as a means to degrade them to the status of second-class citizens. Their Blackness became the determining factor influencing every aspect of their daily existence, subjecting them to systemic discrimination and oppression (Fortuin, 2018, p. 515). In this context, Black people were coaxed by means of social conditioning enforced through laws and religious instruction to believe that they were not fully human, at least not as far as the relationship with white people is concerned. Fortuin draws attention to this when he relates to Black Theology in the South African context by reminding us that theology fervently engages with the real-life challenges and hardships experienced within a specific context and community. Consequently, concerning the Black community, theology is called upon to actively participate in the Black experience (Fortuin, 2018, p. 509). It is evident that the experience of the community in South Africa is one of poverty and discrimination, in the apartheid context. Again, it the response of Black Theology as articulated by its practitioners that would go on to define the impact of Black Theology in its opposition to the apartheid theologies. Steve Biko and his philosophy of Black Consciousness significantly influenced and confronted Boesak and other Black church leaders, urging them to deliver the gospel in a manner that would encourage Black individuals in South Africa to embrace their Black identity as a divine endowment. Until that juncture, the gospel had been employed to endorse segregation and white supremacy. The question now arises: How can the very same gospel be employed to respond to Biko's challenge? In response, Boesak assumed the responsibility of addressing Biko's appeal (Fortuin, 2018, p. 512).

On the opposite side of the spectrum, Black Liberation Theology emerged as a counterpoint to apartheid logic, both in church and society. In searching for appropriate theological models and root metaphors, Black Theology is often expressed differently. Among other things, it is most commonly reflected in terms of its 'liberatory' potential, hence the term Black Liberation Theology (Motlhabi, 1972, p. 53). However, it is not uncommon for Black Theology to be expressed in terms of its potential for reconciliation and reconstruction (Roberts, 2005, p. 9), as echoed by Demaine Solomons in his Master's thesis (2010). In South Africa, this finds expressions in the various forms of Ubuntu theologies. One may suggest that such theological approaches had to do with the search for appropriate theological models and root metaphors. Liberation offers one such possibility, but 'reconciliation,' 'justice,' 'nation building,' 'human dignity' (Ubuntu), 'reconstruction,' and 'development' offer alternatives. At the very least, the question of how these concepts are related must be addressed. How, for example, is Black Liberation Theology related to Ubuntu Theology theologically and methodologically?

As noted above, Black Theology has emphasised liberation as the root metaphor of its hermeneutical stance. However, after centuries of colonial and apartheid rule, Black liberation and its association with Black Theology need to be examined in the light of the advent of democracy in South Africa. Among other things, it has been implied, and in some quarters asserted, that the abolition of apartheid, together with the democratisation of South Africa, render Black Theology irrelevant (Solomons, 2010, p. 1). Often these views are taken further by suggesting that it is no longer Blacks alone who need liberation. The advent of democracy is, therefore, a significant variable in the work of scholars seeking to replace liberation with notions deemed what they believe is more appropriate for the democratic context. In this sense, some theologians appear to jettison Black Liberation Theology in light of emerging paradigms, such as Ubuntu Theology reflected in notions such as the 'rainbow people of God' (Tutu, 1994). Here root metaphors such as reconciliation and reconstruction have gained much traction, a shift indicative of a theology perceived to be less abrasive and conciliatory. Reconstruction, development, and democracy have assumed a paramount role in the South African political discourse, paralleling the erstwhile prominence of concepts such as struggle, revolution, and liberation (Maluleke, 1994, p. 245). Put simply, theologians seem to have accepted the concepts of reconciliation and reconstruction being closely aligned to Ubuntu Theology and justice to Black Theology (Kobe, 2021, p. 3). This is underpinned by Fortuin (2022, p. 540), when he calls for Black Theology to be recognised as a prophetic theology, which translates to the justice of Black Theology. In turn, this creates a scenario where Ubuntu

Theology is considered more palatable, whereas the confrontational nature of Black Theology is often highlighted. In the post-apartheid context, this has led to an increased division in terms of how Black Theology in relation to other theologies, including Ubuntu Theology, is understood. In turn, this provides the premise to interrogate whether Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology are antagonists or soulmates in light of what some may perceive to be the romantic idea of the so-called 'rainbow nation.'

The contrast in these theological approaches is significant. Black Theology is premised on 'liberation' as the root metaphor of its hermeneutical stance. Metaphorically, this is expressed in Black people likened to the people of Israel on their way from the land of bondage in Egypt (referring to the apartheid regime) to the Promised Land (referring to the day of liberation) highlighted through developments such as South Africa's first democratically elected government in 1994.

On the other hand, Ubuntu Theology appears to be more inclusive, with the main focus on reconciling conflicting identities, which necessarily includes both Black and white South Africans. Nevertheless, although different in terms of process, both theological approaches recognise the struggle for liberation being at the centre of the theological project. However, underlying much of the difference in these positions is the idea that liberation can be brought about instantaneously, provided that conflicting parties have an open attitude or embrace the notion of Ubuntu (Frostin, 1988). By contrast, the proponents of Black Theology argue that liberation and reconciliation of conflicting parties will only be realised if the injustice of the present situation is confronted. Per Frostin (1988), similarly when making an argument for theologies of reconciliation, identifies two distinct approaches – one is 'synchronic' and the other 'diachronic.' The synchronic approach to conflict suggests that mutuality can be achieved immediately by a change in mentality and attitude. In contrast, the diachronic approach suggests that liberation and reconciliation can only be arrived at as a result of the process through which the opposing parties are liberated from their different types of alienation.

1.3 Statement of the research problem

Against this background, the apparent stagnation of the Black Theology movement in post-apartheid South Africa raises serious questions about the lack of a clear theological framework following the dismantling of apartheid (Maluleke, 2010, p. 157). It is abundantly clear from the available literature that liberation and reconciliation, the root metaphors of the Black

theological agenda, are understood in very different ways. This study identifies, describes, and assesses the diverging ways in which this is understood in the literature (ecclesial and academic publications). Moreover, this is done by assessing what appears to be the contrasting theological approaches of Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology. This is done by surveying the work of two key theologians in the South African context namely, Allan Boesak (1977), a proponent of Black Theology and Desmond Tutu (1994), a proponent of Ubuntu Theology. These two theologians have been identified due to their significant roles, both during the struggles of apartheid as well as post-apartheid struggles for justice, with both demonstrating their particular viewpoints within the public square of religion and theology, which is unpacked later in this study.

1.4 Research question

On this basis, the problem investigated in this study is formulated as follows:

In light of the emergence of post-apartheid theological paradigms, including theologies of reconstruction and reconciliation, has the romanticising of Ubuntu Theology led to the diminished prominence of Black Theology in South Africa today?

The formulation of the research problem calls for further clarification on several aspects concerning the contemporary significance of Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology.

The link between Black Theology and liberation is well documented. Generally, in a contextualised form of liberation theology, it was formulated by Black scholars in the United States and in South Africa. It emerged as a direct challenge to traditional Western theology, which was judged incapable of addressing the plight of Black oppressed peoples living in the white racist societies of the United States and South Africa (Motlhabi, 1972, p. 53). This study focuses on literature where the normative associations of liberation as a root metaphor for Black theological reflection is assumed. Historically, Black Theology has been linked to an emotion of anger and discontent (Roberts, 2005, p. 102). In South Africa, we have engaged Black Theology as liberation theology in the fight against apartheid. However, questions concerning the relevance of Black Theology in the post-apartheid context reveal some seeking to jettison this theological form in favour of that deemed more appropriate for the democratic context (Maluleke, 1994, p. 253).

Ubuntu Theology, as an emerging theological paradigm, draws on the African philosophical notion that human beings are connected irrespective of the social markers that separate them. This idea is encapsulated in the statement, 'I am because we are' and 'I am because you are' (Mbiti, 1970). The significance of Ubuntu Theology is concretised in the work of Desmond Tutu, who is widely considered one of the foremost proponents of this theological form. Thus, this study relies heavily on Tutu's oeuvre to explicate the understanding of Ubuntu.

Michael Battle's (1997) seminal contribution to the Ubuntu Theology of Desmond Tutu provides the basis for this theological paradigm and is used as one of the primary texts in this research. Battle argues that the essence of Ubuntu is reconciliation, which is achieved through the creation of a society characterised by justice, compassion, and harmony. In Ubuntu Theology, reconciliation is not merely the resolution of conflict, but rather the restoration of human dignity and relationships, especially between oppressors and the oppressed. Thus, Ubuntu Theology emphasises the importance of restorative justice, which seeks to heal the wounds caused by injustice and restore the dignity of victims. The relevance of Ubuntu Theology in the post-apartheid South African context cannot be overstated. Given the many challenges faced by South Africa, including poverty, inequality, corruption, and racial tensions, Ubuntu Theology has been more palatable and easier to internalise in relation to the veracity and intentional deconstruction of Black Theology. Furthermore, Ubuntu Theology provides a framework for addressing the complex issues of reconciliation and liberation in the post-apartheid context. By emphasising the interconnectedness of human beings, Ubuntu Theology challenges the traditional notions of individualism and self-interest that have contributed to social fragmentation and disunity. However, Ubuntu Theology is not without its criticisms. Some have argued that Ubuntu Theology may perpetuate essentialism and reinforce cultural stereotypes by promoting a static and monolithic understanding of African identity. Others have questioned the extent to which Ubuntu Theology can be applied in pluralistic and multi-cultural societies. Nonetheless, despite these criticisms, Ubuntu Theology remains a compelling and innovative theological paradigm that offers a unique perspective on issues of reconciliation, liberation, and social justice.

This study aims to explore the intrinsic link between Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology in the post-apartheid South African context. By examining the relevant literature, this study seeks to demonstrate that a deeper appreciation of Ubuntu Theology provides a framework from which root theological metaphors such as liberation and reconciliation are reconfigured for the

post-apartheid context. This study also acknowledges its limitations, which include not surveying contributions in African traditional religion or theological reflections in the context of other religious traditions, such as Islam, Judaism, and Hinduism. The notion of reconciliation has been a central theme in the Christian faith and has become increasingly important in the South African context. This study seeks to explore the theological underpinnings of reconciliation in the South African context through a historical survey of relevant literature.

It is important to note that this study focuses solely on publications of an explicitly theological nature in English or Afrikaans. While Christian discourse on reconciliation can be found in popular literature, ecclesial magazines, sermons, speeches, newspaper articles, or letters to the press, these sources are not included in this study. This is because the study aims to provide an in-depth analysis of the theological foundations of reconciliation in South Africa and requires a focus on more rigorous academic literature. Furthermore, this study does not investigate the attitudes towards Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology among ordinary Christians in South Africa. Although such an investigation may be highly fascinating, it would require empirical research beyond the scope of this study. The focus of this study is on the theological literature and the insights offered by the respective theologians and their discourses, rather than the attitudes and beliefs of individual Christians.

Finally, it is important to note that this study does not survey contributions in African traditional religion or theological reflections in the context of other religious traditions, such as Islam, Judaism, and Hinduism. While these religious traditions have undoubtedly contributed to the discourse on reconciliation in South Africa, this study focuses specifically on the Christian theological perspective.

1.5 Methodological clarification

This study seeks to provide a historical survey of the theological underpinnings of reconciliation in the South African context. It focuses exclusively on rigorous academic literature in English or Afrikaans and does not investigate the attitudes of ordinary Christians or contributions from other religious traditions. By analysing the theological literature, this study aims to provide a deeper understanding of the foundations of reconciliation in the South African context and its implications for contemporary Christian theology.

This study entails a historical survey on the basis of the relevant literature. Such literature include publications of an explicitly theological nature in English or Afrikaans. It does not

necessarily include Christian discourse on reconciliation in the form of popular literature, ecclesial magazines, sermons, speeches, newspaper articles, or letters to the press. An investigation of the attitudes towards Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology among ordinary Christians in South Africa may be highly fascinating but will require empirical research beyond this study's scope. It also does not survey contributions in African traditional religion or theological reflections in the context of other religious traditions, such as Islam, Judaism and Hinduism.

In the aftermath of the democratic dispensation, reflection on the relevance of Black Theology has continued unabated. Such theological literature typically seeks to come to terms with the legacy of this theological form now that the apartheid system no longer exists. This study forms part of such theological discourse. Through this study, I seek to identify and describe the relationship between Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology as a means to contribute to an unfolding theological paradigm in the post-apartheid context.

This study must therefore be understood as a form of contemporary history – in this case, the history of the development of Black Theology in the South African context. The study aims to clarify what is at stake when rendering Black Theology irrelevant now that Black people have been liberated (politically). This study would also be of ecumenical significance beyond the South African context. It may also facilitate dialogue with notions of liberation and reconciliation in other religious traditions.

1.6 Procedure

In what appears to be two contrasting theological positions, how do the approaches in Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology contribute to a renewed theological framework in post-apartheid South Africa? The hypothesis investigated in this study is based on comparing and contrasting two popular theological positions: Black Theology with its overarching focus on the liberation of the oppressed, and Ubuntu Theology, which focuses on root metaphors such as reconciliation and reconstruction in affirming people, irrespective of the social markers that separate them. This is done by utilising Per Frostin's (1988) notion of 'synchronic' and 'diachronic' approaches to addressing conflict.

Firstly, Frostin highlights the 'synchronic' approach to reconciliation and, by implication, liberation, suggesting that mutuality can be achieved instantly through a change in mental attitude. The assumption is that if people leave the past behind, the country will be in a much

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better position to address some of its most pressing challenges. Rhetorically, this approach is aimed at those who believe Black Theology, in its focus on past events, can potentially reverse racism in a situation where Black people have been in political power since 1994. In this context, the inclination for Ubuntu Theology may be more prevalent.

Secondly, in contrast, the 'diachronic' approach suggests that liberation and reconciliation can only be arrived at as a result of the process through which the opposing parties are liberated from their different types of alienation. For example, through the diachronic approach, the distinction between 'authentic' and 'cheap' reconciliation will often be made. Here there is a need to problematise the significance of liberation and reconciliation in the South African context. Here the Black theological impulse will be more prevalent.

Thirdly, Frostin's analysis of the 'synchronic' and 'diachronic' approaches leads him to the notion of metanoia. From a Black theological perspective, this requires the repentance of both Blacks and whites, even though it may have different implications for the parties involved since there is a clear distinction between the victims and the perpetrators of apartheid – who, for the most part, were based on racial classification. This leads one to believe that Black people need to be liberated from their sense of inferiority in the same way white people need to be liberated from their sense of superiority. Liberation and reconciliation are inextricably tied. In light of the focus of this research study, this begs the question: Are Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology antagonists or soulmates?

This research hypothesis is tested and developed through a survey and critical analysis of the available literature. It therefore entails a literature-based study.

1.7 Chapter outline

This chapter offered an exposition of the central theme of the thesis, delineating the process of formulating the research inquiry and recognising its connections to queries previously explored by theologians. Additionally, it presents a comprehensive overview of the framework, methodology, and procedural steps to be undertaken in the pursuit of addressing the research question.

Chapter 2, will underscore the significance of interlocutors, particularly within the realm of theological studies. Furthermore, it will introduce the two favoured interlocutors identified for the specific focus of this study.

Chapter 3 serves to introduce and engage in discourse concerning Black theology within the context of South Africa. This chapter provides a contextual backdrop to Black Theology in the South African context, as well as its appropriation, delving into the distinctive phases of Black Theology and conducting an inquiry into its historical origins.

Chapter 4,is an exploration into Ubuntu theology, encompassing its historical and philosophical foundations, while also conducting an analysis of its successive phases and stages as adapted and applied in the South African context.

In Chapter 5, emphasis is directed towards elucidating the fundamental metaphors underpinning Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology, engaging in a discourse concerning liberation and reconciliation, accompanied by an appreciative assessment of the theological frameworks they underlie.

Chapter 6 takes on the task of responding to the research question, accentuating how the two distinct theological paradigms address the concepts of human dignity and reconciliation.

Chapter 7 delineates a proposed trajectory for practitioners of both Black theology and Ubuntu Theology, suggesting a way forward that is informed by the culmination of the preceding chapters' investigations.

CHAPTER 2: INTERLOCUTORS

2.1 Introduction

Defining an interlocutor within the field of theology is essential for fostering meaningful dialogue and advancing scholarly understanding. An interlocutor in this field can be conceptualised as a critical conversational partner who engages in an intellectual exchange, facilitating a deep exploration of theological concepts and ideas. A theological interlocutor not only acts as a mediator between different perspectives but also contributes to the development and refinement of theological discourse. Furthermore, the choice of an appropriate interlocutor for a specific theological subject is crucial, as it ensures compatibility and expertise in the relevant area of study. The definition and identification of an interlocutor within the realm of theology is instrumental in nurturing a vibrant intellectual community committed to rigorous scholarship and enriching theological understanding.

The examination of the significance of Black Theology in the post-1994 democratic era in South Africa is crucial as it pertains to the lived experiences of a substantial number of Black individuals – the majority of South African people – and therefore it requires the most appropriate interlocutor. In the context of South Africa, Black Theology is observed through the restructuring of contemporary theological frameworks, with the objective of challenging the dominant economic and political system across both public and private domains. Consequently, the role of interlocutors gains significance when examining theological matters through the lens of Black Theology.

Within the academic discourse surrounding the subjects of Black Theology, justice, and reconciliation, it is important to acknowledge the diverse range of voices and perspectives. Instead of venturing into this contested realm without a clear methodological approach, I designated Allan Boesak as an interlocutor for Black Theology due to his sincere commitment to justice within the South African context. Similarly, Desmond Tutu is widely regarded for his significant contributions to matters pertaining to reconciliation within the South African context. Consequently, when examining the two theologies in tandem, these two interlocutors emerge as experts in this field, particularly within the specific context of South Africa and its theological frameworks. The forthcoming chapters delve into the exploration of South African theologies to shed further light on these matters. Furthermore, in considering Allan Boesak and

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Desmond Tutu as interlocutors within the academic discourse, it is important to recognise that both individuals do not lay claim to expertise on an exclusive basis. For instance, Boesak does not present an approach to liberation that overlooks the importance of reconciliation, nor does Tutu advocate for a reconciliation that disregards the significance of justice. Rather, these selected interlocutors argue that they are advocates of justice and reconciliation in accordance with their theological orientations. Thus, their perspectives maintain a simultaneous commitment to both justice and reconciliation, acknowledging the inherent interconnectedness of these principles within their theological frameworks.

This chapter explores the significance of interlocutors and determines appropriate interlocutors for the subjects being examined, namely Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology. The exploration focuses on the role played by interlocutors in facilitating meaningful dialogue and fostering an enhanced understanding of these theological frameworks. Through identifying suitable interlocutors for each subject, this chapter seeks to contribute to the existing scholarly discourse surrounding Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology.

2.2 Role of interlocutors in Black Theology

In the pre-democratic era of South Africa, a significant focus of methodological discussions within the realm of Black Theology revolved around determining the appropriate interlocutors for this particular theological framework. It was widely acknowledged that being Black did not automatically qualify an individual as an interlocutor of Black Theology (Vellem, 2012, p. 1). This recognition highlights the nuanced understanding that not all members of the Black community possess the necessary perspectives and experiences to actively engage with and contribute meaningfully to the discourse surrounding Black Theology.

Vuyani Vellem (2012) aligns his perspective on 'interlocution' with the affirmations put forth by Per Frostin (1988). In particular, Vellem (2012, p. 2) acknowledges that the selection of an interlocutor plays a crucial role in differentiating various forms of theology, echoing Frostin's position and argument that Black Theology stands apart from Western orthodox theology by opting for the 'non-person' as its interlocutor. Both Frostin and Vellem view theology as a contested arena, underscoring the significance of distinguishing one theology from another, wherein the choice of interlocutor emerges as the defining factor in discerning a particular theological framework.

Gerald West (2020, p. 2), who also has significant theological engagement, acknowledges that the identification of interlocutors for Black Theology is closely tied to the recognition of class as a significant determinant. This is underscored by Itumeleng Mosala's (1989) seminal work on Black Theology and the issue of classism. Vellem addresses the question of where the interlocution for urban Black public theology should be situated. He not only points to the Black, apartheid-built locations and townships as the race- and class-based context with which Black Theology must engage, but also contends that it is within these spaces that Black Theology must persistently seek out transformed, locally generated linguistic resources and symbols employed by the impoverished population to counteract the dehumanising impact of urbanisation and the erosion of life-nurturing sources (Vellem, 2014, pp. 4–6).

Tinyiko Maluleke, also a South African Black theologian, asserts that the classification of 'Black people' proves to be an inadequate analytical construct, lacking precision and coherence. This revelation emerged over fifteen years ago within the context of South African Black Theology's inception (1996, p. 313). Initially, South African Black Theology harboured an idealistic ambition to address and represent the entirety of Black individuals, or at the very least, Black Christians. However, the shortcomings of such a broad categorisation were soon realised, prompting a reassessment of its efficacy.

One soon discovers through engagement with the scholarly work of Black Theology that it is crucial to maintain an awareness of the concept of 'Objective Blackness' without assuming that every Black individual automatically qualifies as an interlocutor of Black Liberation Theology. As Vellem reminds us, the designation of an interlocutor within this theological framework necessitates the fulfilment of various additional criteria beyond racial identity alone (2012, p. 3).

In this study, the research question is examined through the use of two interlocutors for the purpose of interrogation: Allan Boesak as an interlocutor for Black Theology and Desmond Tutu as an interlocutor for Ubuntu Theology. By selecting these individuals, who have made significant contributions in their respective fields, this study engages with the distinct theological frameworks they represent and explores their implications within the broader discourse.

Boesak's role as an interlocutor for Black Theology allows us to examine the liberationist perspectives and the transformative potential within the context of racial justice and liberation.

Similarly, Tutu's position as an interlocutor for Ubuntu Theology enables us to explore the communal, humanistic ethos that underpins this African philosophy and its implications for social cohesion and ethical living.

Boesak, a prominent South African theologian, played a crucial role in shaping the theological landscape of Black Theology. As a scholar and activist, Boesak emphasised the inseparable connection between theology and the lived experiences of marginalised and oppressed communities. He advocated for a theology that confronted the realities of racism, discrimination, and economic injustice, seeking to dismantle oppressive structures and promote social transformation. Boesak's theological framework draws heavily on the concept of liberation, rooted in the experiences of Black individuals who have historically endured systemic forms of oppression. This perspective aligns with the broader context of Black Theology, which views liberation as a central theme and a transformative force that embodies the love and justice of God in the world.

Tutu, on the other hand, is renowned for his advocacy of Ubuntu Theology, which originates from the African philosophy of Ubuntu. Ubuntu, often translated as 'humanity towards others,' emphasises the interconnectedness of individuals and the importance of communal harmony. Tutu's theological framework embraces the principles of Ubuntu, emphasising the fundamental dignity and worth of every human being and the necessity of solidarity and compassion in fostering a just and equitable society. Ubuntu Theology recognises the ethical imperative to prioritise the well-being of others, cultivate reconciliation, and promote social cohesion.

Through examining these two theological frameworks, we can discern significant implications for understanding God, the Bible, and the Christian faith. Black Theology highlights the urgent need for Christians to actively engage in social transformation, advocate for justice, and address the structural barriers that perpetuate oppression. It calls for a theology that challenges systems of power and privilege, while centring the experiences and voices of marginalised communities. By emphasising the notion of liberation, Black Theology invites believers to embrace their role as agents of change and work towards the realisation of a more just and equitable society. Conversely, Ubuntu Theology offers a distinct perspective on the Christian faith, focusing on the interconnectedness and interdependence of individuals. It invites Christians to embody the principles of Ubuntu, fostering communal relationships, and promoting reconciliation and social cohesion. Ubuntu Theology emphasises the significance of human dignity, compassion, and respect, encouraging believers to live in harmony with

others and cultivate a sense of shared humanity. By embracing the Ubuntu ethic, Christians can actively contribute to the creation of a more inclusive and compassionate society.

Theologically, in the South African context and its journey towards democracy, the theological perspectives of Boesak and Tutu, as interlocutors for Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology, respectively, can offer valuable insights into the understanding of God, the Bible, and the Christian faith. Their frameworks have the potential to emphasise the transformative potential of liberation and communal harmony, while providing powerful tools for addressing the challenges of social injustice and inequality.

2.3 Allan Boesak

Allan Boesak,[1] born on 23 February 1946 in Kakamas, Northern Cape, has been recognised as a prominent figure in various roles, including as a minister of the Word within the Dutch Reformed Mission Church (DRMC), a politician, and an anti-apartheid activist. Boesak's reputation has been subject to controversy, with differing perceptions of his actions and beliefs. Boesak completed his secondary education in 1962 at Gordon High School, Somerset West, which was a segregated institution catering specifically to 'coloured' students. In the era of apartheid in South Africa, higher education was racially segregated, resulting in separate universities for different racial and ethnic groups. One such institution, the University of the Western Cape (UWC) in Bellville South, emerged in the early 1960s. Boesak pursued his studies at UWC and the Theological Seminary of the DRMC from 1963 to 1967. Both institutions were specifically established for the training of individuals of mixed descent. Boesak's ordination as a minister of the Word and sacraments of the DRMC took place in 1967, at the age of 22, at the DRMC Immanuel in Paarl.

In 1976, Boesak successfully completed his doctoral studies focusing on ethics. His understanding of political theology and theological anthropology was significantly shaped during his time in the Netherlands. Boesak's numerous publications, comprising articles on theology and politics, as well as his authorship of 17 books, editorship of one, and co-editorship of three, reveal the discernible political and cultural exchange between the Netherlands and

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[1] Despite the absence of an authoritative biography documenting the life of Allan Boesak, a significant source of valuable insights can be found in a festschrift published in 2016 to commemorate his achievements. For the purpose of constructing a comprehensive biography of Boesak, I draw upon the information presented by Mary-Anne Plaatjies van Huffel, co-editor of the aforementioned festschrift. This endeavour presents an illuminating portrayal of Boesak's life, work, and impactful contributions within the domains of theology and social activism, offering a contextual understanding of his endeavours.

South Africa. Particularly noteworthy is the significant influence of Dutch theologian, Gerard Rothuizen on Boesak's theology, underscoring the enduring impact of their intellectual engagement.

Maluluke tries to capture a biography of Boesak and notes that Boesak's theological education had a profound impact on him, shaped both through intentional instruction and unintentional exclusion. Although his undergraduate studies at UWC left him feeling considerably unprepared and impractical, they nonetheless furnished him with the primary and essential underpinnings of reformed theology. It is evident that Boesak held education, particularly higher education, in high regard. During his tenure as a student chaplain at UWC, he delivered passionate sermons, with the young Boesak finding his initial audience among the students at UWC (Maluleke, 2017, p. 64).

Following the publication of his doctoral work, 'Farewell to Innocence: A Socio-Ethical Study of Black Theology and Black Power' in 1976 (Boesak, 1977), Boesak gained recognition as a liberation theologian. He returned to South Africa shortly after the Soweto uprisings in 1976, and quickly emerged as one of the prominent figures in the global fight against white minority rule. By bringing attention to the issue of structural racism and the theological justifications used to support apartheid, Boesak played a central role in placing these critical concerns at the forefront of the discourse. Boesak's prominence grew throughout the 1980s as he fearlessly voiced his opposition to the policies of the National Party and actively engaged in the struggle against apartheid (Plaatjies van Huffel, 2016).

2.4 Desmond Tutu

Desmond Tutu,[2] a towering figure in twentieth-century history, played a central role in the overthrow of apartheid and the subsequent reconciliation process in South Africa. Born in Klerksdorp, Transvaal in 1931, Tutu attended Johannesburg Bantu High School before pursuing a career in teaching, following in his father's footsteps. However, he became disillusioned with the government's discriminatory education policies, which marginalised non-white students, and decided to pursue theological studies to become an Anglican priest.

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[2] To achieve a thorough and comprehensive portrayal of Desmond Tutu, this analysis relies on the authorised biography by John Allen, titled 'Tutu: The Rabble-Rouser for Peace' (2006). Recognizing the prominence of Tutu's stature and the diverse narratives that exist regarding his life, it is imperative to delve deeply into this authorised account to construct a coherent and all-encompassing biography of the subject. By drawing upon the insights presented in Allen's authorised work, one can attain a comprehensive understanding of Tutu's life, achievements, and influence.

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Ordained in 1960, Tutu's calling coincided with the forced resettlement of Black Africans and Asians from areas designated for white residents by the government. He studied theology in England from 1962 to 1966 before returning to South Africa to teach the subject. In the early 1970s, he served as an assistant director of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in the United Kingdom (UK).

In 1975, Tutu made history as the first Black African to be appointed as the Dean of St Mary's Cathedral in Johannesburg, and the following year, he became the Bishop of Lesotho. In 1978, Tutu achieved another milestone by becoming the first Black general secretary of the South African Council of Churches (SACC). Tutu's prominent position within the church provided him with a national platform to condemn the apartheid system and advocate for equal rights and a unified education system. His vocal opposition drew the ire of the South African government, leading to the revocation of his passport in an attempt to restrict his travel. However, an international outcry compelled the government to reverse this decision.

In 1984, Tutu received global recognition for his tireless efforts when he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Two years later, he was elected as the Archbishop of Cape Town, becoming the first Black African to hold this esteemed position. Concurrently, pressure mounted on the South African government, leading to negotiations between politicians and the African National Congress (ANC). These talks eventually resulted in the release of Nelson Mandela in 1990 and the dismantling of apartheid legislation. Following the country's first democratic elections, President Mandela appointed Tutu as the chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in 1994. This significant role entailed examining the human rights violations committed during the apartheid era, further solidifying Tutu's influence in the pursuit of justice and healing in South Africa.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter explored the significance of interlocutors in relation to the subjects under examination, namely Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology in the South African context. The study determined the appropriate interlocutors. Specifically, it identified the lenses of Allan Boesak and Desmond Tutu through which the research question is examined. It is important to acknowledge the wide range of scholarly work in the fields of theological study being considered. Both Boesak and Tutu hold prominence in the South African context, and like any

theologian, they are not without flaws. However, their contributions are significant to the relevance of this study.

CHAPTER 3: BLACK THEOLOGY IN SOUTH AFRICA

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the focus is on the development of Black Theology in the specific context of South Africa, considering its origins and its unique adaptations within the country. The exploration involves an examination of specific theological concepts, including the notion of God's preferential option for the poor and the oppressed, the significance of collective action and solidarity, and the idea of prophetic witness. Also, this chapter delves into the development of Black Theology in South Africa, examining its origins and adaptations within the context of apartheid. The analysis of these concepts constitutes the basis for a robust understanding of the theological framework of Black Theology in South Africa in the context of South Africa's struggle against racial oppression and the pursuit of justice and liberation. This study seeks to provide a cursory overview of the development and impact of Black Theology in South Africa, as well as to assess its relevance and significance in the present day. By examining both the theological underpinnings and practical manifestations of this movement, a deeper understanding of the complex relationship between religion, politics, and social justice in South Africa's history and contemporary reality emerges. In assessing the relevance and significance of Black Theology in present-day South Africa, it is important to consider its continued influence on discussions of race, justice, and equality in South Africa and beyond. Furthermore, the chapter discusses the historical perspective and manifestations of Black Theology within the political and social movements as well as the emergence of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM).

In relation to the objective of this study, this chapter explains the role of Black Theology in addressing South Africa's socio-political challenges including advocacy for justice and equality. By exploring the critiques of Black Theology, both internal and external, a more nuanced understanding of its strengths and limitations is highlighted and explained. In essence, engaging with the existing theological critiques provides a broader dialogue within the theological community, fostering critical reflection and the development of more comprehensive theological frameworks. Additionally, the chapter examines the critiques of Black Theology, both internal and external, providing a comprehensive understanding of its reception and impact. The study of Black Theology in South Africa seeks to understand its historical development, practical manifestations, and ongoing significance in addressing social

and political challenges. South Africa continues to experience challenges relating to inequality and injustice; hence, Black Theology is considered as a viable platform to offer insights and inspiration for transformative action and the pursuit of a just and equitable society.

3.2 Setting the scene

The significance of Black Theology remains an enduring and influential aspect within the theological landscape of South Africa. Scholars and practitioners of Black Theology, such as Allan Boesak (1978), Tinyiko Maluleke (1995), Eugene Fortuin (2018), and Demaine Solomons (2010) frequently engage in introspective reflections on its inception, drawing from a sense of nostalgia and employing historical perspectives to inform contemporary approaches. This retrospective exploration serves as a means to grapple with and respond to current pressing challenges that society faces. Solomons (2021, p. 1) argues that, by delving into the past, adherents of Black Theology seek to glean insights and strategies that are pertinent to addressing present-day concerns, thus demonstrating the ongoing relevance and impact of this theological framework within the South African context.

Contextually, the concept of Black Theology was considered as an expression of liberation theology. Liberation theology is known to address the oppressive socio-economic conditions prevalent in the Latin America region and used to promote social justice including human rights advocacy and equality for marginalised and impoverished communities. As such, the historical undertone of liberation theology relates to socio-political agitations. The term 'liberation theology' was coined during the Chimbote, Peru gathering in July 1968, a few weeks prior to the Latin American episcopate's conference in Medellin, Colombia. This pivotal moment in theological discourse marked the emergence of a new ideological framework within the Catholic Church, which sought to reconcile Christian principles with the socio-political context of Latin America. In the study conducted by Motlhabi (1972, p. 1) it was agreed that the origin of the term 'Black Theology' can be attributed to its emergence in North America. This label signifies a distinctive theological paradigm that developed within the historical and cultural context of African American experiences and their pursuit of racial justice. By acknowledging its North American roots, the term 'Black Theology' reflects a theological discourse that explicitly engages with the unique challenges and aspirations of the Black community in the United States. The Chimbote event served as a catalyst for the subsequent development and dissemination of liberation theology throughout Latin America, exerting a profound influence

on theological debates and inspiring progressive movements within the church (Buffel, 2021, p. 2).

According to James Cone (1972), the theological roots of Black Theology in North America can be traced to pre-civil war within the Black church communities where racism and Christianity were deemed not mutually exclusive. The polarity between racism and Christianity birthed the 'Black Theology' phenomenon in the twentieth century (Cone, 1972, p. 28). In America, Black Theology was intrinsically aligned to the Black Power movement (p. 26). The phenomenon of Black Power articulated the collective sentiment among Black individuals regarding their refusal to accept the white-imposed constraints on their human identity. The Black Power vocalised resistance culminated in an era of introspection, encapsulating the growing assertion and empowerment of the Black community in the face of pervasive racial subjugation. Civil-rights activist, Stokely Carmichael's declaration of "Black Power" created a degree of consciousness within Black circles, symbolising a resistance movement and the rejection of the established hegemonic structures that sought to impose a diminished sense of humanity on Black individuals. Carmichael's concept epitomised the emerging consciousness and determination of Black people and also catalysed a transformative era in the ongoing struggle for racial justice and equity (Cone, 1972, p. 31).

For Cone (1972, p. 31), 'Black power means that Black people are publicly declaring that whatever white people do, it will inevitably work against Black freedom.' Black freedom thus becomes central to the theology of liberation in the American context. Consequently, there was a re-alignment of values and perceptions such that the emergence of unique advocacy language for communication, liberation and freedom consciousness become frequently used or preferred metaphors. However, Cone's approach in the use of these symbolic metaphors was a deliberate focus on the concept of Black Theology such that historical contexts are not compromised. In addition, Cone's approach towards black liberation in a theological context was to ensure the need for non-recognition of alien gods but more importantly, to create value structures according to the God of Black freedom (1972, p. 32). To achieve these objectives, Cone (1972) asserted the essence of Black Theology, which is fundamentally rooted in liberation. It is noteworthy to indicate that Cone's perspective is all-encompassing because it accommodates the historical and socio-political realities faced by the Black community. Hence, it emphasises the transformative power of liberation within the theological framework. According to Cone, the liberation of oppressed communities, particularly the Black community, is intricately

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intertwined with the very essence of Christian theology. This is articulated by Hlulani Mdingi when he asserst; "There is no contradiction between the blackness of God, the blackness of Black people, and the meaning of the Black experience in the world" (Mdingi,2022, p588).

The significance of Black Theology, therefore, lies in its insistence on understanding and engaging with the Christian gospel through the lens of liberation, affirming the inherent dignity and agency of marginalised individuals and calling for the dismantling of oppressive systems. This theological framework challenges conventional interpretations and calls for a re-evaluation of Christian teachings, urging believers to actively work towards justice, equality, and the liberation of all oppressed peoples (Cone, 1972, p. 32).

Cone's concepts, particularly his emphasis on Black Theology as a theology of liberation, exerted significant influence within the Black Theology Project and provided a valuable foundation for the development of a Black Theology specific to the South African context. Cone's ideas assumed a prominent role, shaping the discourse and direction of the project. The focus on liberation, central to Cone's theological framework, resonated with the experiences and aspirations of those engaged in the South African struggle against apartheid (Solomons, 2017, p. 140). Furthermore, when examining the Western perspective on Black Theology, it is crucial to acknowledge that Black Consciousness emerged as a form of protest against the prevailing liberal conception of racism. This recognition serves as a vital reminder of the underlying motivations and historical context that contributed to the development of Black Theology within Western frameworks. By appreciating this nuanced perspective, scholars and researchers can continue to engage with and analyse the multifaceted dynamics of race, theology, and social activism, fostering a more comprehensive understanding of these interconnected realms (Frostin, 1988, p. 91).

3.3 Origins of Black Theology in South Africa

When considering the origins of Black Theology in South Africa, and searching for its foundations, it would be fair to suggest that Black Theology embraces the Afro-American perspectives. Black Theology in South Africa is a liberation-oriented theology and has its roots in the liberation theology movement that emerged in Latin America in the 1960s, as described by Emmanuel Martey (2005). Black Theology first emerged as a liberation-oriented theology in African in the early 1970s. In South Africa, Black Theology emerged as a response to the

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oppressive system of apartheid, which was characterised by racial segregation, discrimination, and inequality. Cone's 'Black Theology and Black Power' (1969) provided the intellectual foundation for Black Theology in South Africa, with its key preoccupation being racism. The roots of Black Theology in South Africa can be traced to pioneers such as James Cone. Cone's seminal work, 'A Black Liberation Theology' (1970), provided the theoretical framework for Black Theology in South Africa, which sought to address the specific challenges faced by Black South Africans under apartheid. Cone's emphasis on the need for a theology that speaks to the oppressed and marginalised in society resonated with the BCM in South Africa, which sought to empower Black people and challenge the racial hierarchy imposed by apartheid.

The inception of the initial local colloquium on Black Theology in South Africa was orchestrated under the guidance of Sabelo Ntwasa, the director of the Black Theology Project (Solomons, 2017, p. 141). This pivotal event not only served as a platform for scholarly engagement but also catalysed subsequent colloquia across the country. Furthermore, as a testament to the significance and academic relevance of these discussions, a selection of the essays presented at these colloquia was published in a seminal work titled 'Essays in Black Theology,' edited by Mokgethi Motlhabi (1972). However, it is important to note that the immediate impact and potential dissemination of this publication were obstructed by the banning of the book. This ban, imposed soon after its release, not only hindered access to the content but also underscored the contentious nature of the discussions and the perceived threat they posed to the prevailing socio-political order in South Africa at that time.

The emergence of Black Theology in South Africa represented a radical departure from the theological traditions that had dominated the country's religious landscape (Moore, 1973, p. 20). Traditional theology in South Africa had largely been complicit in the perpetuation of apartheid, as it failed to challenge the theological justifications for racial segregation and the oppression of Black people. Black Theology, on the other hand, sought to dismantle the theological underpinnings of apartheid and to develop a theology that was grounded in the experiences of Black South Africans.

 Moore (1973) reminds us that, motivated by the influence of Black Theology in the United States and the emergence of liberation theology in Latin America, individuals within the University Christian Movement (UCM) were inspired to formulate an Indigenous theology that accurately reflected the unique circumstances faced by South Africa. In pursuit of this objective, the UCM initiated the Black Theology Project in 1971. The theological framework

proposed by Cone in the United States, particularly his emphasis on Black Theology as a means of liberation, strongly resonated with the members of the UCM. As Maluleke asserts, 'Though clearly influenced by and initially dependent on North American Black Theology – at least for framing, diagnosing and prophetic language – South African Black Theology arose in a unique local context' (1998, p. 1). Consequently, Cone's ideas became predominant within the Black Theology Project and served as a valuable foundation for the development of a Black Theology specifically tailored to the South African context (Frostin, 1988, p. 89). The UCM played a significant role in introducing Black Theology to the South African scene. Basil Moore, the UCM's director of Theological Concerns, imported Black Theology as a method of theological reflection from the United States and established a separate project under that name (Solomons, 2017, pp. 143–144). However, it was made clear that the content and outlook of Black Theology in South Africa was situational (Moore, 1973, p. 5), that is, specific to the South African context and not a mere replication of the American model. In essence, Black Theology in South Africa was a religious counterpart of the BCM, which emphasised the need for Black people to liberate themselves from the psychological and physical shackles of apartheid.

Frostin argues and reminds us that the meaning of 'Black' in Black Theology diverges significantly from its interpretation in apartheid legislation. In the context of apartheid, 'Black' was a categorisation employed to designate individuals who were non-white. It was directly associated with skin colour and served as a tool for racial discrimination and segregation (Frostin, 1988, p. 86). However, within Black Theology, the term 'Black' transcends its literal meaning and encompasses a broader, metaphorical significance. It refers to those who have experienced marginalisation, oppression, and injustice. Black Theology does not focus on physical attributes such as skin colour but rather seeks to address systemic inequalities and advocate for social transformation and liberation.

Boesak defines Black Theology as 'the theological reflection of black Christians on the situation which they live and, on their struggle' (1977, p. 1). Boesak further describes Black Theology as a theology of liberation, which 'signifies an irreversible reordering of the ecumenical agenda' (1977, p. 2). Thus, based on this definition of Black Theology, it is evident that it operates within a context of an inclusion of social, religious, and political influences. Socially it would be a theology that primarily focuses on the poor, oppressed, and marginalised; in the religious sphere it crosses ecumenical boundaries and tradition; and politically it is deeply rooted in the political understanding of Black Consciousness. This presupposes the

teaching of Cone and Dr Martin Luther King Jr, who both influence Boesak's understating of Black Theology. Due to this influence when considering Boesak's theology, one is met with a clear presupposition of a link between Black Theology and Black Power.

Boesak (1977. p. 19) reminds us that,

> Black Theology, taking its cue its biblical message refuses to let go of the truth that one cannot speak about God's love without also speaking of His righteousness, His justice, which becomes concrete in His relation to human beings and the relations of people among themselves.

The interpretations of South African Black Theology, situated within the dynamics of the South African experience, do not negate the influence of Cone or Moore. Instead, Black theologians in South Africa can be described as active participants in a conciliar process, acknowledging the significant influence of both the United States and Latin America. It is crucial to recognise the reciprocal relationship between the local context and international theological currents. While Cone and Moore have influenced the development of South African Black Theology, it is important to note that South African theologians have not been able to replicate these frameworks. Rather, South African theologians have successfully adapted the influences of Cone and Moore to address the unique and specific socio-political realities of apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa. For example, South African Black theologians actively participate in a conciliar process, by adopting multiple sources of inspiration and grappling with the unique challenges faced within their own context. Although the South African theologians have duly acknowledged the intellectual and theological contributions from the United States and Latin America, the local theological approach has been characterised by a distinctive South African flavour that reflects the realities of racial oppression, colonialism, and the struggle for liberation (Frostin, 1988, p. 90).

Furthermore, according to Frostin (1988, p. 87), the concept of Blackness is intricately intertwined with the notion of the epistemological break, demonstrating a profound link between the two constructs. Blackness, as a social construct, refers to the racial identity associated with individuals of African descent, encompassing a diverse range of ethnicities and cultural backgrounds. This complex concept has been shaped by historical contexts and systemic processes, ultimately leading to its close association with oppression. Frostin further suggests that Blackness and oppression are intimately linked due to the historical and ongoing

experiences of racial discrimination, dehumanisation, and systemic violence faced by Black individuals and communities. This oppressive reality has been perpetuated through various means, including slavery, colonisation, segregation, and racial profiling. As a result, the concept of Blackness has become synonymous with the struggle against these oppressive systems, encompassing both personal and collective experiences of resilience, resistance, and liberation.

When conducting an examination of the literature and considering the historical backdrop of Black Theology, as well as its manifestation in both the United States and South Africa, it becomes evident that Black Theology maintains a profound interconnectedness with the notions of Black Power within the American context and Black Consciousness within the South African context. The subsequent segment of this investigation explores the function and influence of Black Consciousness within the realm of Black Theology in South Africa. The objective is to conduct an analysis of the interconnectedness and dynamics between these two ideological constructs. Solomons (2017, p. 139) contends that, 'The emergence of the Black Consciousness Movement indicates that theology and politics interacted in the articulation of this philosophy.'

3.4 Role of Black Consciousness

According to Takatso Mafokeng (1983, p. 9), it was the South African Students' Organisation (SASO), which developed out of the United Christian Movement (UCM), that became the first organisational expression of Black Consciousness. According to Gail Gerhart (1978, p. 292), the aim was to form an organisation that would serve as the central coordinating body of the BCM, as well as fill the political vacuum left by the banning of the Black liberation movements.

In South Africa, Black Consciousness remains a tool that could change the landscape of Black communities, which in turn means that we take the struggles of Black people seriously. Black Consciousness is indeed a construct that Boesak takes seriously and naturally draws on Steve Biko's writings in understanding Black Consciousness and its expression as part of Black Theology (Boesak, 1978). Of course, one cannot deny the influence of Cone and Gustavo Gutierrez in Boesak's expression of Black Theology as well as Black Consciousness, for it is a coming together of these influences that allows Boesak to conceptualise and realise this idea of Black Power.

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From a cursory reading of Black Consciousness through the lens of Steve Biko, it could be argued that Black Consciousness contributed to the birth of Black Theology, as the philosophy needed a vehicle to capture the people.

Biko (1972, p. 21) defines Black Consciousness as,

> … an attitude of mind and a way of life. It is the most positive call to emanate from the Black world for a long time. Its unadulterated quintessence is the realisation by the Black man of the need to rally together with his brothers around the cause of their oppression—the Blackness of their skin—and to operate as a group in order to rid themselves of the shackles that bind them to perpetual servanthood.

Biko then amplifies the philosophy of Black Consciousness as one that 'expresses group pride and the determination by Black people to rise and attain the envisaged self' (Biko, 1972, p. 21). Therefore, at the outset of Black Consciousness, one notices a shift of two pivotal markers – agency and identity. Biko encourages Black people, through Black Consciousness, to acknowledge their identity as being fully human with the capacity to transform the situation. He asserts this when he writes: 'Freedom is the ability to define one's self with one's possibilities held back, not by the power of other people over you but one's relationship to God and to natural surroundings' (Biko, 1972, p. 21).

The assertion that authentic humanity for Black people means that Black humanity is a fundamental principle of Black Theology (Boesak, 1977, p. 27). This statement underscores the importance of recognising and valuing Blackness as a crucial aspect of humanity. It asserts that true fellowship and reconciliation between different racial groups can only occur when white people learn to accept Black people as Black and acknowledge the unique experiences and perspectives that come with being Black. Black Theology seeks to create a space where Black people can assert their identities, histories, and cultures without being forced to conform to white norms and standards. This approach recognises that the struggle for liberation and equality must begin with the affirmation of Black humanity and the recognition of the structural inequalities and injustices that have historically marginalised and oppressed Black people. By centring Black humanity in its theological framework, Black Theology provides a powerful vision for social and political transformation that seeks to address the deep-seated inequities and injustices that continue to plague our society.

What Boesak does well, is to capture the themes of authenticity and humanity, for this is what bridges the gap for Black Consciousness and Black Theology. This is in line with Biko's view:

> Biko saw the liberation of black people on two levels, i.e., psychological and physical liberation. For Biko and the Black Consciousness Movement the reference to 'black' was not just a reference to black people in particular, but rather a reference to 'coloureds' and Indians and other people who suffer under any form of oppression (Fortuin, 2018, p. 513).

It is thus evident that when we consider Black Theology and Black Consciousness, there is a pattern that emerges that draws our attention to suffering and oppression in relation to liberation and freedom.

One cannot engage with the understanding of Black Theology and Black Consciousness, without being reminded that:

> Although this Blackness we speak of is certainly, among other things, a matter of the colour of the skin, it is also more than merely that, if only because not all who share Blackness as a colour of skin are also truly Black. This Blackness is an awareness, an attitude, a state of mind (Boesak, 1977, p. 27).

It is when one takes these factors into account that we are met with a reality of entering the conversation of anthropology and the *Imago Dei* (the image of God), as we recognise that the state of mind, and the awareness of who we are call us to recognise that which we call humanity. Notwithstanding that, when we begin to speak of humanity, we are invited into the creation story, which Christians hold onto as the beginning of everything, and that in the Genesis account of creation, that which God creates, God calls good. So, when we speak of the humanity of Black people, we begin to highlight the goodness of Black people, in contrast to the apartheid theology that diminished the humanity of Black people. Without taking too much for granted, we need to remember that 'Blackness in these terms is more than skin colour' (Boesak, 1978, p. 27).

The call for Black people to love themselves is a crucial aspect of Black Theology. This call recognises that Black people have historically been subjected to dehumanisation, oppression, and the cultivation of a slave mentality. Asking Black people to love themselves is not a call for hatred towards white people, but rather a call for resistance against the structures and

systems that have perpetuated oppression and dehumanisation (Boesak, 1977, p. 29). It is a call for Black people to reject the idea that they are inferior and unworthy and to embrace their identity and cultural heritage with pride and dignity. Black Liberation Theology asserts that the root of the problem lies not in the colour of a person's skin but in the systems of oppression and inequality that benefit some at the expense of others. By calling for Black people to love themselves and resist oppression, Black Liberation Theology provides a powerful tool for social and political transformation that seeks to uproot the systemic injustices that have historically marginalised and oppressed Black people.

The concept of Black Consciousness is a significant aspect of Black Theology in South Africa. Black Consciousness emphasises the importance of recognising the Blackness of individuals as an essential aspect of their humanity. This concept asserts that Black people should celebrate their Blackness and not view it as inferior to white culture. In the context of Black Theology, Black Consciousness means that being Black becomes a decisive factor in how Black people express their faith in Jesus Christ (Boesak, 1977, p. 26). It encourages Black people to develop a theology that is rooted in their lived experiences and cultural traditions, rather than one that uncritically adopts Western norms and values. By emphasising the significance of Black identity in the expression of Christian faith, Black Consciousness offers a powerful critique of the dominant culture's attempt to suppress Black culture and promotes a more inclusive and empowering vision of Christianity.

3.5 Framework of Black Theology

The framework of Black Theology emerged in South Africa during the struggle against apartheid, as a theological response to the oppressive system of racial segregation and discrimination (Frostin, 1988, p. 105). It is clear that apartheid is a complex phenomenon; not only is it considered a political and social problem, but it is undoubtedly also considered a theological problem (Frostin, 1988, p. 105). Black Theology seeks to provide a critical reflection on how Christianity had been used to justify and perpetuate the injustices of apartheid, while also offering a vision for the liberation of Black South Africans. Black Theology rejects the idea of a neutral, apolitical Christianity, arguing instead that theology must be rooted in the concrete realities of the South African context. Black Theology is not only an intellectual exercise but also a practical one, with Black Theology being closely linked

to the political and social movements of the time, such as the BCM and the ANC.[3] The framework of Black Theology in South Africa continues to be a powerful lens through which to view the intersection of religion, politics, and social justice in the country's history and present-day reality.

When engaging with Black Theology, it is crucial to understand the intended discourse, which is a theology of liberation rooted in the lived experiences of Black people. This theology is shaped by the gospel and is grounded in the belief that God is present in the struggles of the oppressed. As such, Black Theology is an incarnational theology that seeks to bring God's liberating presence into the concrete realities of people's lives. This incarnational approach to theology emphasises the need for a theology that is rooted in the particularities of people's experiences, rather than an abstract and universalised theology that is detached from the realities of people's lives. As Cone (1970, p. 14) writes, 'Black Theology is the theological expression of black life, and it seeks to describe the religious dimensions of our existence in a racist society.' Therefore, Black Theology is a theology of the people, by the people, and for the people, and it seeks to empower the oppressed to claim their dignity and agency as bearers of God's image.

Black Theology is,

> … born in the community of the Black oppressed, it takes seriously the Black experience, the Black situation. Black Theology grapples with suffering and oppression; it's a cry unto God for the sake of the people. It believes that in Jesus Christ the total liberation of all people has come (Boesak, 1978, pp. 9–10).

It has to be noted that,

> Black Theology, according to Boesak, knows it is not merely people that need to be liberated. The Gospel, so often abused and exploited, also needs to be liberated and it is in this movement that black Christians engage themselves (Fortuin, 2018, p. 508).

If we consider that Black Theology entails a theological framework developed by Black individuals who contemplate their encounters with exclusion and prejudice, it can be contended that the origins of South African Black Theology can be traced to the eighteenth century

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[3] The ANC has been the ruling political party since the dawn of democracy in 1994.

through the prophetess Donna Beatrice.[4] Alternatively, one could trace its roots to the separatist movements of the late nineteenth century, which witnessed a shift away from the paternalistic influence of missionaries (Nicolson, 1990, p. 200).

Black Theology, similar to liberation theologies, is characterised by a framework that is centred on the experiences and circumstances of the oppressed, specifically focusing on the Black population in this context (Nicolson, 1990, p. 200). Moreover, Ronald Nicolson suggests that, within the framework of Black Theology in South Africa, there is an acknowledgement of the significant role played by the church or Christianity in general (Nicolson, 1990, p. 202). It can be argued that the emergence of Black Theology in South Africa during the 1970s was primarily a product of individuals within the church community reflecting upon the teachings of the gospel in the context of their experiences of oppression. This development was less influenced by the contributions of professional theologians well versed in Western political theory.

Maluleke (1998) argues that despite its Christian framework and emphasis, Black Theology has consistently transcended the confines of the Christian Church and its four walls as well as the domain of solely religious matters. Hence, if Black Theology did not manifest its influence publicly, it undeniably displayed a public and political intent. Moreover, the classification of Black Theology as 'private discourse' was more likely a consequence of circumstances rather than a deliberate intention. Its categorisation as 'private' arose due to its non-hegemonic nature, as it did not hold dominant power or authority. It is within the realm of public discourse that we are compelled to recognise the various stages or phases of Black Theology.

3.5.1 Phase one of Black Theology

The emergence of the Black Theology movement in South Africa was closely linked to the rise of the BCM in the 1970s. This phase was primarily focused on race analysis, and its goal was to raise the consciousness of Black people and empower them to be the agents of their own liberation. Inspired by the philosophy of Black Consciousness, Black theologians sought to create a theology that was relevant to the experiences and struggles of Black people in South Africa. Prominent theologians during this phase included Allan Boesak, who published

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[4] The prophetess Donna Beatrice was a prominent religious figure and spiritual leader in Southern Africa during the late 19th century. She founded a religious movement known as the "Israelite Church" or "Harambee Church," which blended Christian and traditional African religious beliefs

influential works (1977, 1984). However, it was Basil Moore's collection of essays that is widely regarded as the catalyst for Black Theology's intellectual development in South Africa. This phase of Black Theology was crucial in shaping the movement's future trajectory and influencing the struggle against apartheid. Ironically, while the emergence of Black Theology in South Africa was closely linked to the rise of the BCM in the 1970s, it was also during this same time that African Theology began to crystallise. The parallel development of African and Black theologies during this time reflects the diversity and richness of African Christianity and the importance of contextualising theological reflection.

It can thus be concluded that the first phase of Black Theology in South Africa was a response to the oppressive apartheid regime and the Church's complicity in it. Black theologians sought to reclaim Christianity from the clutches of white supremacy and to articulate a theology that spoke to the Black experience. They challenged the notion of a colour-blind church and emphasised the need for a theology that was rooted in the struggle for Black liberation. This phase was marked by a critical analysis of race, and it paved the way for future theological reflections that incorporated Marxist and other critical perspectives. The first phase of Black Theology in South Africa was a significant contribution to the development of theology, not only in South Africa but also in the global Church. It demonstrated the power of theology to challenge oppressive structures and to speak truth to power.

3.5.2 Phase two of Black Theology

Vellem (2007) suggests that the publication of Bongajalo Goba's 1986 article, 'The Black Consciousness Movement: Its Impact on Black Theology' marked the beginning of a second phase in the development of Black Theology. During this phase, Black theologians began to incorporate Marxist analysis into their theological reflections. This shift towards Marxist analysis was partly in response to the limitations of a race-based analysis of Black liberation.

Black theologians realised that while race was an important factor in the oppression of Black people in South Africa, it was not the only one. A Marxist analysis provided a more comprehensive framework for understanding the economic, social, and political factors that underpinned the oppression of Black people. This second phase of Black Theology was characterised by a more radical and revolutionary approach to theology, and it challenged the dominant theological discourse in South Africa. The incorporation of Marxist analysis into

Black Theology was a significant development that expanded the scope of theological reflection and emphasised the need for a holistic approach to Black liberation.

Therefore, the second phase of Black Theology in South Africa marked a significant shift in theological reflection as Black theologians incorporated Marxist analysis into their theological perspectives. This phase challenged the limitations of a race-based analysis and emphasised the need for a more comprehensive approach to understanding the complex web of factors that underpinned the oppression of Black people. Black theologians adopted a more radical and revolutionary approach to theology and challenged the dominant theological discourse in South Africa.

The incorporation of Marxist analysis into Black Theology expanded the scope of theological reflection and emphasised the need for a holistic approach to Black liberation. The second phase of Black Theology was marked by an unyielding commitment to the struggle for Black liberation and a rejection of the theological justifications for the apartheid regime. It demonstrated the power of theology to challenge oppressive structures and to provide a voice for the marginalised and oppressed.

3.5.3 Phase three of Black Theology

In the third phase of Black Theology, Black theologians sought to address issues such as the gendered nature of Black oppression and the impact of heteronormativity on Black experiences. For example, Kelly Brown Douglas (2015) argues that the murder of Trayvon Martin was not only a racial issue, but a gendered one, as the perpetrator saw Martin as a threat to his masculinity. Similarly, Cone (2011) explores the intersection of race and religion in the history of lynching in the United States.

Through its different phases, Black Theology has played an important role in the struggle for Black liberation. The first phase of Black Theology challenged the traditional Western theology and its complicity in Black oppression. The second phase expanded the scope of Black liberation by incorporating Marxist analysis. The third phase acknowledges the complexity of Black experiences and calls for an intersectional analysis. Black theologians have continued to adapt to the changing social and political contexts in which they operate and have provided critical insights into the struggle for Black liberation. Ultimately, Black Theology's focus on the lived experiences of Black people and its gospel-shaped incarnational theology make it a powerful tool for understanding and resisting oppression.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter investigated the role that Black Theology in South Africa has played and continues to play in South Africa's struggle for freedom, justice, and equality. Through providing a theological framework that rejected the status quo and emphasised the importance of collective action, solidarity, and God's preferential option for the poor and the oppressed, Black Theology inspired and empowered generations of activists and ordinary people to work towards a just and equitable society. Despite the official end of apartheid, the legacy of Black Theology continues to be felt in South Africa and beyond, as theologians and activists continue to draw on its ideas and insights to address ongoing challenges related to poverty, inequality, and social injustice. In this way, Black Theology remains a powerful and relevant force for social and political transformation, offering a compelling vision of what it means to be faithful, committed, and engaged in the pursuit of a more just and peaceful world.
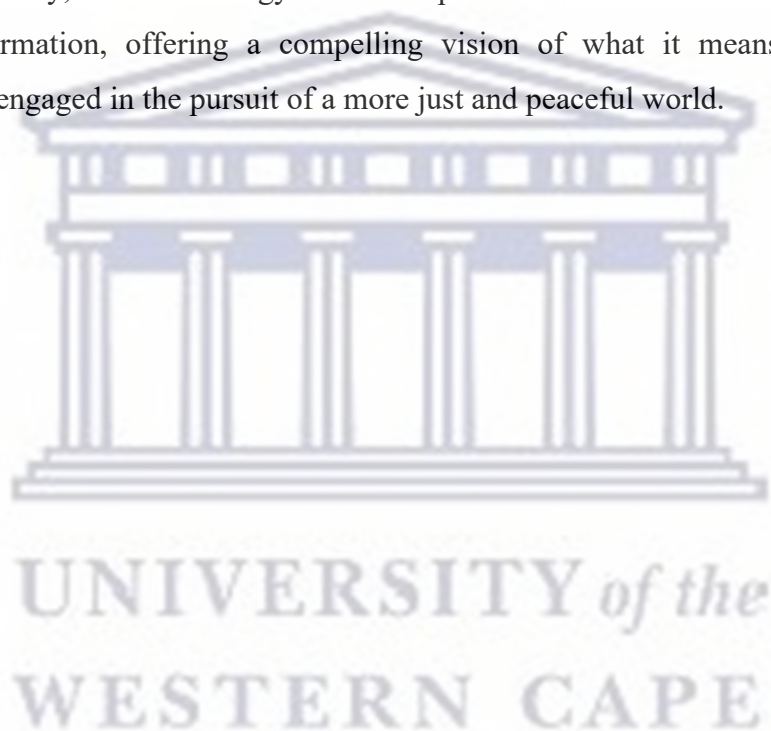
CHAPTER 4: UBUNTU THEOLOGY IN SOUTH AFRICA

4.1 Introduction

Ubuntu Theology is an emerging theological paradigm that draws on the African philosophical notion of Ubuntu, which connects human beings irrespective of the social markers that separate them. The concept of Ubuntu is deeply embedded in African traditional beliefs and practices and refers to the interconnectedness and interdependence of individuals within a community. Ubuntu Theology views the individual as fundamentally linked to the community and affirms the importance of social justice and reconciliation.

One of the foremost proponents of Ubuntu Theology is Archbishop Desmond Tutu, whose work has been influential in the development of this theological paradigm. Michael Battle's (1997) seminal contribution to the Ubuntu Theology of Desmond Tutu provides the basis for this theological paradigm.

In this chapter I explore the history and development of Ubuntu Theology, its key features, and its implications for theology and social justice in South Africa and beyond. I also critically engage with the debates surrounding Ubuntu Theology. Through this analysis, I seek to provide an understanding of Ubuntu Theology and its relevance for contemporary theological discourse.

4.2 Setting the scene

Amid the diversity of African cultures, there exist shared characteristics across various aspects such as value systems, beliefs, and practices, which collectively embody the African worldview. Among these aspects, the principle of *ubuntu/botho* (humanism or humaneness) stands as a profound and enduring tenet (Mnyaka & Motlhabi, 2015). Ubuntu represents an ancient philosophy and a way of life that has served as a sustaining force within African communities for centuries, both in South Africa and across the continent. It encapsulates a fundamental understanding of the interconnectedness of humanity and emphasises the importance of harmonious relationships, collective well-being, and mutual support. Ubuntu, as a guiding principle, continues to shape and influence African societies, providing a moral compass and a foundation for communal existence (Mnyaka & Motlhabi, 2015, p. 215).

Ubuntu is short for an isiXhosa proverb in Southern Africa. It comes from *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* – a person is a person through their relationship to others (Samkange & Samkange, 1980). Ubuntu is recognised as the African philosophy of humanism, linking the individual to the collective through 'brotherhood' or 'sisterhood' (Swanson, 2007, p. 55). Furthermore; Ubuntu is grounded in the philosophical principle that the strength of a community arises from the support it provides to its members. Central to this ideology is the belief that dignity and identity are attained through the practice of mutualism, empathy, generosity, and a steadfast commitment to the community. This understanding of Ubuntu emphasises the interconnectedness of individuals within a community, emphasising the importance of collective well-being and shared responsibility. The philosophy of Ubuntu highlights the significance of communal bonds and the cultivation of a harmonious coexistence based on reciprocal relationships and a genuine concern for others (Swanson, 2007, pp. 55–56).

As a philosophy, Ubuntu presents itself as a life orientation that opposes the prevailing concept of individualism, one-sided decision-making, and ruthless competitiveness. In their essence, Ubuntu teachings are pervasive across various age groups, families, organisations, and communities in Africa and other regions, transcending geographical boundaries (Anofuechi, 2022, p. 32). The continent exhibits a rich tapestry of cultures, each with its unique perspectives and practices, making it difficult to establish a universally comprehensive definition of Ubuntu. The wide array of cultural expressions and linguistic nuances add complexity to the task of encapsulating Ubuntu's essence. The multifaceted nature of Ubuntu underscores the need for contextual understanding and sensitivity when attempting to define this philosophy. Acknowledging the diversity within Africa becomes crucial in appreciating the variations and complexities associated with Ubuntu, recognising that its interpretations and manifestations may differ across different cultural and linguistic contexts.

The term *Ubuntu* has not remained unaffected by misinterpretation and excessive employment. It holds significant weight and carries a multifaceted connotation. Within African societies, *ubuntu/botho* is regarded as an indispensable quality intrinsic to *umntu/motho* (a human being). This perception highlights the paramount importance assigned to *ubuntu/botho* in defining and shaping human identity (Mnyaka & Motlhabi, 2015, p. 216). The concept is deeply ingrained in African cultural values, emphasising the interconnectedness, interdependence, and communal nature of humanity. As such, *ubuntu/botho* encompasses a holistic understanding of human existence, encapsulating notions of empathy, compassion, respect, and solidarity. Its

enduring significance underscores its centrality in African thought and underscores its status as a fundamental aspect of African societal fabric (Mnyaka & Motlhabi, 2015, p. 216).

Ubuntu recognises a sense of identity through being in community with others but also in community with God. It is noted that, 'Ubuntu became one of the key concepts of the new democratic South Africa, which inspired people of different races to embrace one another after apartheid' (Buqa, 2015, p. 1). Furthermore; the South African government, in its 1997 White Paper on Social Welfare, defines Ubuntu as 'the principle of caring for each other's well-being ... and a spirit of mutual support. ... Everyone's humanity is ideally expressed through his or her relationship with others and theirs in turn through a recognition of the individual's humanity' (Macdonald, 2010, p. 141). Ubuntu means that people are people through other people. It also acknowledges both the rights and the responsibilities of every citizen in promoting individual and societal well-being.

In summary: 'Ubuntu, it is an African-embedded philosophical approach to human life. It would be misleading to speak of Ubuntu and then to mistreat others on the basis of their race, culture, creed, gender, or status. Ubuntu demands respect for human dignity regardless of any outward appearances' (Buqa, 2015, p. 4). Or very simply put, 'At the heart of ubuntu lies an understanding of identity as it emerges through relationship; that is, the principle of interconnectedness' (Lewis, 2010, p. 69).

4.3 Origins of Ubuntu Theology in South Africa

Ubuntu Theology is a religious and philosophical concept that has its roots in South Africa, where it emerged as a response to the social and political challenges of apartheid. The term *Ubuntu* is derived from the Nguni language '*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu,*' which means 'a person is a person through other people.' This philosophy emphasises the interconnectedness of all beings and the importance of compassion, empathy, and community in promoting social harmony and justice. Shutte (2001) argues that utilising Ubuntu as an African humanist framework to undergird any religious system has the potential to promote equity and fairness for humanity and foster an authentic realisation of the most profound aspirations to improve oneself.

The origins of Ubuntu Theology can be traced to the work of African theologians such as John Mbiti (1989) and Gabriel Setiloane (1976) who were interested in exploring the relationship between Christianity and African culture. In the 1960s and 1970s, these theologians began to

promote the idea of an African Theology that would be grounded in the cultural and spiritual traditions of the continent, rather than in European or American theological frameworks. There appears to be scholarly agreement that with reference to early written sources of Ubuntu in South Africa, it could be traced to a conference in Durban in 1960 where Setiloane first used the term in South African writing (Gade, 2011). However, Gade is able to trace the term Ubuntu to writing all the way back to 1846 (Gade, 2011, p. 309). Ubuntu is understood as being a philosophy of tolerance and compassion, which also embraces forgiveness (Mnyaka & Motlhabi, 2015, p. 232).

It was Archbishop Desmond Tutu who became the most prominent advocate for Ubuntu Theology in South Africa. Tutu regarded Ubuntu as a fundamental aspect of African culture and a powerful tool for promoting social justice and reconciliation in post-apartheid South Africa. Tutu (1999, p. 31) asserts that, 'Ubuntu is very difficult to render into a Western language … It is to say, "My humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in yours." We belong in a bundle of life.' Tutu is widely recognised as the Father of Ubuntu Theology, a religious and philosophical concept that emphasises the interconnectedness of all beings and the importance of compassion, empathy, and community. Tutu's work on Ubuntu Theology is deeply rooted in his experiences as a South African Anglican bishop and his role in the anti-apartheid movement (Battle, 1997). Tutu regarded Ubuntu as a fundamental aspect of African culture, and he believed that it could be used as a tool for promoting justice and reconciliation in post-apartheid South Africa. Drawing from his commitment to the African worldview of Ubuntu, Tutu played a pivotal role as the Chair of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), offering leadership, counsel, and direction to his South African compatriots throughout the challenging and delicate period of transition in this nation (Muruthi, 2009, p. 224). Tutu's adherence to Ubuntu provided a foundation for his approach, enabling him to navigate the complexities of post-apartheid South Africa with wisdom and insight. Grounded in the principles of compassion, forgiveness, and reconciliation, Tutu's leadership embodied the essence of Ubuntu, fostering a spirit of unity, healing, and social cohesion. Tutu's embodiment of Ubuntu, both in philosophy and action, served as a guiding light during a critical phase of South Africa's history, helping to steer the nation towards a path of truth, understanding, and ultimately, reconciliation (de Gruchy, 2002, p. 22). Within the context of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, one can posit that the philosophy of Ubuntu served as a catalyst for the emergence and development of Ubuntu Theology, with Tutu emerging as its leading proponent (Kobe, 2021, p. 4). The unique circumstances surrounding the TRC

provided a fertile ground for the exploration and application of Ubuntu principles within a theological framework. Through his leadership and influence, Tutu played a pivotal role in establishing Ubuntu Theology as a distinct theological paradigm, grounded in the principles of compassion, forgiveness, and social reconciliation. Thus, it can be argued that the context of the TRC provided the impetus for the advancement and popularisation of Ubuntu Theology, with Tutu at the forefront of its advocacy and dissemination (Kobe, 2021, p. 4).

Tutu's advocacy for Ubuntu Theology has had a significant impact on the field of African Theology, inspiring a new generation of scholars and theologians to explore the potential of Ubuntu as a model for building more just and equitable societies. For example, South African scholar Carolyn Hamilton (2017) explores the role of Ubuntu in shaping the country's political and cultural landscape, arguing that it offers a powerful alternative to the individualistic and materialistic values of modernity. Ubuntu Theology has its origins in South Africa, where it emerged as a response to the social and political challenges of apartheid. Tutu played a key role in promoting Ubuntu as a theology that emphasises the interconnectedness of all beings and the importance of compassion, empathy, and community in promoting social harmony and justice. Today, it could be said that, Ubuntu Theology continues to inspire scholars and theologians across Africa and around the world, offering a powerful vision of a just and equitable future.

Ubuntu Theology is a concept that finds its roots in African philosophy, and specifically in the idea of Ubuntu, which emphasises interconnectedness, community, and the importance of relationships between people. It can be argued that historically, Ubuntu Theology has its home in the sphere of philosophy, rather than theology. This is because the concept of Ubuntu originated in African philosophy, and was later adopted by theologians such as Tutu, who theologised the philosophy and applied it to Christian theology. Tutu's adoption of Ubuntu Theology helped to bring it into the mainstream of theological discourse, but its philosophical origins continue to influence its development and interpretation within theological circles.

4.4 Framework of Ubuntu Theology

Early in his ministry Tutu expresses the person of the God he worships in asserting his spirituality. He reminds his detractors that no one has a monopoly of truth. He asserts that the truth belongs to God, and He is the ultimate guardian and guarantor. He continues that God truth does not need us to protect it, and the church is God's church and not even the gates of

hell can prevail against the church and as such, the church had to speak the good news of relevance and for Jesus, good news spoke to the real and not to imagined need (Villa-Vicencio & de Gruchy, 1984, pp. 160–161).

According to Battle (1997), Tutu's theological model endeavours to restore the humanity of the oppressor by facilitating the release of forgiveness, enabling the oppressed to perceive their oppressors as equals in the eyes of God. This approach challenges the traditional power dynamics and reorients the theological discourse to emphasise the transformative potential of reconciliation for all parties involved. By adopting this perspective, Ubuntu Theology shifts the narrative from one of victimhood and retribution to one of shared humanity, fostering a pathway towards healing, understanding, and ultimately, the dismantling of oppressive systems.

When considering Ubuntu and its application through the theology it presupposes, one needs to recognise its overlapping of various African concepts, related to community: 'Ubuntu refers to the person who is welcoming, who is hospitable, who is warm and generous, who is affirming of others' (Battle, 1997, p. 35). This is a concept not alien to African communities, and so Ubuntu as a concept or disposition could be considered as a norm in many African communities. In an African understanding, human society is something constituted organically; in Western, egalitarian societies there is a non-organic organisation of individuals that is more akin to an association than to an African community. If one contrasts this to Western culture around community, we soon note that these distinctions also play out on the level of personhood. Many Western views of personhood focus primarily on the lone, self-determined individual.

The African view of a person depicts a person in the context of that person's surrounding environment (Battle, 2000, p. 179). Moreover, according to current African scholarship, African epistemology begins with community and moves to individuality, whereas Western epistemology moves from individuality to community (Battle, 2000, p. 178). This is further explored by Anofuechi (2022, p. 178) who reiterates that Ubuntu's fundamental goal is to emphasise that individuals surpass the limitations of being categorised solely as Black or white; rather, it advocates for recognising and embracing their common humanity.

One has to also note that Ubuntu Theology has particular relevance for re-imagining what it means to be human generally and specifically for people who inhabit their humanity in a Black

skin. Ubuntu emphasises personal empowerment and limitless potential through an understanding of identity construction as an ongoing process of becoming through relationship with the other (Lewis, 2010, p. 83). This perspective challenges the Western individualistic conception of identity, which often prioritises the autonomy and independence of the self.

Ubuntu Theology seeks to restore the humanity of the oppressor by encouraging the oppressed to release feelings of resentment and bitterness, allowing them to view their oppressors as fellow human beings before God. This shift in perspective enables individuals who have experienced marginalisation and oppression to regain agency and reclaim their sense of self-worth. By embracing the principles of Ubuntu, Black individuals can find strength in their shared experiences and communal bonds, fostering a sense of belonging and empowerment. Ubuntu Theology underscores the significance of community support, solidarity, and collective responsibility, enabling marginalised individuals to challenge systemic injustice and work towards social transformation. Through the recognition of their inherent dignity and worth as human beings, Ubuntu Theology empowers Black individuals to assert their voices, assert their rights, and actively participate in the processes of liberation and societal change.

A preliminary examination of the existing literature reveals that Tutu approaches and comprehends Ubuntu within the framework of his ecclesiology. This ecclesiological perspective is grounded in a profound appreciation for community, particularly in its African manifestation. Tutu's interpretation of Ubuntu is undoubtedly influenced by the unique South African context, characterised by a history of oppression and poverty, where individuals experienced various forms of deprivation even if they were not economically impoverished. Tutu's engagement with Ubuntu, therefore, stems from a deep awareness of the societal conditions prevalent in South Africa, prompting him to emphasise the significance of communal interconnectedness, solidarity, and mutual support as essential components of his ecclesiological understanding.

4.5 Characteristics of Ubuntu Theology

Anofuechi (2022) expounds on the four defining attributes of Ubuntu Theology and underscores that Tutu's vision for Ubuntu Theology embodies these four characteristics. He posits that Ubuntu Theology constitutes a theology that builds interdependent communities; it integrates cultures; it recognises the distinctiveness of a person; and it has the potential to

conquer apartheid (2022, p. 177). I draw on Anofuechi's exposition to further expand on these characteristics.

4.5.1 Building interdependent communities

Archbishop Desmond Tutu's philosophy of Ubuntu emphasises that true community arises from a state of vulnerability. This vulnerability arises when the artificial divisions that separate human beings are transcended. In this regard, Battle (1997) contrasts the ethos of apartheid, which holds that individuals are created for segregation, estrangement, and discord, with the Ubuntu worldview, which posits that human beings are inherently inclined towards solidarity, companionship, and harmony.

For Tutu, Ubuntu entails an acknowledgement of the interconnectedness of humanity, in which individuals recognise their essential unity with others and are bound by a shared commitment to promoting the common good. By prioritising this ethos of community and interdependence, Tutu suggests that Ubuntu provides a counterpoint to the individualistic and divisive tendencies that underlie many societal problems.

4.5.2 Integrating cultures

Tutu's Ubuntu Theology is founded on the recognition of the interconnectedness of all human beings. By encouraging individuals to see themselves in others, Tutu's philosophy counters the tendency within Western societies to divide individuals based on racial or ethnic classifications. Tutu's view of Ubuntu seeks to demonstrate that individuals are more than just Black or white; they are first and foremost human. This perspective is built upon the notion that each person is unique and has something valuable to contribute to the world. Tutu's Ubuntu philosophy therefore promotes a worldview in which nations and individuals alike are celebrated for their distinctive qualities and encouraged to interact with one another on an international level. This approach represents a departure from more divisive paradigms that have historically been used to classify individuals and limit their potential based on indiscriminate characteristics.

4.5.3 Recognising the distinctiveness of persons

Tutu's Ubuntu Theology seeks to bridge the divide between white and Black communities in South Africa (Battle, 1997). However, the practicality of this philosophy has been questioned in light of the longstanding history of disintegration and conflict between these two groups. The Ubuntu approach is in contrast to the individualistic and antagonistic language that has

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characterised interactions between these communities in the past. Tutu's Ubuntu Theology posits that individuals can only truly discover themselves through their connections with others, and that true human flourishing is achieved through recognising and respecting the inherent value of every person.

While the notion of Ubuntu may initially seem unrealistic in the face of such deep-seated conflict, Tutu's philosophy provides a powerful alternative to traditional approaches and offers hope for a more unified and harmonious future.

4.5.4 Conquering apartheid

The understanding of the Imago Dei as the core of one's identity in South Africa is integral to both Tutu's definition of Ubuntu (Battle, 1997) and his theological interpretation of it, which stands in opposition to the apartheid narrative. Tutu's viewpoint highlights the significance of recognising the Imago Dei, or the image of God, within oneself and others. The concept of the Imago Dei is rooted in Christian theology and affirms the belief that all human beings are created in the image of God. Tutu's interpretation of Ubuntu seeks to emphasise the inherent worth and dignity of every individual, which is grounded in their shared humanity as bearers of the Imago Dei. By countering the narrative of apartheid, Tutu's Ubuntu Theology endeavours to promote a more just and equitable society in which all individuals are valued and respected.

Tutu's contribution to the discourse on Ubuntu as the foundation for moral development in contemporary Africa is a fresh perspective. His Ubuntu Theology, which is the most suitable philosophy to guide moral development, has been enriched by the contributions of other theologians. This research recognises the multiplicity of perspectives expressed by scholars and concentrates on the valuable insights they provide for the moral strengthening of African societies.

4.6 Phases of Ubuntu

This section outlines the five phases of Ubuntu and draws on the work of Benson Anofuechi (2022) and Christian Gade (2011).

4.6.1 Phase one of Ubuntu (1846–1962)

The concept of Ubuntu has historically been associated with a distinct human virtue, which is believed to elevate individuals to a level akin to divinity. This understanding of Ubuntu centres on the inherent goodness of human beings and the interconnectedness that exists between them.

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In essence, Ubuntu is viewed as a reflection of human dignity and the moral obligation to treat others with respect and compassion. This conception of Ubuntu emphasises the importance of valuing humanity and promoting harmonious relationships among individuals and communities.

This conception of Ubuntu places great importance on valuing the fundamental humanity within each individual and strives for the promotion of harmonious relationships among individuals and communities. By embracing Ubuntu, individuals and societies are encouraged to cultivate a deep sense of empathy, recognising that the well-being of one is intimately tied to the well-being of all.

The emphasis on interconnectedness in Ubuntu challenges the prevailing individualistic mindset that often prevails in contemporary societies. Instead, Ubuntu urges individuals to consider their roles as members of a broader community, fostering a sense of shared responsibility and solidarity. By recognising the interconnectedness of human existence, Ubuntu calls for a collective effort to create a society that upholds the principles of respect, understanding, and compassion.

Ubuntu's emphasis on harmonious relationships and the promotion of human dignity aligns with principles of social justice and equity. By treating others with respect and compassion, Ubuntu can contribute to the reduction of social inequalities and the establishment of a more inclusive society. Ubuntu reminds us of our moral obligation to recognise and uplift the humanity in others, regardless of their backgrounds, and to work towards building a community characterised by mutual understanding and cooperation.

4.6.2 Phase two of Ubuntu (1962–1975)

A growing epistemology emerged in scholarly literature that established a link between Ubuntu and philosophy on a fundamental level. In Ubuntu philosophy, the concept of humanity as embodied in umuntu (a person) becomes crucial in responding to the inherent instability of existence. According to Gade (2011), this period saw the emergence of Ubuntu as a philosophical framework that emphasised the promotion of the collective welfare of humanity, with an integral focus on human growth and development.

The recognition of Ubuntu within scholarly literature has given rise to a burgeoning epistemology that establishes a profound connection between Ubuntu and philosophy. Gade's

(2011, 2013) work highlights the significance of this period, as Ubuntu emerged as a comprehensive philosophical framework, placing great emphasis on the promotion of the collective welfare of humanity, while maintaining an integral focus on the growth and development of individuals.

The epistemological exploration of Ubuntu has shed light on its relevance as a philosophical standpoint, highlighting its potential to provide insightful perspectives on various aspects of human existence. The concept of umuntu encapsulates the multifaceted nature of human beings, encompassing their social, cultural, and moral dimensions. By recognising the interconnectedness and interdependence of individuals, Ubuntu philosophy acknowledges the impact of communal relationships and the collective responsibility that accompanies them.

The emergence of Ubuntu as a philosophical framework during this period marks a significant development in philosophical discourse. Ubuntu expands the boundaries of traditional Western philosophical traditions by incorporating an African perspective rooted in communal values and interdependence. The integration of Ubuntu into philosophical discussions enriches the discipline, inviting broader perspectives and alternative ways of understanding the human experience.

4.6.3 Phase three of Ubuntu (1975–1990s)

In this era, certain scholars classified Ubuntu as a manifestation of African humanism. This perspective encompasses a range of ethical principles, such as solidarity, generosity, communal well-being (*buen vivir*), empathy, altruism, forgiveness, compassion, conviviality, care, love, hope, and sympathy.

Ubuntu's classification as African humanism signifies its rootedness in the African cultural and philosophical tradition, reflecting the values and worldview prevalent in various African societies. Solidarity is a central tenet of Ubuntu, emphasising the interdependence and interconnectedness of individuals within a community. Generosity and communal well-being underscore the importance of sharing resources and promoting the collective welfare of the community as a whole.

Empathy and altruism are integral to Ubuntu philosophy, as they encourage individuals to understand and share in the joys and sorrows of others. Forgiveness, compassion, and conviviality emphasise the fostering of harmonious relationships, promoting understanding and

reconciliation. Care, love, hope, and sympathy further reinforce Ubuntu's emphasis on nurturing and supporting one another in times of need and celebration.

These ethical principles reflect Ubuntu's commitment to the well-being and flourishing of individuals within their social and communal contexts. They guide interactions, shape moral judgements, and influence the ethical choices made within Ubuntu philosophy. Ubuntu's emphasis on these values promotes a culture of mutual respect, dignity, and human flourishing.

The classification of Ubuntu as African humanism not only highlights its specific cultural and philosophical origins but also contributes to the broader discourse on humanism. It offers an alternative perspective to Western humanism by highlighting the communal aspect of human existence and the importance of collective well-being. Ubuntu's ethical principles provide a framework for ethical conduct and social cohesion within African societies.

4.6.4 Phase four of Ubuntu (1990s–2000)

In this stage, Ubuntu was defined as the lens through which Africans perceive reality. For instance, Tutu asserted that Ubuntu motivated many victims of apartheid in South Africa to opt for forgiveness instead of seeking retribution. Gade (2011) illustrates that scholars who identified Ubuntu as a comprehensive worldview recognised that adherence to Ubuntu would address and eliminate major social challenges affecting Africa and the world at large, such as climate change, social injustice, crime, racism, tribalism, ethnic conflict, etc.

The characterisation of Ubuntu as a lens through which reality is understood highlights its pervasive influence on African societies. Ubuntu shapes the way individuals perceive their place within the world, fostering a collective consciousness that values interconnectedness, empathy, and communal well-being. Tutu's assertion regarding forgiveness in the face of apartheid reflects Ubuntu's emphasis on reconciliation and healing, prioritising the restoration of relationships and the pursuit of justice through non-violent means. Moreover, it becomes evident that scholars who view Ubuntu as a comprehensive worldview recognise its potential to address various pressing social challenges. Ubuntu's emphasis on interconnectedness and the promotion of communal well-being provides a foundation for tackling issues such as climate change, as it encourages responsible stewardship of the environment and emphasises the impact of human actions on the broader ecosystem. Ubuntu's focus on justice, empathy, and collective welfare offers a framework for addressing social injustices, combating racism, and fostering harmony among diverse communities.

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Furthermore, Ubuntu's recognition of the intrinsic worth and dignity of all individuals challenges tribalism, ethnic conflict, and other forms of division. By valuing humanity and promoting inclusive and respectful relationships, Ubuntu can contribute to the dismantling of harmful social hierarchies and the creation of more equitable societies. It is important to note, however, that while Ubuntu offers a compelling framework for addressing these social challenges, the practical implementation may face complexities and limitations in different contexts. Cultural, political, and historical factors can influence the interpretation and application of Ubuntu principles, necessitating contextual sensitivity and ongoing dialogue.

4.6.5 Phase five of Ubuntu (2000–2011)

During this period, the concept of Ubuntu was recognised as being connected to the South African Zulu proverb, 'umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu' (a person is a person through other persons), which gained prominence between 1993 and 1995. However, on a more philosophical level, and extending beyond its proverbial expression, Ubuntu denotes the conviction in a universal connection of mutual sharing and giving that link all of humanity.

Ubuntu's philosophical depth lies in its recognition of the inherent interdependence and mutual obligation that exist among all human beings. It emphasises the importance of mutual sharing and giving as foundational aspects of human existence. This philosophical understanding of Ubuntu underscores the idea that the well-being and flourishing of one individual are intimately tied to the well-being and flourishing of the entire community. It calls for a collective commitment to nurturing relationships based on compassion, empathy, and a shared responsibility for the welfare of all. By embracing the universal connection of Ubuntu, individuals are encouraged to cultivate a sense of solidarity, cooperation, and respect for the dignity of others. This philosophical understanding of Ubuntu offers a profound framework for fostering harmonious relationships and addressing various challenges that face humanity, such as social inequality, injustice, and the fragmentation of communities.

4.7 Ubuntu Theology and the rainbow nation

Ubuntu Theology provides a platform for us to engage in discourse regarding the concept of a rainbow nation, which serves as an expansion of its inherent principles and values. Tutu (1999) used Ubuntu Theology to bring to light the dream of a rainbow nation, in contrast to an apartheid state. We need to acknowledge that this comes with its own shortcomings when we conform to the rainbow nation ideology, as, 'South Africa is now called the rainbow nation

because this means unity within multi-culturalism and the coming together of people of many different races' (Buqa, 2015, p. 5). This notion then tries to affirm that, 'Ubuntu is taken overtly as a uniquely African concept that is implicitly not expressed elsewhere in the world. The experience of post-apartheid South Africa can be regarded as a bold experiment where the boundaries of the possibility of the integrated-society approach are continuously tested' (2015, p. 5).

Tutu's concept of the 'rainbow nation' is a recognised metaphor for South Africa's multi-racial and multi-cultural society. Tutu (1994) used the metaphor to promote reconciliation and unity in a country that had been deeply divided by decades of apartheid. The rainbow nation metaphor emerged in the aftermath of South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994. In his inaugural speech as the country's first Black president, Nelson Mandela used the metaphor to describe the diverse peoples of South Africa coming together under one flag. Tutu, who had played a prominent role in the anti-apartheid struggle, expanded on the metaphor in his 1999 book. Furthermore, Buqa (2015, p. 5) asserts that, 'It was the ideal of Mandela and Tutu to have a caring and compassionate rainbow nation.'

Tutu argued that the different colours of the rainbow represented the different races and cultures of South Africa, and that the beauty of the rainbow lay in its diversity. Tutu's rainbow nation metaphor was a powerful symbol of reconciliation and unity in a country that had been deeply divided by apartheid. The metaphor suggested that South Africa's diversity was not a source of division, but rather a source of strength. Furthermore, the metaphor implied that the different races and cultures of South Africa could coexist in harmony, as long as they were willing to acknowledge and celebrate their differences. Biblically, the rainbow is seen as a covenant between God and His people, signifying peace and hope (Tshawane, 2009). Within Tutu's thinking, the rainbow symbolises hope, prosperity, and justice, indicating the promise of a bright future for South Africa's diverse population. Tutu's use of the rainbow metaphor thus taps into the broader cultural and religious significance of the rainbow, and imbues it with a specific meaning that resonates with his vision of a harmonious and just society. By drawing on this powerful symbol, Tutu is able to evoke a sense of shared purpose and optimism that transcends ethnic, racial, and religious differences. Overall, the interpretation suggests that Tutu's use of the rainbow metaphor is a testament to his ability to draw on a wide range of cultural and religious traditions to promote a vision of social justice and harmony.

Central to Tutu's vision of the rainbow people of God is the idea of reconciliation (1994). It was here that Tutu advocated for the realisation of the rainbow concept, a vision of societal harmony and equality, which he believed could only be achieved through a comprehensive and nuanced process of reconciliation. Tutu posited that this transformative journey required the active participation of all individuals and communities, transcending the boundaries of race, ethnicity, and socio-economic status. Central to this process was the imperative of acknowledging and confronting the deep-rooted injustices perpetrated during the era of apartheid. Tutu emphasised the importance of collective reflection and truth-telling, wherein the painful experiences and trauma endured by marginalised groups would be openly acknowledged and validated. Such an acknowledgement would serve as the foundation for fostering understanding, empathy, and ultimately, forgiveness. Tutu envisioned reconciliation as a multifaceted endeavour that encompassed societal, political, and individual dimensions. It entailed dismantling systemic inequalities, dismantling discriminatory policies, and fostering a culture of inclusivity and equal opportunity. By undertaking this arduous journey of reconciliation, Tutu believed that South Africa could transcend its divisive past, heal its wounds, and forge a more just and equitable society where all individuals could thrive, irrespective of their backgrounds.

Tutu (1994) proposes that a society that is truly reconciled and just can be formed through a process that entails confession, forgiveness, and restitution. He believed that by following this process, the rainbow people of God can emerge, and the African society can attain a state of authentic reconciliation and justice. This process is based on the fundamental principle of Ubuntu, which emphasises communalism and interconnectedness, and is considered a crucial component for the creation of a harmonious society. Tutu's proposition advocates for the recognition of the inherent worth and dignity of every human being, irrespective of their race, gender, or social status, thereby promoting a society that is equitable, fair, and just.

Moreover, Tutu's rainbow concept is deeply connected to the idea of human potential. Tutu believed that all individuals possess an innate capacity for greatness and that this potential could only be fully realised in a society that values justice, equality, and mutual respect. Tutu argued that the rainbow people of God must work together to create a society that allows all individuals to achieve their full human potential, free from the constraints of discrimination and oppression (Tshawane, 2009). Tutu's rainbow nation metaphor was a powerful symbol of hope and unity in South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy. The metaphor

suggested that South Africa's diversity was a source of strength and that the different races and cultures of the country could coexist in harmony. While the metaphor has been criticised for being too idealistic and for ignoring ongoing divisions and inequalities in South Africa, it remains a potent symbol of reconciliation and dialogue in a country that still grapples with the legacy of apartheid. It could be argued that more needs to be done to realise the vision of the rainbow nation in the South African context today. This notwithstanding, the continued persistence of racial and cultural divisions in South Africa suggests that more needs to be done to realise the vision of the rainbow nation. As South African writer Sisonke Msimang (2017) has argued, the rainbow nation metaphor may have been useful in the early years of democracy, but it has now become a 'lazy cliché' that obscures the ongoing struggles for justice and equality in the country.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter showed that Ubuntu Theology offers a unique and powerful framework for understanding the human experience and promoting social justice and equity. This is demonstrated through its emphasis on personal and collective empowerment and its recognition of the potential for identity construction as an ongoing process of becoming through relationship with the other. Furthermore, the literature points to the understanding that, Ubuntu challenges the Western individualistic conception of identity and offers a pathway to re-imagining what it means to be fully human. Furthermore, Ubuntu has proven to be a source of inspiration for political and social movements, such as the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa. As a result, Ubuntu Theology has gained increasing recognition as a tool for promoting social justice and equity, not only in South Africa but around the world.

While the potential of Ubuntu Theology for promoting social justice and equity in South Africa is widely recognised, there are also challenges and limitations to its application. For instance, some have argued that Ubuntu's emphasis on community and relationships may be difficult to reconcile with the individualistic values that dominate many Western societies. Additionally, there is a need to ensure that Ubuntu is not essentialised or romanticised, but rather recognised as a dynamic and evolving philosophy that is open to critical engagement and interpretation. Nonetheless, the growing interest in Ubuntu Theology reflects a growing recognition of the need for alternative worldviews and values that can challenge the status quo and promote greater justice and equity. Given the challenges faced by South Africa, Ubuntu Theology has

become more palatable for many and easier to internalise in relation to the veracity and intentional deconstruction of Black Theology.

Overall, Ubuntu Theology offers a powerful alternative to dominant Western conceptions of identity and community, and a compelling vision for building more just and equitable societies. In a world that is increasingly marked by division, polarisation, and inequality, Ubuntu offers a pathway towards a more just and compassionate future, one in which the inherent worth and dignity of all beings is recognised and celebrated.

CHAPTER 5: ROOT METAPHORS — BLACK THEOLOGY AND UBUNTU THEOLOGY

5.1 Introduction

Theological discourse often makes use of metaphors to convey complex ideas and experiences in a more accessible and relatable way. One type of metaphor that is particularly common in theological discourse is the 'root metaphor,' which provides the fundamental imagery or conceptual framework for an entire system of thought. Root metaphors can shape how we understand and interpret theological concepts and practices and can have significant implications for how we engage with the world around us. Root metaphors are elemental symbols or concepts that shape an entire system of thought and serve as foundational principles in a specific discourse.

The intertwining of church and politics has been a significant struggle throughout South Africa's history. In the pre-democratic era, the apartheid regime exploited the church and the Bible to promote discriminatory policies against people based on the colour of their skin. The Bible was the primary tool used by the architects of apartheid to justify and defend their heinous acts of prejudice and discrimination (Maluleke, 1998). They claimed that apartheid was a divinely ordained system, and they cherry-picked biblical texts to support their argument (Vorster, 1983, p. 94).

On the other side of the spectrum, missionaries played a crucial role in the colonial project, using the Bible as a tool to impose their cultural and religious beliefs on colonised peoples. They saw themselves as saviours, tasked with bringing enlightenment and civilisation to 'uncivilised' peoples. The missionaries' use of the Bible as an instrument of colonisation highlights the complex relationship between religion and politics in South Africa's history (Kobe, 2021, p. 4). This relationship has had profound implications for the country's social, cultural, and political landscape, and it continues to shape debates about the role of religion in contemporary South African society. Many have praised the missionaries for the work they have done particularly in relation to education and healthcare, but it is pivotal to recognise that part of the colonial project was to use missionaries to get insight into the colony (Kobe, 2021, p. 3). Missionaries in South Africa and other colonial contexts have often been viewed as the representatives of the colonial state who promoted the ideology of domination and assimilation

into the European world system. Missionaries are regarded as having contributed to the erosion of Indigenous cultures and social structures that provided resistance to colonialism. Instead, the missionaries presented a friendly face of the colonial state, superficially bringing salvation to the heathen, but in reality, serving as a tool of colonialism (Dladla, 2017, p. 45). The colonial project in South Africa played a pivotal role in shaping the emergence of Black Liberation Theology. The imposition of colonialism brought with it a '*new*' religion, Christianity, which was used as a tool of control and domination. Missionaries were instrumental in spreading Christianity, but they also imposed European cultural norms and values on Indigenous communities, erasing their cultural identities and social structures (Kobe, 2021, p. 3).

Theology can be understood as having been characterised by the emergence of different theological frameworks and paradigms that reflect the unique historical, cultural, and social contexts across the globe. One of the most prominent theological discourses that has emerged in South Africa is Black Theology, which is rooted in the experiences of the Black community under the apartheid system. It is on the basis as set out above that through a reading of both Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology in South Africa, one can recognise that liberation is considered a central theme and root metaphor of Black Theology, which seeks to address the socio-political and economic oppression faced by Black South Africans and other marginalised groups. Similarly, Ubuntu Theology has emerged as a distinct theological paradigm that is grounded in the cultural traditions and experiences of the African continent, based on an understanding of reconciliation. Reconciliation is thus considered a root metaphor of Ubuntu Theology, which seeks to address the historical wounds and divisions caused by colonisation, slavery, and apartheid.

In this chapter, I explore the use of root metaphors in theological discourse, examining their role in shaping theological thought and their impact on our understanding of the divine, the human experience, and our relationship to the world. I juxtapose the two theologies, Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology and thereafter introduce their root metaphors of which I provide an overview. I also consider some of the critiques and challenges that have been raised regarding the use of root metaphors in theology and discuss the implications of these critiques for theological discourse in the South African context, riddled with the scabs of apartheid and colonial missionary endeavours.

5.2 Juxtaposing Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology

5.2.1 Black Theology as a theological discourse

Boesak (1977) reminds Back Theology is derived from its biblical foundation, is steadfastly maintains that discussing God's love necessitates addressing not only His righteousness but also His justice. This justice is tangibly manifested in His interactions with human beings and the dynamics of interpersonal relationships among individuals.This is a stark reminder that Black Theology is grounded in the biblical message, which emphasises the inextricable connection between God's love and His righteousness and justice in his relationship with human beings and their relationships with one another. In other words, Black Theology acknowledges that the biblical message cannot be limited to God's love without also addressing issues of justice and righteousness, which are essential to understanding God's relationship with humanity. The implication is that the promotion of love, justice, and righteousness is not an optional aspect of the biblical message but an inseparable component that must be addressed in theological discourse. By emphasising the importance of these components, Black Theology provides a framework for engaging in critical theological analysis that challenges traditional theological perspectives that neglect issues of justice and righteousness. Therefore, it is implied that Black Theology is a theological discourse that seeks to recontextualise the biblical message and address issues of social justice and equality for all.

At its core, Black Theology is a theology of liberation that seeks to address the systemic oppression of Black people and other marginalised communities. However, despite its fundamental principles of Black Consciousness, it is arguable that the depth of its praxis has not been fully realised. This could be attributed to the shortcomings of Black Theology as a liberation theology and its premature coming of age. In less than 30 years, Black Theology was seemingly abandoned, or at least relegated to the sidelines, around 10 years ago already. It is crucial to interrogate the factors that may have led to this premature decline and to explore the potential for a revival of Black Theology in the current social and political context (Buffel, 2021, p. 3). The experience of colonialism and Christianisation through the colonial project and the impotence of apartheid led to a crisis of identity and a sense of dislocation among Black South Africans (Zwane, 2020, p. 1).

The rise of the BCM and the emergence of Black Liberation Theology sought to reclaim the cultural heritage and social identity of Black South Africans, while also providing a theological framework for their struggle against the oppressive system of apartheid. Black Liberation Theology rejected the theology of the colonisers and instead emphasised the idea of God's preferential option for the poor and the oppressed, which was rooted in the experience of Black South Africans. In the context of Black Theology, the philosophy of Black Consciousness has been regarded as a fundamental principle that must be considered in order for the praxis of Black liberation to have a lasting impact. Thus, Black Theology is challenged to find a home amidst contested spaces, which is not limited to apartheid but includes the colonial project.

When the principles of Black Consciousness are not embedded or rooted in society, it could be argued that there is a need to call for a re-emergence of Black Theology that places Black Consciousness at its core. This can be seen as a call for a return to the roots of Black Theology and a renewed emphasis on its foundational principles, which include the recognition and affirmation of the humanity of Black people, the pursuit of social justice, and the liberation of the oppressed. By re-emphasising the principles of Black Consciousness, Black Theology is thus a relevant and powerful force in the struggle for Black liberation.

Boesak (1977, p. 26) sums this up when he writes:

> In simple terms, Black Consciousness means that Black people realise that the recognition of the Blackness is essential to their humanity. In its relation to Black Theology, Black Consciousness means that being Black becomes a decisive factor in Black people's expression of their belief in Jesus Christ.

The immediate challenge facing Black Theology in South Africa was the dominance of what Moore (1973) refers to as 'liberal ecumenism,' where the theme of reconciliation through interpersonal contact was emphasised. This 'liberal reconciliation ideology' of opposition to apartheid was attractive to many white English-speakers as well as some of the more conservative Black people (Solomons, 2017).

This does not negate Engdahl's (2017, p. 6) assertion that, 'A Black Liberation Theology inevitably leads to a black ecclesiology.' This ecclesiology will thus not be limited to a particular faith tradition or expression but will be relevant across the expressions of the God of liberation. It could therefore be acknowledged and appreciated that, 'Black Theology is not

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prepared to separate the historical Jesus from the reality of his presence in the world today' (Boesak, 1977, p. 41).

Furthermore, one needs to understand that Boesak's theology of Black liberation, morphed very early on into a prophetic theology. However, one needs to consider that, 'Prophetic theology is often polemical and confessional. It relies on the interpretation of the root causes of problems and then provides an alternative alluring vision based on the foundations of a particular religious faith' (Vellem, 2012, p. 8). It is generally understood that Boesak's adoption of Black Consciousness enabled him to develop and formulate a prophetic resistance; later on, this could be accepted as a prophetic theology. One could argue that this contributes to the premature dissolving of Black Liberation Theology in South Africa, as Boesak's theology morphs from liberation to prophetic.

In the contemporary South African context, the pursuit of affirming the emancipation and liberation of the Black populace is intricately intertwined with the presence of dehumanising poverty. This unfortunate reality persists despite the fact that political power has been in the hands of Black leaders since 1994 (Buffel, 2021, p. 3). The evolution of Black Theology and liberation theology in South Africa is indeed in a space and context where it is ready to mature into its own. Black Liberation Theology can no longer be regarded as an extension of James Cone or Martin Luther King Jnr, but rather it should have sufficient credentials to now evolve as an extension of Allan Boesak, Barney Pityana, Steve Biko, and the likes. This will indeed signal an understanding and appreciation of the role of the American Black theological disposition as well as that of Latin America but will also entice South Africans into a space of renewal for the struggle against economic and racial injustice.

The notion of Blackness is still associated with negative connotations and is often used as a means of denigration. This is in part due to the legacy of apartheid, which perpetuated the idea that Blackness was something to be ashamed of. However, this association of Blackness with shame is deeply problematic and undermines the dignity and humanity of Black individuals. It is therefore essential to challenge this narrative and to affirm the value and worth of Blackness. This requires a shift in societal attitudes and a recognition of how systemic racism continues to perpetuate these harmful stereotypes. By dismantling these harmful narratives and celebrating the diversity and richness of Black culture, we can begin to create a more just and equitable society.

When one now considers Black Theology considering the fundamental principles of Black Consciousness, it is evident that the depth of its praxis has not been felt. This could be due to the shortcomings of Black Theology as a liberation theology and I would venture to suggest that it is as a result of its premature coming of age.

5.2.2 Ubuntu Theology as a theological discourse

When considering Ubuntu and its application through the theology it presupposes, one needs to recognise its overlapping of various African concepts, related to community: 'Ubuntu refers to the person who is welcoming, who is hospitable, who is warm and generous, who is affirming of others' (Battle, 1997). This is a concept not alien to African communities, and so Ubuntu as a concept or disposition could be considered as a norm in many African communities. In an African understanding, human society is something constituted organically; in Western, egalitarian societies there is a non-organic organisation of individuals that is more akin to an association than to an African community. If one contrasts this to Western culture around community, we soon note that, these distinctions also play out on the level of personhood. Many Western views of personhood focus primarily on the lone, self-determined individual.

The African view of a person depicts a person in the context of that person's surrounding environment (Battle, 2000), so much so that, according to much current African scholarship, African epistemology begins with community and moves to individuality, whereas Western epistemology moves from individuality to community.

One has to also note that,

> Since ubuntu emphasises personal empowerment and limitless potential through an understanding of identity construction as an ongoing process of 'becoming through relationship with the other,' this has particular relevance for re-imagining what it means to be human generally and specifically people who inhabit their humanity in a Black skin (Lewis, 2010, pp. 70–71).

Furthermore:

> It is important to note, however, that ubuntu does not exclude notions of individual identity or personhood even if it holds that our individual identities are very much

related to and dependent on our corporate identity or belonging or interconnectedness (de Beer, 2015, p. 4).

It is understood that Tutu interprets and understands Ubuntu in light of his ecclesiology, which is rooted in the appreciation of community, and the African expression thereof. This would no doubt be influenced by the South African context – one of oppression and poverty – even if one was not economically poor.

In examining ecclesiology, the doctrine of Imago Dei also comes into play, which affirms the inherent worth and dignity of all human beings. This doctrine asserts that every individual is made in the image of God and therefore possesses an intrinsic value that is not dependent on any external factors. From this perspective, the appreciation and expression of community are rooted in a shared recognition of the divine image present in each person. In essence, the doctrine of Imago Dei serves as a foundation for understanding the theological basis of community and highlights the importance of treating every person with dignity and respect. By recognising the divine image in all individuals, this doctrine provides a framework for fostering unity, compassion, and social justice within the context of the church and wider society.

The concept of Imago Dei, or the idea that humans are created in the image of God, is central to Tutu's theological views. His understanding of Imago Dei presupposes a radical formation of human identity in the world (Battle, 1997). His view of the Imago Dei presupposes that every human being possesses inherent dignity and worth, regardless of their race, gender, or social status. This understanding of human identity is radical because it challenges the traditional hierarchies and power structures that have dominated society throughout history. Tutu argues that every human being is created in the image of God and, as such, deserves to be treated with respect and dignity. Moreover, Tutu believes that this understanding of the Imago Dei has practical implications for the formation of human identity in the world. He argues that the Imago Dei is not a static concept but rather an ongoing process of becoming. This means that human identity is not fixed but is constantly evolving and shaped by our relationships with others. Tutu believes that it is through our relationships with others that we come to understand ourselves and our place in the world (Battle, 1997). For Tutu, the radical formation of human identity in the world is not just an abstract theological concept. Rather, it has practical implications for the building of a just and equitable society. Tutu believes that by recognising the inherent dignity and worth of every human being, we can create a society that is free from discrimination and oppression. He argues that this requires us to be in solidarity with one

another, to listen to each other's stories and experiences, and to work together to create a more just and equitable world. This coming together of ecclesiology and Imago Dei highlights the engagement with the Christian understanding of personhood. Furthermore, 'From Tutu's perspective of Ubuntu—a form of relational spirituality that connotes the basic connectedness of all human beings—godless systems of justice encourage a high degree of competitiveness and selfishness' (Battle, 2000, p. 178). In other words, Ubuntu 'is a touchstone by which the quality of a society has to be continually tested, no matter what ideology is reigning; it must be incorporated not only in the society of the future but also in the process of the struggle towards that future' (Wilson & Ramphele, 1989, p. 269).

Tutu's approach to theology involves taking an African concept, reflecting on it, and providing a theological framework for it. However, it is noteworthy that the world often interprets this framework as a theology of liberation due to the core of the concept, which emphasises the recognition of the humanity of others. Tutu's use of Ubuntu Theology, which centres on the interconnectedness of humanity, highlights the importance of recognising the shared humanity of all individuals and treating them with dignity and respect. This recognition of the humanity of others is a crucial aspect of liberation theology, which is grounded in the struggle for the liberation of oppressed peoples. Therefore, while Tutu's theology may not be explicitly focused on liberation, it is still associated with it due to the underlying emphasis on human dignity and respect. The conflation of Ubuntu Theology with liberation theology highlights the complexity of the relationship between different theological frameworks and how they are interpreted and applied in different contexts. In a journal article, Battle (2000, p. 178) suggests: 'One cannot understand Tutu's political contributions until his theology is understood. From Tutu's perspective of Ubuntu—a form of relational spirituality that connotes the basic connectedness of all human beings—godless systems of justice encourage a high degree of competitiveness and selfishness.' That which has caused the disconnection with Ubuntu from its African counterparts is its intrinsically political link, which by extension becomes the challenge to the theology it implores or even exudes. It could be argued that the nature of Ubuntu in South Africa and its liberation landscape could be because of the face and personality attached to it in South Africa: Desmond Tutu.

It is apparent in a reading of Ubuntu Theology that its nature has been a source of confusion for many scholars and theologians, due in part to its political identity. Ubuntu Theology has been shaped by South Africa's political context, which has had a profound impact on its

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development and expression. For South Africa, the concept of Ubuntu emerged in the context of the struggle against apartheid, and was used as a tool for resistance and liberation. As such, Ubuntu Theology is often associated with political activism and is viewed by some as a political theology rather than a purely religious one. This political identity has caused confusion about the nature of Ubuntu Theology, leading some to question whether it is a genuine theology or simply a form of political ideology.

However, proponents of Ubuntu Theology argue that it is a distinct theological tradition with its own unique perspectives and insights. While it is true that Ubuntu Theology is deeply influenced by the political context in which it emerged, it is important to recognise that it is more than just a political ideology. By exploring the nature of Ubuntu Theology in more depth, it is possible to gain a deeper understanding of its theological perspectives and to appreciate its significance as a distinct theological tradition.

5.3 Liberation in the South African context

Liberation refers to the struggle for freedom from oppression and domination in all its forms, including racism, poverty, and social injustice (Gutierrez, 1973, p. 1). Furthermore, when considering liberation in light of theology, Gutierrez and Shaull (1977, p. 86), remind us that 'the theology of liberation is a theology of salvation incarnated in the concrete historical and political conditions of today.' Liberation thus cannot be caught up in the political arena solely but must translate into the lived experience of individuals and taken seriously in light of the gift of salvation. This is to say that liberation is not only for the believer; instead, liberation and the challenge thereof come from the non-person – an individual who is not recognised through the social order of the day, the poor, the exploited, and those who are systemically deprived of being persons (p. 79). Liberation and the experience thereof are grounded in an understanding of love; a love that goes to the root of exploitation and injustices (p. 87).

Liberation and its expression as a theology emerged in the 1960s and 1970s as a response to the social, economic, and political realities of Latin America (Gutierrez, 1973) It sought to bring about social change by interpreting the gospel in light of the struggles of the poor and marginalised, and by encouraging Christians to take an active role in transforming oppressive structures. However, liberation theology should not be understood as replacing other functions of theology, such as wisdom and rational knowledge. Rather, it should be seen as a critical reflection on Christian praxis in the light of the Word, presupposing and needing these other

functions of theology (1973). By engaging with the social, economic, and political realities of the poor and marginalised, liberation theology highlights the need for Christians to be active agents of social transformation, while drawing on the wisdom and knowledge of the broader theological tradition. In this manner, liberation theology assumes the character of a resolute call to action deeply grounded in the Christian faith, aspiring to foster a society that is characterised by justice and equity. At its core, liberation theology acknowledges the significance of engaging with the multifaceted complexities of the world, all the while remaining firmly rooted in the transformative power of the gospel message.

As illustrated, the emergence of Black Liberation Theology in South Africa was deeply influenced by the experiences and ideas of liberation theology in Latin America. This is as a result of liberation theology being a theology that emphasised the idea of God's preferential option for the poor and the oppressed and sought to mobilise the church to work towards social and economic justice. The emergence of liberation theology in Latin America had a profound impact on theologians and activists in South Africa, who were grappling with similar issues of oppression and inequality.

Black theologians in South Africa, such as Boesak and Tutu, drew on the ideas of liberation theology and adapted them to the South African context, emphasising many a time the importance of collective action and solidarity in the struggle against apartheid. The exchange of ideas and experiences between theologians in Latin America and South Africa helped to shape the emergence of Black Liberation Theology in South Africa and contributed to a broader global movement for justice and liberation. Thus, when we place Black Theology in the context of South Africa today, it is still a theology that needs to take seriously the suffering of Black people, today. It is thus a point to note that, 'Theology is passionately involved in the actual struggles and suffering within a given situation and community' (Fortuin, 2018, p. 509). It has to be further understood that, 'for Black people this means that theology must engage itself in the Black experience' (p. 509). This experience that is often referred to must not be misunderstood as human or anthropological liberation but so too, a liberation of engagement, particularly how we engage with scripture.

A review of Black Theology in South Africa points to the fact that Black Theology in South Africa recognises liberation as a central part of the Christian gospel message and as a way of embodying the love and justice of God in the world. Liberation stands as a prominent and

central theme within the framework of Black Theology, functioning as a root metaphor that underpins the theological discourse within the Black community.

My examination of liberation theology, viewed through the lens of Black Theology, compels me to assert that liberation in the context of Black Theology in South Africa has been a long and difficult journey. However, the struggle for liberation is far from over, and new challenges continue to emerge. In the post-apartheid era, Black theologians are faced with the task of articulating a theology that addresses the ongoing legacy of colonialism and apartheid, as well as the challenges of poverty, inequality, and corruption. The struggle for liberation in South Africa is an ongoing process, and Black Theology continues to play a critical role in this process by offering a prophetic voice that speaks truth to power and challenges oppressive structures. Ultimately, the goal of liberation in the context of Black Theology in South Africa is the creation of a just and equitable society, where all people are valued and respected, regardless of their race, gender, or social status. This dimension acquires significance within the specific context of South Africa, particularly when considering the enduring obstacles to achieving liberation in these disputed domains. Consequently, acknowledging the debatable nature of this matter compels us to advance and formulate a comprehensive strategy for liberation in the South African milieu, with Black Theology and its defining features serving as essential guideposts in this endeavour.

5.4 Reconciliation in the South African context

In Ubuntu Theology, the central emphasis is placed on reconciliation (Resane, 2017, p. 93), the process of bridging apparent divisions and restoring both the humanity and dignity of not only the victims but also the perpetrators of violence. Within this theological framework, it is Tutu who recognises the imperative of addressing the wounds inflicted by violence and promoting healing and restoration. Ubuntu Theology encompasses a profound understanding of the interconnectedness of all individuals and the recognition that both victims and perpetrators are impacted by the cycles of violence and dehumanisation, all bound up in one word: reconciliation. By prioritising reconciliation, Tutu seeks to transcend the boundaries that separate individuals and foster a sense of shared humanity, promoting the restoration of dignity and fostering a path towards healing for all parties involved.

As per previous chapters, Ubuntu Theology, emerging from the cultural and theological traditions of Africa, has reconciliation as one of its central themes. Reconciliation is a root

metaphor of Ubuntu Theology, which emphasises the interconnectedness and interdependence of all individuals in a community. In South Africa where the wounds of apartheid and colonialism remain, reconciliation has taken on a particular significance as a means of healing and restoring broken relationships. The concept of reconciliation is deeply embedded in the African worldview and is viewed as a process that involves restoring relationships, seeking forgiveness, and embracing the other. Through various developments on the political front, the discourse on reconciliation has undergone significant transformations, moving away from its traditional theological associations to assume a broader and more encompassing role within the guiding vision for the country. Over time, the concept of reconciliation has expanded to encompass a wider range of societal and political contexts. This evolution can be attributed to a multitude of factors, including changing social dynamics, the recognition of historical injustices, and the realisation of the need for healing and unity within diverse societies.

As political landscapes have shifted, the discourse on reconciliation has increasingly become intertwined with concepts of social justice, human rights, and transitional justice mechanisms. It now represents a comprehensive approach aimed at addressing deep-rooted divisions, restoring trust, and building inclusive and equitable societies. This transformation reflects a growing understanding that reconciliation is not merely a theological concept confined to the personal realm, but a vital component of a nation's vision for progress, stability, and sustainable development (Solomons, 2017, p. 188). The concept of reconciliation, therefore, cannot be equated with the notions of negotiation or compromise, as embracing mere tolerance would lead to an illusory state of tranquillity and the continuation of malevolent forces. Such a trajectory would signify a complete abandonment and betrayal of the fundamental essence encapsulated by the Christian faith throughout its history (Solomons, 2020, p. 5).

5.5 Black Theology and liberation

The emergence of Black Theology in South Africa during the late 1960s has resulted in the development of the liberation metaphor as a prominent concept. This metaphor has become a category for a new theological self-understanding that challenges Black people to discover themselves as human beings created in the Imago Dei. The liberation metaphor is rooted in the historical experiences of the Black community, and it highlights the importance of social justice and the need for liberation from oppression. The Black Theology of South Africa and the Black Theology of North America have one common foundational focus, that is, the liberation from racism (Hopkins, 1990, p. 49).

Black Theology thus continues to be a pivotal tool to eradicate that, this has been at the heart of Black Consciousness, or as many in liberation circles speak of, the setting free of one's mind. For Black communities, this is central to the current spaces and lived experiences. As Black people there is no need to continue to live in spaces marred by oppression and subjugation because of one's skin colour.

Too often Black communities have been made to believe that their lived experiences of oppression and subjugation in our townships is a result of oppression, rather than being Black. In reading Boesak's work, one soon discovers that 'Boesak believes God reveals himself in the situation' (Fortuin, 2018, p. 509). Hluani Mdinigi, reminds us; "Blackness is not merely an insignia for the notion of Black identity but is, in fact, tran-scendence"(Mdingi,2022, p583). In the realm of Black liberation theology, a transcendent actuality manifests as a convergence of revolutionary transcendence within the context of the tangible world characterized by profound suffering, which emanates from the pervasive influence of white supremacy and the prevailing capitalist systems of production.

Driven by an emerging sense that Black people should take the initiative for their own liberation struggle, it soon became apparent that the (white) liberal model of the non-racial student organisation could not withstand the level of Black discontent. It was argued that despite its facade of non-racialism, the UCM was primarily a 'white-dominated' organisation. This made cooperation across racial lines increasingly more difficult, eventually leading to the formation of a Black caucus with Steve Biko and Barney Pityana at its centre. Those in the black caucus were determined not only to understand the long history of Black protest in the country but also to find creative ways of addressing existing challenges. They did this by focusing on the radical writings of Black American scholars like James Baldwin, Stokely Carmichael, Eldridge Cleaver, and James Cone – particularly, their concern with Black Theology as a vehicle for examining the predicament of the poor and the oppressed (Solomons, 2017, p. 136).

Maluleke (1995, p. 252) and Gunda (2009, p. 86) have argued that the notion of liberation as a root metaphor for Black Theology is overly simplistic and fails to acknowledge the complexity and sophistication of the theological discourse. This characterisation suggests that the pursuit of liberation requires minimal intellectual effort and creative input, which is an underestimation of the intellectual and theological rigour demanded by liberation theology. As a result, the notion of liberation as a root metaphor also undermines the possibility of a productive

relationship between liberation and reconstruction. The oversimplified characterisation of liberation fails to account for the nuanced interplay between these two concepts and the potential for constructive interaction between them. However, Solomons (2017) argues that liberation theologies have evolved over time, resulting in variations in approach and emphasis with respect to methodology, definition, and content. In the case of Black Theology, the root metaphor of liberation is grounded in a range of issues, including race, poverty, culture, and spirituality (Solomons, 2017, p. 4). These issues serve as the points of departure for the development of the liberation metaphor within the context of Black Theology. Such a perspective on liberation underscores the importance of understanding the complexities and nuances of the various factors that have contributed to the development of this metaphor in the field of theology. Furthermore, Jerry Pillay (2020, p. 2) notes that, 'Liberation theologians point out that liberation is a continued task because oppression, poverty, unjust economic systems, racism and social injustices will always be with us in the world.'

Vellem (2007) provides an important contribution to the field of liberation theology by exploring the root paradigm of liberation. He notes that this paradigm is central to the vision and norms of liberation theologies, including Black Liberation Theology. Liberation, according to Vellem, serves as the foundation for a theological understanding that seeks to empower oppressed communities and challenge systems of injustice. The concept of liberation is multifaceted, encompassing political, social, economic, and spiritual dimensions. It is through the root metaphor of liberation that Black Liberation Theology has sought to challenge the oppression and marginalisation faced by Black South Africans, providing a framework for a theology that is grounded in the lived experiences of the people. Vellem's exploration of liberation as a root paradigm offers a critical perspective on the development and application of liberation theology in the South African context, highlighting how it has served as a tool for resistance and transformation.

Solomons (2021, p. 5) argues that in the democratic context, it is possible to argue for the inclusion of liberation and reconciliation as fundamental concepts within the framework of Black Liberation Theology. However, one must also acknowledge reservations regarding the capacity of this theological perspective to adequately confront the complex issues surrounding strained race relations in the nation. There has been an insinuation that the dismantling of apartheid and the establishment of a democratic system render Black Liberation Theology irrelevant. Nevertheless, it is important to recognise that such concerns are often rooted in

political considerations rather than theological ones. Thus, the notion of liberation as a root metaphor for Black Theology emphasises the importance of understanding the complexities and nuances of the various factors that have contributed to the development of this metaphor in the field of theology. Furthermore, it has served as a tool for resistance and transformation, providing a framework for a theology that is grounded in the lived experiences of the people. The relationship between liberation and reconciliation emerges as a critical topic for Black theological thought, emphasising the importance of restoring broken relationships and fostering unity and solidarity among diverse groups.

In South Africa, liberation as a root metaphor has played a crucial role and continue to shape Black Theology. It has challenged the theological status quo, dismantled theologies of oppression, and emphasised the inherent dignity and worth of Black people created in the Imago Dei. Moreover, the liberation metaphor has been a source of inspiration for many theological praxes that have brought about social and political change. While criticisms and limitations exist, its impact on theological discourse and praxis cannot be denied. It is a reminder that theology cannot be separated from the social, political, and economic realities of the world, and that true theology must strive towards the liberation of all people from all forms of oppression. Thus, liberation as a root metaphor has become an essential component of Black Theology, providing a foundation for a theology that is committed to justice, freedom, and the dignity of all people. Black Theology emphasises the liberation of Black people from the oppressive systems of racism and discrimination that have historically plagued society. In this context, the relationship between liberation and reconciliation emerges as a critical topic for Black theological thought. While liberation focuses on the emancipation of Black people from oppressive structures, reconciliation emphasises the importance of restoring broken relationships and fostering unity and solidarity among diverse groups. These key precepts of Black Theology are particularly important, as they provide a framework for addressing the social and political issues that continue to impact the Black community in South Africa.

As surveyed through the lenses of Black theologians, it is evident that, liberation as a root metaphor has played a crucial role in shaping Black Theology in South Africa. It has served as a lens through which theologians view the world, the church, and God. The liberation paradigm has challenged the theological status quo, dismantled theologies of oppression, and emphasised the inherent dignity and worth of Black people created in the Imago Dei. Moreover, the

liberation metaphor has been a source of inspiration for many theological praxes that have brought about social and political change in South Africa.

5.6 Ubuntu Theology and reconciliation

Reconciliation is a fundamental and pervasive concept in the field of theology, and it holds particular significance in the context of South Africa's complex social and political history. Ubuntu Theology, which emerged as a response to the challenges faced by post-apartheid South Africa, places a strong emphasis on the principle of reconciliation. Through examining the concept of reconciliation as a root metaphor for Ubuntu Theology in South Africa, it is pivotal to explore its theological foundations, its practical implications, and its potential for contributing to social transformation and justice. By delving into the rich tapestry of Ubuntu Theology and its understanding of reconciliation, I provide an analysis of the significance of this root metaphor in shaping theological discourse and praxis in South Africa.

Reconciliation can be viewed as a task that involves building bridges to connect opposing forces that are separated by historical, ideological, and cultural divisions (Resane, 2017, p. 206). Reconciliation has been identified as a critical process that can facilitate healing, restoration, and self-discovery (p. 208). The act of reconciliation enables individuals to move beyond past hurts and injustices towards a state of healing and restoration. Through reconciliation, individuals can begin to confront the impact of traumatic experiences and restore their sense of identity and purpose. The process of reconciliation allows individuals to come to terms with their experiences and to find a sense of closure, which in turn can facilitate a greater sense of self-discovery. In many cases, the act of reconciliation can lead to an increased sense of self-awareness, as individuals are forced to confront their own biases and beliefs. Ultimately, the process of reconciliation is a means by which individuals can move beyond their past and begin to forge a path towards a more just, peaceful, and equitable future. It is this understanding that paves the way for Ubuntu Theology to almost monopolise reconciliation as its root metaphor. 'The guiding principle of ubuntu was based on the notion that both parties to a dispute need to be reconciled in order to re-build and maintain social trust and social cohesion, with a view to preventing the emergence and escalation of a culture of retribution among individuals, families and the society as a whole' (Muruthi, 2009, p. 229).

The beginning of reconciliation in South Africa as a national initiative is traced to the decisions reached during the multiparty negotiating process. An important aspect of the negotiations was

the issue of an interim constitution that would replace the old constitution that formed the basis of apartheid legislation. Among other things, one of the more controversial aspects of this interim constitution was the issue over whether the advent of democracy would include the possibility of amnesty. However, it is John de Gruchy (2002) who reminds us that reconciliation was crucial in trying to uncover the truth, also, in terms of how the country should deal with the past as well as defining the future. Moreover, reconciliation was now seen as part of defining the national goals of democratic transformation and reconstruction. (de Gruchy, 2002, pp. 25, 41).

In the context of South Africa, it is evident that the process of reconciliation in South Africa continues to exhibit a delicate state, marked by its fragile nature, and the overarching social and economic project pursued within the country remains far from achieving comprehensive fulfilment. Despite notable progress made in the aftermath of the apartheid era, it is evident that deep-seated divisions and unresolved historical grievances continue to exert influence, impeding the consolidation of a harmonious and united society. The scars left by decades of institutionalised racial discrimination and violence persist, manifesting in persistent social inequalities, racial tensions, and sporadic outbreaks of unrest. These challenges underline the ongoing need for sustained efforts to address the root causes of division, engender meaningful dialogue, and pursue restorative justice mechanisms. Moreover, the incompleteness of South Africa's social and economic project is evident in the enduring disparities and disparities experienced by marginalised communities, particularly those historically disadvantaged by apartheid policies. Widespread poverty, limited access to quality education and healthcare, and persistently high levels of unemployment pose formidable barriers to inclusive development and hinder the realisation of true reconciliation. To achieve a lasting and comprehensive reconciliation, South Africa must navigate these complex issues, engage in inclusive policy-making processes, and strive for equitable resource distribution to rectify the historical inequities and foster a more inclusive, cohesive, and prosperous society. Ubuntu Theology emerges as a critical theoretical lens and practical tool in the ongoing journey towards social healing, cohesion, and the pursuit of a more equitable and harmonious South African society.

In Tutu's work 'No Future Without Forgiveness,' (1999), and as the Chairman of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), he offers reflective insights into his role and approach during this transformative phase in South Africa's history. Tutu underscores the significant influence of both his Christian beliefs and cultural heritage in shaping his leadership

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and decision-making processes. Particularly noteworthy is Tutu's recurrent reliance on the concept of Ubuntu when providing guidance and counsel to individuals appearing before the Commission, including witnesses, victims, and perpetrators. Ubuntu, deeply ingrained in African traditions, represents a collective worldview centred on interconnectedness, empathy, and the recognition of inherent human dignity. Tutu's deliberate invocation of Ubuntu during the Commission's hearings reflects his commitment to engendering a sense of shared responsibility, compassion, and restorative justice within the South African context. By drawing upon his religious and cultural values, Tutu sought to create a moral framework that encouraged reconciliation, fostered dialogue, and facilitated the healing of deep-seated wounds inflicted by the apartheid era.

Vellem's (2013) scholarly exploration of reconciliation revolves around a comprehensive understanding that encompasses both intellectual comprehension and experiential engagement. Grounded in the liberation theology tradition, Vellem's theological framework draws upon the interplay of experiential encounters, theoretical underpinnings, and hermeneutical interpretations. By merging lived experiences with theoretical insights, Vellem seeks to unveil a holistic understanding of reconciliation. This approach acknowledges the significance of engaging with the practical realities and complexities of human existence, while also delving into the theoretical constructs that inform and guide the process of reconciliation. Through his liberation theology framework, Vellem strives to bridge the gap between abstract concepts and concrete manifestations of reconciliation, thereby fostering a more nuanced and contextualised understanding of this transformative process. By intertwining experience, theory, and hermeneutics, Vellem's theological approach provides a valuable lens through which to analyse and navigate the multifaceted dimensions of reconciliation, ultimately enriching the scholarly discourse on this critical subject matter. A contesting view is that of Klaasen (2018, p. 4), who notes: 'My own use of the concept of reconciliation is theological and includes restoring relationships with self, community, other, the rest of creation, and God.' Klaasen argues that reconciliation pertains to the endeavour of re-establishing various forms of connections among individuals with themselves, others, the community, the wider natural world, and the divine.

Central to the process of reconciliation is the underlying premise of relationships, which necessitates a fundamental understanding of the parties involved. Such comprehension encompasses the awareness of identity, both inherent and perceived, pertaining to the individuals engaged in the reconciliatory efforts. Moreover, reconciliation entails a crucial

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element of critical engagement and reciprocal dialogue among those impacted by fractured relationships. This interactive and transformative interchange serves as a means to address and rectify the distortions that have arisen within these relationships, fostering an environment conducive to reconciliation. By embracing these multifaceted dimensions, reconciliation strives to restore harmonious connections at both interpersonal and communal levels, acknowledging the significance of knowledge, critical engagement, and transformative processes within the pursuit of reconciliation. Therefore, reconciliation is seen as a powerful root metaphor for Ubuntu Theology in South Africa, reflecting a journey towards healing and unity. Rooted in the deep-seated values of interconnectedness, empathy, and communal responsibility, Ubuntu Theology offers a framework that emphasises the restoration of relationships and the recognition of shared humanity. Ubuntu Theology and its embodiment in reconciliation can serve as an inspiration not only for South Africa but for the world, highlighting the transformative potential of forgiveness and the power of communal healing. By embracing reconciliation as a root metaphor, humanity is invited to demonstrate their unwavering belief in the possibility of a more just, inclusive, and harmonious society.

5.7 Conclusion

In comparing Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology, it is sobering to note that Tutu, the one who appropriates Ubuntu Theology, does not distinguish between the two, as Battle (1997, p. 133) notes, 'Tutu sought in his spirituality to take up the positive elements of Black Theology and African theology.' Central to Tutu's appropriation of Ubuntu and the coming to life of Ubuntu Theology has been the understanding and theological acceptance of Imago Dei. Battle (1997, p. 133) rightfully notes in the South African context, 'The Imago Dei was claimed by Blacks and whites as something that one group possessed but the other lacked.' According to Battle (p. 133), it was in this context that 'Tutu sought a common theological understanding to which both white and Black people could ascent.' Tutu understood that it is a discovery, a state of mind, a conversion, and an affirmation of being, which is power. It is an insight that has to do with wisdom and responsibility. Black Theology sought a God who would not rest until His children were liberated and who would permit a lie to exist without being challenged.

It is noteworthy that there is a misconception that Tutu, one of the leading figures of Ubuntu Theology, is not a student and activist of Black Theology. In fact, Tutu has acknowledged the influence of Black Theology on his own theological perspective, but has also highlighted the unique aspects of Ubuntu Theology. Thus, while there may be similarities between Black

Theology and Ubuntu Theology, it is important to recognise their distinct theological frameworks and their respective contributions to theological discourse. Many have compared these two theologies and, in so doing, dismissed Tutu as a proprietor of Black Theology. Tutu (1975, p. 32) counters this when weighing up African Theology and Black Theology: 'I believe I am an exponent of Black Theology coming as I do from South Africa.'

Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology are two distinct theological frameworks with significant differences, despite both originating from the African continent. One such difference is in their approach to justice and reconciliation. While Ubuntu Theology emphasises the importance of reconciliation and restoration of relationships, Black Theology places a greater emphasis on justice. This is evident in the way Black Theology focuses on the structural and systemic issues that contribute to the oppression of Black people, rather than solely on personal relationships. Another area of distinction is identity. Ubuntu Theology places a strong emphasis on community and interconnectedness, whereas Black Theology recognises the importance of community but also asserts the unique identity and experiences of Black individuals within that community. These differences highlight the unique contributions and perspectives of both Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology to theological discourse.

In his 1997 book, 'Reconciliation: The Ubuntu Theology of Desmond Tutu,' Michael Battle reflects on Tutu's belief that African and Black theologies are particularly concerned with the concept of liberation. According to Tutu, liberation is a crucial component of these theologies, as they emerged in response to the suffering and oppression experienced by Black people throughout history. Tutu contends that the struggle for liberation should not lead to further division and conflict, as identities are often used as weapons in these battles. Instead, the pursuit of liberation must be grounded in a commitment to reconciliation and unity. Tutu's understanding of liberation reflects the broader trend within Black Theology of emphasising the importance of social justice and the liberation of oppressed groups. The concept of liberation has been a driving force behind the evolution of Black Theology, from its early phases that focused primarily on race analysis, to its current emphasis on intersectionality and the consideration of multiple social categories in the pursuit of justice. Tutu's insights on the importance of reconciliation and unity in the struggle for liberation highlight the ongoing relevance of Black Theology in the contemporary context, as it continues to offer critical perspectives on the pursuit of justice and equality.

In conclusion, this chapter has highlighted the notion that the complex relationship between Ubuntu Theology and Black Theology requires a deeper exploration of their similarities and differences. While I argue that Ubuntu Theology has been influenced by Black Theology, there are clear distinctions between the two, particularly around matters of justice, reconciliation, and identity. This is notwithstanding that both theologies share a concern for social justice and liberation, highlighting the need to bridge the gap between them. Through a continued examination of their relationship and engagement with their respective starting points and orientations, a deeper understanding of these two theologies can be achieved, leading to a more holistic approach to theology and its implications for the struggle for liberation.

CHAPTER 6: BLACK THEOLOGY AND UBUNTU THEOLOGY – ANTAGONISTS OR SOULMATES?

6.1 Introduction

Desmond Tutu has played a pivotal role in shaping the discourse surrounding African Theology and its relation to Black Theology. His 1975 thought-provoking paper 'Black Theology/African Theology: Soulmates or antagonists?' raises an important question: Are African Theology and Black Theology soulmates, united by their shared concerns and aspirations, or are they antagonists, reflecting divergent approaches and objectives? Tutu contends that 'Black Theology is like the inner and smaller circles in a series of concentric circles' (1975). Therefore, it can be concluded that Black Theology challenges the hegemonic theological narratives and asserts the importance of centring the marginalised and oppressed voices within theological discourse, creating space for their distinct theological contributions.

When we examine these two theological frameworks – Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology in South Africa, we encounter a crossroads where their paths converge or diverge. While both theologies share a commitment to social transformation and the promotion of human dignity, they may also diverge in their theological emphases, cultural contexts, and methodologies. I posit that the convergence of Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology engenders a pivotal intersection, which compels us to engage in a profound examination of whether these two frameworks are fundamentally opposed or mutually harmonious. By embarking upon this intellectual exploration, I endeavour to explore the intricate dynamics and potential synergies that arise when these two theological perspectives, each with its own distinct historical and cultural underpinnings, intertwine.

This chapter delves into the complex interplay between Black Theology, which centres the liberation and empowerment of the African diaspora within the context of systemic oppression, and Ubuntu Theology, which emphasises communal interconnectedness and a collective human identity grounded in shared humanity. By scrutinising the nuanced intersections of these two theological frameworks, this study seeks to unravel the underlying tensions, alignments, or symbiotic resonances that may emerge, thereby enriching a deeper comprehension of their entwined philosophical tenets. Ultimately, this investigation serves as an exercise that beckons us to navigate the dialectical relationship between Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology,

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fostering a deeper understanding of their potential compatibility or discordance, and contributing to the broader discourse on theological synthesis and interconnectivity.

6.2 Critical analysis of the two theologies

When seeking to respond to the question whether Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology are antagonists or soulmates, after considering the two theologies, one begins to notice that which holds the two together (soulmates) and that which splits (antagonists) them apart. I draw attention to an aspect that holds them together, and an aspect that splits them apart. That which holds these two together is the quest for humanity, and that which splits them apart is an understanding of reconciliation.

Both Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology in South Africa seek to restore the human face of the oppressed. Black Theology speaks of this as an understanding of Black being beautiful, Ubuntu Theology speaks of it as the rainbow people of God; both carry with them a semblance of the Imago Dei. While Black Theology is very specific around restoring the human image of Black people, Ubuntu Theology seeks to discount the experience of Black people in favour of all oppressed people, without making the oppressor guilty of anything.

That which separates these two, is the understanding and expression of reconciliation. Ubuntu by its very nature, what many would deem a nation builder, much of Tutu's energies have been exerted around the notion of being a rainbow nation, and thus limits Ubuntu Theology's interaction to that of reconciling people and communities. Of course, because of Tutu's influence, one needs to appreciate that the reconciliation advocated for by Ubuntu Theology is one deeply embedded in the understanding of the church and its teachings, we have to recognise that reconciliation was at the heart of the church's struggle against apartheid.

Boesak (2020, p. 51) comments on our incomplete revolution:

> Since 1994, we have rubbed our Ubuntu-ness in Africa's face. We have preened and basked in the admiration of the world because we were the ones who knew what 'reconciliation' meant. We deemed ourselves fit to teach other nations from Rwanda to Ireland to Serbia how it worked and how they should follow our example. We have so much to learn still, and the first seems to be a lesson in humility. The second is to learn to embrace the painful healing of honest self-critical reflection as necessary for our

growth toward what Biko called our 'envisioned self,' for our ability to give South Africa and the world a human face.

The role of Black Theology in South Africa lies in its potential to empower individuals, particularly Black South Africans, in fostering an environment where the recognition of shared humanity transcends power dynamics. Black Theology endeavours to promote a sense of Ubuntu, whereby individuals acknowledge and value each other's inherent dignity and worth, irrespective of societal hierarchies or power differentials. By embracing the principles of Ubuntu, Black Theology seeks to dismantle oppressive structures, challenge systemic injustices, and create spaces where individuals can authentically engage with one another, free from the limitations imposed by power dynamics. In doing so, Black Theology serves as a catalyst for cultivating a society that upholds the principles of equality, respect, and communal interdependence, fostering an environment where all individuals are afforded the opportunity to flourish and contribute to the collective well-being of South Africa.

6.2.1 Black Theology/Ubuntu Theology and their search for human dignity

At the core of the convergence between Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology lies a shared pursuit of a human face, reflecting their status as soulmates. To demonstrate this interconnection, I wish to highlight how these two theological frameworks respond to the search for human dignity within the contemporary context of the LGBTIQ+ community.

Both Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology are animated by a fundamental concern for the human condition, seeking to challenge and dismantle oppressive structures that impede the full realisation of human dignity. By engaging with these theological perspectives, we can deepen our understanding of their shared commitment to affirming the intrinsic humanity and inherent rights of all individuals, irrespective of their sexual orientations or gender identities. Ultimately, this analysis underscores the significant overlap between Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology in their endeavours to foster inclusivity, justice, and the recognition of the profound value of every human being.

In his critique, Boesak (2020) draws attention to a notable shortcoming within Black Theology, namely its failure to adequately address the pressing issues of gender-based violence and the recognition of the LGBTIQ+ community within the context of South Africa. This he does as he speaks of an 'incomplete revolution.' Despite its emphasis on justice, liberation, and dismantling oppressive structures, Black Theology has often overlooked the unique

experiences and struggles faced by women and members of the LGBTIQ+ community. By neglecting to engage with these critical issues, Black Theology inadvertently perpetuates systems of gender inequality and exclusion. Boesak's observation underscores the necessity for Black Theology to broaden its scope and deepen its analysis, incorporating an intersectional perspective that accounts for the complex interplay of race, gender, and sexuality. By actively addressing gender-based violence and affirming the rights and dignity of the LGBTIQ+ community, Black Theology can better align itself with its fundamental objectives of liberation, justice, and inclusivity within the South African context.

In examining Ubuntu Theology and Black Theology and its interplay between elements that foster solidarity (soulmates) and elements that create divisions (antagonism), an area of significant relevance emerges concerning the response to the LGBTIQ+ community. Within this context, the focus of this research pertains to Tutu's response, as a figure closely associated with Ubuntu Theology. Tutu's stance on issues related to the LGBTIQ+ community becomes a crucial point of analysis within the broader exploration of Ubuntu Theology. By investigating Tutu's response to the LGBTIQ+ community, this study aims to shed light on the complex dynamics within Ubuntu Theology, exploring how it navigates the tension between inclusivity and divergence. By engaging with Tutu's views and actions, this research seeks to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of Ubuntu Theology's perspective on the LGBTIQ+ community, thereby deepening our comprehension of its capacity to address diverse identities and challenges within the framework of communal interconnectedness. It is worth noting that, 'Although Tutu has not systematically reflected on questions of sexuality from the perspective of his theology of *Ubuntu*, it is obvious that it shapes his thinking about sexuality considerably' (Klinken & Chitando, 2021, p. 105).

Furthermore, Tutu's staunch advocacy for equality in his engagement with individuals who identify as LGBTIQ+ is deeply rooted in his adoption of Ubuntu Theology. Tutu's adherence to Ubuntu Theology, a philosophical and theological framework grounded in African cultural and communal values, significantly influences his stance on social justice issues, including the rights and inclusion of the LGBTIQ+ community. Ubuntu Theology underscores the interconnectedness and inherent worth of all individuals, emphasising the fundamental principle of recognising and respecting the humanity in others. Guided by this theological perspective, Tutu champions equality and human rights for individuals regardless of their sexual orientations or gender identities, viewing their inherent worth as integral to the fabric of

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human community and harmony. His adoption of Ubuntu Theology enables Tutu to articulate a robust theological foundation for his support of LGBTIQ+ rights, challenging societal norms and promoting inclusivity within the broader discourse on equality and social justice. As such, Tutu's alignment with Ubuntu Theology provides a compelling lens through which to understand and contextualise his unwavering commitment to equality when engaging with the LGBTIQ+ community.

This is underscored in an essay in honour of Tutu, when West (2021, p. 85) writes:

> The gift of Archbishop Tutu's witness is experienced as a dynamic resource in this New York City-based project that defies the enduring political imprint of colonialism and transatlantic slavery on black church morality. Gratefulness for this gift means claiming African heritage as a resource for defining the power of black church tradition in terms of its welcoming embrace of black LGBTIQ+ Christians.

This is affirmed by Jakobsen (2021, p. 88) in the same collection of essays:

> He (Tutu) became more vocal towards the end of his Anglican episcopate and after he retired, was unequivocally clear that God is not a man, God is not homophobic, God is not a Christian, and all human beings, all people – all are made in the image of God.

In his authorised biography of Desmond Tutu, John Allen (2006, p. 372) explores Tutu's longstanding advocacy for gay rights, tracing its origins to as early as the 1970s:

> In the 1970s he had been tolerant of gays but had mentioned them in his sermons alongside drug addicts and the poor; by the turn of the century, however, he had become perhaps the world's most prominent leader advocating gay and lesbian rights.

The affirmation of human dignity emerges as a compelling factor that positions Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology as soulmates. Through an exploration of their respective responses to the LGBTIQ+ community, it becomes evident that these theological frameworks are indeed aligned in their commitment to serving as theologies that embrace and affirm the inherent humanity of all individuals, transcending boundaries of colour, creed, race, and sexuality. By acknowledging the intrinsic worth and equality of every person, irrespective of their diverse identities, Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology embody a shared mission to create inclusive spaces that promote justice, liberation, and the recognition of human rights. This convergence

underscores the profound resonance between these theologies, as they converge in their pursuit of universal human dignity, thereby fostering a comprehensive theological framework that emphasises the inherent value and worth of every individual, regardless of their differences.

6.2.2 Black Theology/Ubuntu Theology and their expression of reconciliation

The concept of reconciliation represents a contested terrain where Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology exhibit potential divergence, leading to a perception of antagonism between these two theological frameworks. While both Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology are committed to addressing systemic injustices and pursuing social transformation, they diverge in their approaches to the notion of reconciliation. Reconciliation is a widely acknowledged and celebrated notion that frequently permeates the political discourse and public policy of post-conflict nations committed to the task of rebuilding their respective countries. Its significance lies in its potential to heal the wounds of past conflicts and foster a sense of collective responsibility for a shared future. As a concept, reconciliation transcends mere tolerance and calls for active engagement with the past, acknowledgement of wrongdoing, and a commitment to building a more equitable and just society. The allure of reconciliation lies in its ability to transcend divisions and promote national unity, making it a crucial aspect of post-conflict nation building.

Black Theology places emphasis on the struggle for justice and the dismantling of oppressive structures as prerequisites for genuine reconciliation. In contrast, Ubuntu Theology emphasises communal interconnectedness and the restoration of harmonious relationships as central to the process of reconciliation. This discrepancy in emphasis raises questions about the extent to which justice and reconciliation can be effectively pursued in isolation from one another. The tension between these two perspectives invites further exploration and critical analysis. Boesak, in a webinar discussing reparations in his book, 'Radical Reconciliation: Beyond Political Pietism and Christian Quietism,' co-authored with Curtiss Paul DeYoung, notes: 'Reconciliation not only changes the way we feel, it transforms us and our identities as agents of God's love, God's justice and God's reconciliation' (Warren, 2021).

It is evident at the outset that engaging in acts of reconciliation, individuals undergo a profound shift in their perspectives, beliefs, and behaviours, embracing a new understanding of themselves as agents of God's love. This transformation encompasses a holistic reorientation, encompassing not only emotional responses but also cognitive and behavioural changes.

Through reconciliation, individuals align themselves with the divine purpose of promoting love and justice, transcending personal inclinations and self-interests to embrace a higher calling. Moreover, reconciliation serves as a catalyst for the transformation of individual identities by aligning them with God's justice. This entails a commitment to fairness, equity, and ethical conduct, guided by divine principles rather than self-serving motives. As individuals internalise the ideals of justice, they become agents who actively strive to rectify past wrongs, combat injustice, and establish social harmony. Consequently, their identities become intertwined with the pursuit of justice, shaping their actions, and motivating them to effect positive change in society. By actively engaging in acts of reconciliation, individuals become ambassadors of peace, bridge builders between divided communities, and advocates for healing and restoration. Their identities are characterised by a commitment to facilitating understanding, fostering dialogue, and promoting forgiveness. In this capacity, they actively participate in the divine mission of reconciling individuals and communities, embodying the transformative power of God's love and reconciliation.

It is imperative to acknowledge the pivotal role of justice within the context of Black Theology when considering the concept of reconciliation. Black theologians place significant emphasis on justice as a central objective intertwined with the pursuit of reconciliation. This academic analysis underscores the importance of justice in the framework of Black Theology, highlighting its integral role in the quest for reconciliation. Within the context of Black Theology, justice is viewed as an indispensable component in the process of reconciliation. Black theologians recognise that true reconciliation cannot be achieved in the absence of justice. They contend that addressing historical and ongoing injustices is a fundamental prerequisite for genuine healing and restoration. In this regard, justice is not perceived merely as a legalistic or punitive measure, but as a transformative force that rectifies systemic imbalances and fosters equity. Black Theology contends that reconciliation without justice risks perpetuating oppression and maintaining oppressive structures. As surveyed in this thesis, one could argue that true reconciliation necessitates confronting and dismantling systems of power and privilege that perpetuate racial injustice. By foregrounding justice within the framework of reconciliation, Black Theology advocates for a comprehensive approach that addresses both the interpersonal and structural dimensions of inequality. Moreover, justice serves as a vital mechanism for empowering marginalised communities and enabling their active participation in the reconciliation process. Black Theology emphasises the importance of redressing historical and contemporary injustices as a means to restore agency and dignity

to those who have been systematically marginalised and oppressed. Through this lens, justice becomes a catalyst for transformative change and social liberation, laying the foundation for authentic reconciliation.

Reconciliation as interpreted through the lens of Ubuntu Theology is seen as 'a process of restoration or creation of socially harmonious relations between victims and aggressors' (Cordeiro-Rodrigues, 2018, p. 432). In Ubuntu Theology the pursuit of reconciliation extends beyond the individual level, encompassing social, political, and economic dimensions, with the ultimate goal of fostering justice, peace, and collective well-being. Thus, Ubuntu Theology offers a comprehensive understanding of reconciliation that encompasses both personal and communal dimensions, emphasising the importance of interconnectedness and ubuntu values in achieving a state of reconciliation. Metz (2017, p. 295) describes Ubuntu-shaped reconciliation as a 'step on the path towards realising a society that fully respects communal relationships, ones of identity and solidarity.' The significance of solidarity within the context of Ubuntu Theology is underscored, even to the extent of extending solidarity towards the oppressor. By embodying the principles of empathy, forgiveness, and ubuntu, individuals are encouraged to extend solidarity towards those who perpetrate harm, with the aim of promoting their own healing and transformation as well as fostering reconciliation and communal well-being. This inclusive perspective on solidarity, extending even to the oppressor, serves as a testament to the profound commitment to healing, restoration, and the pursuit of a just and harmonious society within Ubuntu Theology. Metz (2017) takes it a step further an introduces the idea of an 'ubuntu-oriented reconciliation.' The challenge herein is that we begin to redefine reconciliation. Solomons (2021, p. 258), reflecting on an Ubuntu-shaped reconciliation, argues that reconciliation emerges as the central tenet, embodying a kenotic manifestation of love that recognises the essential interconnectedness and inherent unity of diverse individuals, transcending the societal boundaries and markers that often serve to differentiate and separate them.

It could thus be deduced that the concept of reconciliation assumes a pivotal role within the discourse, as it evolves into a transformative force characterised by a kenotic expression of love. This transformative understanding goes beyond mere conflict resolution and encompasses a profound recognition of the interconnectedness and interdependence of individuals, regardless of the societal constructs and divisions that traditionally separate them. In this paradigm, reconciliation becomes a powerful tool for acknowledging the inherent unity

and diversity of humanity. It calls for a deliberate shift in perspective, encouraging individuals to embrace an inclusive and empathetic mindset that transcends social markers and embraces the shared humanity that binds them together. By centring reconciliation as an expression of kenotic love, the narrative broadens to encompass a deeper understanding of the complexities of human relationships and the potential for profound healing and unity. This reimagined concept of reconciliation challenges existing paradigms, inviting scholars and practitioners to explore novel approaches that prioritise unity, empathy, and the dismantling of divisive social structures, ultimately fostering a more harmonious and interconnected society.

Furthermore, Haws (2009, p. 477) notes:

> This notion called 'ubuntu' counters segregation and violence with reconciliation and justice. It refuses to execute retribution upon transgressors, instead committing itself to re-membering the disinherited of Christ's inclusive body. Forgiveness is the only future for this body and, though it remains an aporia in the context of radical evils such as apartheid, it is the only way to achieve justice without economising balance. That is, only forgiveness can realise ubuntu because it progresses forward toward justice not backward toward vengeance. Ubuntu is the prophetic balance of a divine gift that transforms the wretchedness of human atrocities.

Within the context of Ubuntu Theology in South Africa, a notable inclination towards forgiveness over justice emerges as a distinct characteristic. Forgiveness is viewed as a transformative and healing force that promotes reconciliation, restoration, and the reintegration of individuals into the community. Rather than seeking punitive measures, Ubuntu Theology encourages the acknowledgement of wrongdoing, the expression of remorse, and the granting of forgiveness as a means of facilitating healing and communal harmony. By prioritising forgiveness, Ubuntu Theology seeks to break the cycle of revenge and resentment, promoting a collective ethos of empathy, healing, and shared responsibility. Ubuntu Theology presents a departure from the conventional pursuit of justice and the notion of balancing the scales. In this framework, the process does not commence with retribution as a prerequisite for forgiveness. Instead, forgiveness is given primacy, serving as the starting point for transformative change. This approach recognises the profound power of forgiveness to initiate healing and reconciliation. By prioritising forgiveness, this Ubuntu Theology allows for the transformative work that forgiveness can accomplish. It embraces the understanding that forgiveness has the potential to disrupt cycles of violence and foster a sense of communal harmony. In this

paradigm, the emphasis is placed on the restoration of relationships and the creation of a more compassionate and inclusive society. While justice and the rebalancing of societal inequalities are not dismissed, they are understood to be intricately intertwined with the process of forgiveness and reconciliation. Thus, this model within Ubuntu Theology underscores the transformative potential of forgiveness as a catalyst for societal healing and the restoration of communal well-being.

Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology in South Africa manifest as antagonists due to their differing approaches to the concept of reconciliation. Black Theology places a strong emphasis on justice. It seeks to address historical injustices, advocate for the rights of the marginalised, and challenge systemic oppression. In contrast, Ubuntu Theology emphasises forgiveness and communal harmony, focusing on the interconnectedness and shared humanity of all individuals. While both theologies emerge from the same context of injustice and oppression, their contrasting approaches to reconciliation engender tension and divergence. Black Theology argues that justice must be pursued in order to dismantle oppressive structures and secure restitution for the victims. Ubuntu Theology, on the other hand, prioritises forgiveness as a means of healing and restoring broken relationships. While their perspectives may appear to be antagonistic, they also offer opportunities for dialogue and mutual learning as scholars and practitioners grapple with the complex challenges of reconciliation and social change.

6.3 Examining Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology

In examining the relationship between Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology, one can observe both similarities and differences between the two. However, it is important to note that there is no direct comparison between Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology. The common ground for comparison lies mainly in their expression of identity. One of the significant differences between these two theologies is their focus on justice, reconciliation, and identity. Black Theology emphasises the importance of justice and equality in the struggle for Black liberation, while Ubuntu Theology centres on the concepts of interconnectedness and community. Black Theology thus proclaims the totality of God's liberation and in total liberation seeks the realisation of the wholeness of life and speaks of hope to people without power. Black Theology calls for Blacks to be aware that they wield economic and political power as a group (Boesak, 1978, p. 26). Black Theology means a search for a totally new social order, a utopia, in the hope that there is a land beyond Jordan. This, I suspect, had been the pushing creed and statement of faith that helped and made Black people realise that, as a group, they had a voice

that could free them from bondage. Ubuntu Theology should have embraced this as a vehicle to freedom and thus set a Black agenda for the rebirth of a post-apartheid South Africa.

One of the challenges of Ubuntu Theology lays in its resistance to Black Theology in favour of a plurality of theologies, which Battle (1997, p. 33) also highlights: 'There must be a plurality of theologies, because we do not all apprehend or respond to the transcendent in exactly the same way, nor can we [be] expected to express our experience in the same way.' This is a direct challenge to Black Theology, as Boesak (1978, p. 16) asserts, that it is in the first place a theology of the oppressed people. But not only that. It is a theology of liberation and it is the focus on liberation that makes the contextuality of Black Theology truly ecumenical and universal. In this sense, Black Theology is not an exclusive, theological apartheid in which whites have no part. On the contrary, Blacks know only too well the terrible estrangement of white people; they know only too well how sorely whites need to be liberated – even if whites themselves do not! Black Theology is a passionate call to freedom, and although it directs its voice to all people, it nonetheless hopes that white people will hear and be saved.

The interpretation of Ubuntu Theology, as suggested by Desmond Tutu, has, in my view, been misguided, first by the understanding of what it means to be Black, rather than understanding it solely as a pigmentation of our skin. Thus, Ubuntu Theology pays hardly any attention to anything else but colour. This is illustrated in Tutu's book 'The Rainbow People of God' (1994, p. 134):

'My sisters and brothers, my sons and daughters, let us accept the gift of God, let us accept the freedom the God wants to give us, so that you and I, all of us, black and white will know that they are members of one family, God's family, the human family.'

If we were to compare this to the sentiments of Boesak, the difference is obvious: Black Theology sincerely believes that it is possible to recapture what was sacred in the African community long before white people came – solidarity, respect for life, humanity, and community. It must be possible not only to recapture it, but to enhance it and bring it to full fruition in contemporary society (Boesak, 1978, p. 152).

Solomons (2021, p. 3) argues that the relationship between liberation and reconciliation as key precepts in Black theological thought is particularly important. Solomons, earlier in his writing,

narrows down a theological disposition by highlighting the Christian characteristics for reconciliation. He notes (2017, p. 6):

The Christian discourse on reconciliation presents at least three additional layers of meaning:

a) reconciliation with God following alienation as a result of sin; this is understood in the light of a broken relationship with God;

b) reconciliation through being one with Christ in the Body of Christ (the church); and

c) the ministry of reconciliation through the Holy Spirit in church and society.

The examination of Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology in South Africa reveals a complex relationship characterised by elements of being both antagonists and soulmates. While these differences and similarities create tensions and conflicts, they also provide opportunities for critical engagement, fruitful dialogue, and the cultivation of a more comprehensive understanding of reconciliation.

In making an argument for Ubuntu and the theology of Ubuntu by Tutu as an African, and an Anglican, Battle (1997, p. 125) notes: 'New theologies need to arise in order to address the perplexities and issues in new contexts as Africa were asking or likely to ask.' I argue that when Tutu asks the question: Black Theology/African Theology – Soulmates or antagonists? It is an attempt to recognise that African Theology and Black Theology emerged within distinct contexts but share common ground in their commitment to challenging oppressive structures and promoting liberation and justice.

When we consider the understanding and role of Ubuntu Theology, and juxtapose it incorrectly to Black Theology or even African Theology, we have to take Battle's (1997, p. 7) understanding of Tutu into account: 'Instead of the primacy of race, Tutu makes the spiritual central to life. The spiritual transforms all human realms, including the political, removing the justification to manipulate persons on the basis of their race.' Again, this is the utopia upon which Tutu premises his Ubuntu Theology. In fact, Black Theology is about liberating the oppressed who continue to be Black communities, and thus, if we were to speak of the spiritual, we ought to ground the spirituality of Ubuntu in Black Theology:

For Blacks, this is the courage to be Black. But again, this need be no other worldly dream; it is real as Africa itself. Indeed, motho ke motho ka batho babang. This age-old

African proverb equivalent in almost all African languages, and its meaning is still as profound as ever, even more so: One is only human because of others, with others, for others. This is Black Theology. It is authentic, it is worthwhile. It is, in the most profound sense of the word, gospel truth (Boesak, 1978, p. 152).

Through the analysis of Black Theology in South Africa, we begin to notice contrasts in identity; from Black Theology that calls on Black people to use biblical understanding and interpretation, to fight against injustice and oppression; Black Consciousness that advocates for the agency and humanity of Black people, in particular, and now Ubuntu that almost suggests that we are one, irrespective of the colour of our skin. However, all these ideologies recognise the struggle for liberation and living out a post-liberation life is the gift of being human, made in the image of God. Both Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology have, as part of their DNA, Black Consciousness, which calls us to a space of being cognisant of the deliberateness of God's plan in creating Black people Black. It seeks to infuse the Black community with a new-found pride in themselves, their efforts, their value systems, their culture, their religion, and their outlook on life. When Ubuntu Theology and Black Theology converge at this point of Black Consciousness, Ubuntu Theology's interpretation of the 'rainbow nation' is given the space to walk alongside Black Theology, without eradicating the Blackness for the sake of being all right with the notion of 'a rainbow people of God,' but rather to embrace the Blackness, in this rainbow, rather than relegating Blackness to the sides as a colour of sadness, depression, worthlessness, or even less-than.

We cannot lose sight of the fact that 'Black Theology is a situational interpretation of Christianity. It seeks to relate the present-day black man to God within the given context of the black man suffering and his attempts to get out of it' (Biko, [1978] 2017, p. 64).

Ubuntu Theology, as presented, interpreted, and demonstrated by Tutu, builds interdependent communities, as Battle (1997, p. 40) reports: 'Ubuntu, for Tutu, is the environment of vulnerability that builds true community. This vulnerability begins when human divisions are set aside.' Accordingly, we begin to see an Ubuntu Theology calling for a neutral ground to re-build, while Black Theology calls for an unequivocal sense of retribution from the oppressors and the privileged. Herein lies a disconnect. However, this disconnect is remedied when we begin to consider Ubuntu Theology as a theology of community that is founded on the Black experience rather than the romanticising of the colours of the rainbow.

When one begins to answer the question around Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology being soulmates or antagonists, we will do ourselves a disservice, if we fail to remember that Black Theology is a theology of liberation, so too, Ubuntu Theology considers itself a theology which liberates, albeit based on two very different interpretations of what liberation means. While Black Theology is deeply connected with the oppressed, Ubuntu Theology is willing to take the oppressor into account on the basis of reconciliation. It would thus cause us to consider, if it is indeed the 'soft' approach of Ubuntu Theology that has caused it to be more popular in contrast to the 'radical' calls of Black Theology.

6.4 Conclusion

It is thus my contention that Ubuntu Theology possesses the capacity to embrace a more radical stance while maintaining its distinctive identity rooted in the values of reconciliation. By appropriating such a radical stance, Ubuntu Theology can expand its conceptual framework to encompass the pursuit of radical justice. This evolution does not necessitate a departure from its foundational principles but rather enables Ubuntu Theology to create space for a more assertive pursuit of justice. Ubuntu Theology, with its emphasis on communal interconnectedness and the inherent worth of each individual, provides a fertile ground for advocating for transformative change and challenging systemic injustices. By integrating the pursuit of radical justice into its core principles of reconciliation and communal harmony, Ubuntu Theology can effectively address the structural barriers and power imbalances that perpetuate inequality and oppression. This synthesis of radicalism and reconciliation within Ubuntu Theology has the potential to generate a more comprehensive theological framework that recognises the imperative of social transformation and embodies a commitment to advancing justice in all its dimensions. Again, we must hear Vellem (2012, p. 4), when he reminds us that, 'Too much emphasis on reconciliation, for example, might compromise justice and vice versa.' Therefore, I contend that, amid the differences highlighted, Ubuntu Theology and Black Theology are indeed soulmates, from a perspective of Black Theology. Both of these theological perspectives share a common objective of pursuing a state of reconciliation. Thus, embracing Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology as soulmates rather than antagonists, we begin to enter the realm of what Boesak calls 'radical reconciliation,' rather than Bonhoeffer's (2012), 'cheap grace.' In holding the two together, rather than antagonists, we begin to engage the work of justice and restitution, the exact space that birthed both Ubuntu Theology and Black Theology.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

7.1 Introduction

My analysis and examination of the research question, and my endeavours at addressing the objectives of this study, lead me to acknowledge that for too long, matters concerning Black Theology have been rendered inferior to Western theologies dictating how Black people should respond to matters of justice, reconciliation, and restitution.

It is imperative to recognise and challenge the historical marginalisation of Black Theology in South Africa in relation to Western theologies, particularly concerning how Black people are expected to respond to issues of justice, reconciliation, and restitution. Throughout history, Western theological frameworks have often held hegemonic influence, imposing their perspectives and dictating the terms by which Black individuals and communities should engage with these crucial matters. This has perpetuated a hierarchy in which Black Theology is positioned as inferior, overshadowed by dominant Western theological discourses. Such a power dynamic undermines the voices, experiences, and agency of Black theologians and communities, limiting their ability to shape theologies that resonate with their own lived realities and cultural contexts. Recognising the inherent value and richness of Black Theology is essential in dismantling this oppressive paradigm and creating space for a more inclusive theological discourse that centres the experiences and aspirations of Black individuals and communities. By fostering a genuine engagement with Black theological perspectives, we can promote a more equitable and pluralistic theological landscape that recognises the diverse expressions of faith, justice, and reconciliation within different cultural and social contexts.

7.2 Discussion and Analysis

Solomons (2021a, p. 2) succinctly encapsulates the apprehensions surrounding the Black Theology agenda:

> Concerns over the relevance of Black Liberation Theology are somewhat of a moot point because its purpose has always transcended political utility; in other words, it has always been about more than a simplistic focus on apartheid.

The concerns surrounding the relevance of Black Liberation Theology in South Africa can be viewed as somewhat inconsequential, as its purpose has consistently transcended mere political utility. This theological framework has always encompassed a broader scope, extending

beyond a simplistic emphasis on apartheid. Its significance lies in its capacity to address the multifaceted aspects of oppression, fostering a deeper understanding of the intricate intersections between race, religion, and social justice. Black Liberation Theology has continually sought to challenge systemic injustices, provide a spiritual foundation for empowerment, and instigate transformative change within individuals and communities. Therefore, reducing its importance solely to its political implications fails to acknowledge the profound spiritual and cultural dimensions that define this theological framework.

We can no longer develop new theologies simply because the Western world is not comfortable with the word 'Black.' The development of new theologies cannot be solely constrained by the discomfort that the Western world may foster towards the term 'Black.' Such limitations overlook the essential nature of theological exploration, which involves the continuous examination and reinterpretation of religious concepts and frameworks to address the evolving needs and realities of diverse communities.

While acknowledging the historical and sociocultural contexts that shape theological discourse, it is crucial to move beyond a restricted perspective that hinders the exploration of new theological paradigms. The pursuit of theological innovation should encompass a broader understanding that transcends external biases and embraces the richness and diversity of human experiences and identities.

It remains imperative to embrace the inherent Blackness of Black Theology and facilitate its manifestation across various spheres, including academia, churches, communities, and individual lives, necessitates an active and engaged stance. Remaining passive spectators as students and activists of Black Theology is insufficient. By actively embracing the Blackness of Black Theology, scholars, practitioners, and communities have the opportunity to integrate its principles, perspectives, and transformative potential into their respective domains. This necessitates a departure from the sidelines and a willingness to confront and challenge established norms, systems, and power structures that perpetuate racial injustice. To fully harness the vitality of Black Theology, it is essential to create spaces that actively foster dialogue, collaboration, and action, thus cultivating an environment where the Blackness of Black Theology can be experienced, appreciated, and mobilised for lasting social change. We ought to demonstrate our consciousness and live out Biko's (1972, pp. 26–27) call:

Blacks have had enough experience as objects of racism not to wish to reverse the tables. While it may be relevant now to talk about black in relation to white, we must not make this our preoccupation for it can be a negative exercise. As we proceed more towards the achievement of our goals, let us talk more about ourselves and less about whites.

The accumulated experiences of Black individuals as recipients of racism have engendered a reluctance to seek a reversal of roles. While it is presently pertinent to discuss the Black-white relationship, it is crucial not to allow this preoccupation to overshadow our progress, as it can potentially devolve into a counterproductive endeavour. As we advance towards the realisation of our aspirations, it becomes imperative to prioritise conversations centred on our own experiences and identities, rather than fixating excessively on the actions and perspectives of white individuals. By shifting the focus towards self-affirmation and self-determination, we empower ourselves and foster an environment conducive to the achievement of our goals. This redirection of discourse facilitates the cultivation of a positive and constructive framework that empowers Black individuals and communities, enabling them to shape their own narratives and define their own destinies.

We cannot allow the West to become the adoptive parent of Ubuntu Theology, while they made us believe that we were its parents, when in praxis it appears as if we were simply the foster parents. The West's appropriation of Ubuntu Theology can be seen as a form of intellectual colonisation, whereby the dominant narratives and perspectives of the West are imposed upon the marginalised voices and experiences of its true creators. Recognising this disparity is crucial to reclaim agency and ownership over Ubuntu Theology, re-establishing its roots in the lived experiences and wisdom of those who have long been marginalised and silenced. Moving forward, it is imperative to engage in a more inclusive and equitable discourse that acknowledges and amplifies the voices of the true parents of Ubuntu Theology, while challenging the historical narratives that perpetuate the erasure of their contributions.

I conclude that Ubuntu Theology and Black Theology are indeed soulmates, but in the words of Boesak, with great humility, I echo a call for a 'Farewell to Innocence.' In this instance, I call for a farewell to the innocence of Ubuntu Theology, which allows us to find comfort while claiming to be advocates of Black Theology. Black Theology calls for radical justice and a radical acknowledgement of our identity as those who espouse to live out Biko's ([1978] 2017,

p. 52) call: 'Being black is not a matter of pigmentation – Being black is a reflection of mental attitude.'

This farewell to the innocence of Ubuntu Theology is indeed rooted in the teachings of Biko ([1978] 2017, p. 5):

> What we want, is not black visibility but real black participation. In other words, it does not help us to see several quiet black faces in a multiracial student gathering, which ultimately concentrates on what the white students believe are the needs of the black students.

In a parallel manner to how white individuals were compelled to confront their complicity and relinquish their innocence with regards to apartheid, the 'rainbow nation,' encompassing the diverse population of South Africa, finds itself facing a similar need to bid farewell to its own innocence. This entails embracing the authentic gospel that espouses solidarity with the impoverished and oppressed, who persistently bear the label of 'Blacks' even within the utopian ideal of community espoused by Tutu's Ubuntu Theology. This call for farewell to innocence necessitates a profound reckoning with the systemic injustices and historical legacies that have perpetuated inequality and marginalisation. By adopting the authentic gospel of the poor and oppressed, the 'rainbow nation' can embody a transformative commitment to justice, empathy, and collective responsibility. It entails recognising that the pursuit of true equality and reconciliation demands active engagement with the realities and experiences of those who have endured marginalisation and systemic oppression.

In our capacity as Black theologians, it becomes imperative to transcend the inclination towards embracing Ubuntu Theology as a superficial, feel-good framework. Rather, we are called to fully embrace our Blackness within the context of an Ubuntu community. This entails confidently occupying our rightful place within the multifaceted spectrum of the rainbow, allowing our Blackness to radiate with equal magnificence. Rather than striving to conform to the various hues of the rainbow, our approach should focus on inviting and challenging the colours of the rainbow to recognise and appreciate the vibrant and resplendent essence inherent in being Black. This transformative mindset encourages a revaluation of societal constructs that have historically marginalised and devalued Blackness, while affirming the intrinsic worth and beauty of Black individuals and communities. By embracing and celebrating our Blackness

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within an Ubuntu framework, we foster a more inclusive and harmonious society, wherein the richness of diverse identities is acknowledged, respected, and collectively cherished.

Ubuntu calls us to live out the image of God. Let us be bold enough to recognise that we have not achieved a community of Ubuntu, because we have separated Ubuntu Theology and Black Theology and thus, as a people, we first need to embrace Black Theology and then exemplify in Ubuntu-shaped expression as we say farewell to the innocence of the 'rainbow nation'! This requires a deliberate and courageous departure from the prevailing innocence of the 'rainbow nation,' as we recognise the unfinished work and systemic challenges that persist. By reconciling and uniting Ubuntu Theology and Black Theology, we can embark on a profound journey towards a more authentic, inclusive, and transformative community founded on the principles of Ubuntu. Ubuntu offers an alternative means of conceptualizing Black humanity, which is not based on racial classification and skin colour, enslavement, colonialism, and neo-colonialism – themes that dehumanise people of African descent (Lewis, 2010).

Through recognising Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology as soulmates, it becomes evident that Ubuntu Theology provides a distinctive framework for re-imagining and redefining the essence of Black humanity, free from the shackles of racial classification, skin colour, enslavement, colonialism, and neo-colonialism. This alternative perspective challenges and transcends the dehumanising themes that have historically marginalised and oppressed people of African descent. Ubuntu Theology recognises the interconnectedness and interdependence of all individuals, emphasising the inherent dignity, worth, and interconnectedness of every human being, regardless of their racial or cultural background. By shifting the focus from divisive markers to the shared essence of humanity, Ubuntu fosters a paradigm that celebrates the diverse contributions and experiences of Black individuals. It invites us to collectively embrace our common humanity, promoting a transformative vision that empowers and affirms the full and equal participation of people of African descent in all aspects of society.

Within theological discourse, the concepts of soulmates and antagonists offer valuable frameworks for comparing different theologies. The notion of soulmates often conveys a sense of deep connection, harmony, and spiritual alignment between individuals or entities. It signifies a belief in the existence of profound and enduring connections that transcend physical or temporal boundaries. In theological contexts, soulmates may be seen as representing theological systems or perspectives that resonate harmoniously, complementing and enriching one another in a mutually beneficial manner. On the other hand, antagonists symbolise

contrasting and conflicting forces that challenge or oppose each other within a theological framework. Antagonistic theologies may engage in critical dialogue, highlighting divergent perspectives, and prompting a deeper examination of underlying assumptions and beliefs. By exploring the dynamics between soulmates and antagonists in theology, scholars can gain insights into the ways different theological systems interact, influence, or challenge one another, ultimately contributing to a more nuanced understanding of theological diversity and the dynamics of theological dialogue and engagement.

7.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, a thorough examination of the relationship between Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology reveals their interconnectedness as soulmates, yet also highlights the original intention and subsequent misappropriation of Tutu's vision. Desmond Tutu's intention was to utilise Black Theology as a catalyst to bring Ubuntu to fruition, resulting in the development of an Ubuntu-shaped theology. Black Theology, with its emphasis on liberation, justice, and the dismantling of oppressive structures, served as a powerful vehicle for promoting the principles of Ubuntu within the context of South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy.

However, as the theological landscape evolved, some individuals and institutions sought to temper the perceived radicalism of Black Theology and sought a softer, more palatable approach. In this process, Tutu's Ubuntu-shaped theology was misappropriated and romanticised, obscuring the original intention behind the integration of Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology. The misappropriation aimed to create a more comfortable theological framework that aligned with the transition from apartheid to democracy but may have diluted the transformative potential of both Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology.

This misappropriation could be viewed as a misinterpretation of Tutu's intention and a departure from the prophetic and transformative nature of Black Theology. By seeking a softer transition theologically, there was a risk of diminishing the radical call for justice and liberation inherent within Black Theology. The shift towards a more harmonious and reconciliatory tone may have overshadowed the urgent need for addressing the deep-rooted systemic injustices and structural inequalities perpetuated during the apartheid era. Nevertheless, it is essential to acknowledge the complexities and nuances surrounding the integration of Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology. The attempt to forge a relationship between these theological frameworks

was rooted in a genuine desire to cultivate a society guided by principles of justice, equality, and interconnectedness. While the misappropriation may have diluted the transformative potential of both theologies, it also served as a testament to the evolving nature of theological discourse and the challenges of translating theory into praxis.

In light of these considerations, it becomes evident that the relationship between Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology is multifaceted. It requires ongoing critical engagement, rigorous theological examination, and a commitment to social action. The original intention of Tutu to utilise Black Theology as a vehicle for promoting Ubuntu Theology remains significant, as it embodies the necessity of grounding theological frameworks in the pursuit of justice, liberation, and the recognition of shared humanity.

Moving forward, it is crucial to engage in reflective theological practices that continuously interrogate the integration of Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology. This involves recentring the radical nature of Black Theology and the transformative potential of Ubuntu Theology, while remaining vigilant against the dilution or misappropriation of these frameworks. By cultivating a nuanced understanding and application of both theologies, scholars, theologians, and practitioners can work towards fostering a society that embodies the principles of justice, reconciliation, and the flourishing of all individuals within the spirit of Ubuntu.

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