



## **Church and South African realities today: Towards a relevant missiology of radical discipleship**

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### **Abstract**

South Africa is one of the last African states to attain liberation from colonial rule. It was ushered into democratic order after one of the most prolonged and painful racial struggles. In 1994 it was heralded as an example of peaceful transition with one of the best constitutions in the world. It was called the “Rainbow Nation” and Madiba Magic. At that stage, the world looked at the new state as the shining example for the rest of Africa. But today, the country has the greatest gap between the rich and the poor in the world. Extreme poverty, inequality, and unemployment are at the centre of the economic ills of the country. In fact, South Africa is reckoned to have one of the largest gaps between rich and poor in the world. The important question is: How did the country decline to the position where it finds itself today? This paper attempts to analyse the trajectory the country took after 1994’s first democratic election to where it is today. Extreme poverty, violence, corruption, greed, bitterness, entitlement mentality and political opportunism are the constituent elements that are plaguing the country.

### **Key words**

*Missiology; discipleship; Rainbow Nation; democracy*

## **1. Introduction**

South Africa gained its independence from colonial yoke in 1994 when Nelson Mandela became the first black and democratically elected president. The country was heralded locally and internationally as the ‘new South Africa’ that was a shining beacon for the rest of the continent and the world not only through its leadership and its constitution with the bill of rights that were regarded as one of the best in the world (Callinicos 1996:1), but because the struggle was waged against a system labelled by the United

Nations as a crime against humanity (Dugaard 2016). The democratic order for South Africa was indeed accepted with euphoria both locally and internationally. Locally it unleashed unprecedented (often unrealistic) expectations among those black millions who identified themselves with the cause of the most brutal struggle in the history of the country. Fuelled by political promises from the African National Congress (ANC) that led to sweeping victory in the first elections, many black people saw themselves arriving in the “promised land” flowing with milk and honey after toiling for so many years under the heinous system of apartheid. Internationally, especially on the African continent, the ANC leaders earned the recognition and reputation of being good reconcilers, mediators and peacemakers (Padayachee & Desai 2007:3). Envoys were sent from South Africa to countries such as Burundi, Zimbabwe, the Democratic Republic of Congo and many others for peace and reconciliation. At that stage, South Africa had taken the lead of African pan-unionism (Ibid 2007:3) and was seen as a beacon of peace.

## **2. Accolades powered to the new democratic order in South Africa**

In line with all the accolades that were shown to the new democracy, Archbishop Desmond Tutu named the country the ‘Rainbow Nation’ (South Africa.net 2016). Tutu, for example, used the term Rainbow Nation to describe the inhabitants of the country that ranged from the San, Dutch, Asian, and African populations that were supposed to live in tranquillity. He used the concept of the Rainbow Nation to denote the covenant of peace that came after the flood in Genesis 9:17. Being one of the last colonies on the continent of Africa with the largest economy, it was fitting to draw such attention from the world.

Different ethnic groups were expected to live together side by side in a “covenant” of peace. It was fitting then in South Africa to call the recently achieved democracy that was brought about by the 1994 election the ‘new South Africa’ that is full of promises. All these praises and promises have, however, not favoured South Africa because a high level of crisis of expectation has now turned into a vicious culture of violent crime and destruction of properties. South Africa has become one of the most

unsaved countries in the world (Ward 2012:215) with extensive poverty, prolonged unemployment and acute inequality (Van Niekerk, A, Tonsing, S, Seedat, M, Jacobs, R, Ratele, K & McClure, R 2015. 5:136) producing an extraordinary burden of violence-related morbidity and mortality (Ibid 2014:137). Scholars such as Muller (nd), Pelser (2000), Doorewaard, Meth (2007), and many others (Van Niekerk, A, Tonsing, S, Seedat, M, Jacobs, R, Ratele, K & McClure, R 2015) affirm that South Africa has a profound violent culture. Enabling factors of the violent culture are poverty, unemployment, and acute socio-economic inequalities that have a high propensity of exclusion and marginalisation. These challenges have been hard to address by the present ANC government.

Another misnomer during the peaceful transition from apartheid to the new South Africa was “Madiba Magic”, emanating from a careful strategy employed by Nelson Mandela to help a country attain a seemingly impossible black majority rule by seducing the white Afrikaners into relinquishing power and allowing a black president to assume leadership against radical blacks that were ready to continue the armed struggle (<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/11bce4d2-37b0-11-897b-00144feabdc0.html>). Madiba Magic was also used in sport as an inspiration brought about by the ingenuity of the new president. After one of fiercest struggles it was fitting for people clamouring for redemption to believe the politicians that promised to meet their needs (Muller n.d.:45). At that moment, black South Africans knew what suffering under apartheid and what emancipation from a draconic regime meant. But the some politicians joined the already rich. They too pursued their own self-interest and forgot the poor to a point where the poor took their destiny into their own hands. The results were a chronic culture of violence and severe bitterness (Muller n.d.:45-63) that became the power of the powerless.

It was under these exuberant expectations and [false] hopes that South Africa was seen as a winning miracle by the world when the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), though a project of extreme ambition, was launched. The TRC was established under the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act of 1995 in the hopes of creating a new, unique society of reconciling both the victims of violence and perpetrators to move forward into a brighter future of the Rainbow Nation (Lindahl 2010:2).

The aim of the commission was to create a common history and advance reconciliation for all South Africans (Ibid:6). Indeed, this consideration was not well thought through. Political leaders failed to see the false picture that had been created by riding on the crest of the honeymoon of the 1994 election victory. Basing the concept of reconciliation on the political ideology and expediency was destructive to the country.

Working from the assumption that understanding the past will contribute to a more peaceful future led to “irreconciliation” (Gibson 2006:82-89). Baron (2015) correctly argues that the pursuit of forgiveness in the absence of remorse (contrite of heart) and repentance cannot produce reconciliation. In the same vein, Forbes (cited in Verwoerd 1999:318) elaborates that forgiveness should be viewed as an antidote to the toxin of bitterness and resentment. According to Baron (2015:13), true forgiveness should be premised on an authentic call to the perpetrators to own up to their atrocities, show remorse and repentance, and be prepared to journey with the victims in their struggle to make ends meet after the loss they have suffered. In this respect, many scholars lament the lack of deep reflection of what was at stake and how less critical thought was allowed to sway the leaders in believing there was a “promised land” after the demise of apartheid (Petrus & Isaacs-Martin 2011; Van Niekerk et al. 2015; Lamb & Snodgrass 2013; Terreblanche 2012 and Govendor et al. 2007). Although South Africa was changed (metaphorically) from being ‘a polecat among the nations’ it had not really become a “Rainbow Nation”.

From the onset the newly inaugurated political leaders and those in high profile positions in civil society were tempted to present South Africa as a ‘miracle’ and shining pinnacle to the rest of the world (Pelser & De Kock 2000:82). The TRC was widely used to create this image. In order to bolster the image of the country and increase its reception in the community of nations after decades of isolation accompanied by fierce struggle, the mass media was allowed to cover every detail of the amnesty hearings and victims’ testimonies (Lindahl 2010:7). Extensive television coverage and newspaper reporting were used to report the breaking news of the Rainbow Nation. The country was admired by the world and both Nelson Mandela and F.W. de Klerk became winners of peace laureates. Although these developments took place in the midst of violence, the hope was entertained

that the scourge of violence would dissipate with the course of time as the new state settled down.

### **3. The reality of the vicious circle of the culture of violence in South Africa**

Many scholars from social sciences such as psychology, sociology, criminology, anthropology and theology have written about the endemic calamities South Africa finds itself in today (Lamb & Snodgrass 2013; Meth 2007; Bowman et al. 2014, Petrus, & Isaacs-Martin 2007). Many other scholars have also written about the social conditions that are tormenting the country: poverty, unemployment, social exclusion, corruption and inequality. The inheritance of a culture of violence from 300 years under the apartheid regime is often used as an explanation of why it is so difficult to eradicate the culture of violence in the country by the present South African government (Meth 2007:81; Ward et al. 2012; Lamb & Snodgrass 2013; Van Niekerk et al. 2015). It is indeed true that the indelible mark of apartheid would take decades to be wiped off and it will demand more effort from the government and general public to be eradicated. It is also true that South African's non-acceptance of the blame for some of the problems in the country and the scapegoating often complicate the problem of poverty and the culture of violence (Petrus & Isaac-Martin 2011:49-61). Owning up to some of the problems and coming up with preventive strategies that work is the government's responsibility.

The legacy of apartheid has indeed bequeathed to South Africa a toxic 'culture of violence' that is rooted in centuries of bitterness and suicidal tendencies. Burning schools that were built by poor communities, destroying factories that are meant to ease chronic poverty, torching buildings and looting shops are not helping the communities to get out of their quagmire. The sloppiness on the part of the government, although they agree to the severity of poverty, unemployment and inequality in the country, as they indulge in self-congratulation on the success of the struggle and the dismantling of oppressive laws is a form of self-deception (Bowman et al. 2015; Meth 2007:83).

The claims contained in the defunct policy documents such as the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (AsgiSA), the

Reconstruction Development Programme (RDP), the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Plan (GEAR), the recently inaugurated National Development Plan of 2030 (NDP) and the National Department of Health (NDoH) have become but a tantalising mirage to the poor. Meth (2007:83) calls this rational ignorance where the concept ‘rational ignorance’ denotes political sloppiness in decision-making where the cost of finding the truth to be able to make informed decisions outweighs the expected benefits of the decision (Meth 2007:83). Meth (2007:85) cites the serious problem facing the government in the face of worsening poverty and inequality as less enthusiasm about discovering the ‘true’ extent of the problem from the side of the government. Like its predecessor, the present government indulges in philosophical jargons and rhetoric that are carefully designed to explain problems in self-exonerating manners. In this regard, Trevor Manuel (2013), the former minister in the Presidency, could not miss his words when he confronted the ruling party and said “We should no longer say it is apartheid’s fault. We should get up every morning and recognise that we have responsibility...” (Mkokeli 2013). Trevor Manuel’s remarks earned him a rebuke from President Zuma. The fact of the matter is that the government is weary to own up to its failures and mistakes. As the adage goes ‘the taste of the pudding is in the eating’. The formal policies on poverty, unemployment and inequality are often informed by a lack of awareness of the realities of life faced by the poorer South Africans (Kirsten & Bruce 2010:3). The hand of the police in controlling violent crime is highly curtailed. More often than not they are blamed for using force when their lives are in danger and criticised for a lack of adequate training and skills. However, the same level of blame is never issued to the other side. This skewed condemnation does not help the process correcting the situation.

#### **4. Political career as employment opportunity in South Africa**

The level of unemployment is very high among the youth in South Africa. In a country with a scarcity of employment opportunities, a political career remains the only lucrative career for which people scramble. Those who succeed to get their way to a political position are placed under tremendous pressure by those who are unemployed. The perception of the poor then is that the politicians and the government officials are busy with their ‘meal’

somewhere and they do not feel the pinch under which the poor are. What is exacerbating the perception is the gap between the rich and the poor that has now changed from a racial issue to an increasingly class issue (www.socialistworld.net 2003). The expectations and promises that politicians have made that resulted in them being elected to power were just a ploy to get elected. There is a perception that those with political wit get away with “murder” through the promises they make and once they are elected they dump those who put them there. The electorate, who happen to be the poor and neglected, are living in squalor conditions and feel powerless, betrayed, used and dumped by those in government who have misused them to enrich the politicians.

Democracy is not yet understood as a system that can make politicians accountable in South Africa. One of my informants replied to the question, “Why do they continue voting for the ANC if it is failing them?” He replied by saying that it was not that the ANC did not know what is the right thing to do, but that they did not want to do it. The informants said that they will continue voting for the ANC until it does the right thing. The only way then to make those in power listen to their plight is through violence but not by voting for them (Von Holdt 2011:2), metaphorically “through [the] smoke that [is] oozing [out of] burning tyres and properties”. The government should never be let off the hook by voting for another party. Continually voting for them is a form of discipline.

People who feel used and betrayed by the powerful often feel marginalised, helpless, inferior, and unworthy and suffer from internal dislocation and rejection (Muller 2007:47). When they find themselves in such conditions they suffer what Muller (2007:54) calls “the behavioural sink”. Occasioned by extreme poverty and extreme inequality they tend to change their environment by devising technologies that nature did not provide for (Ibid 2000:57). A culture of violence often becomes the only option when one is trying to survive in a hostile environment (Fanon 1961).

The poor who are uneducated and unconnected to those in power feel that the only way they could respond to the situation of politicians affected partly by rampant corruption, nepotism and blatant robbery through misdirected service from the poor to their own benefits is through violence.

In a country of failed political promises and miscarriages of justice where high shortages of houses are not lessening although some people have been on the waiting list for 40 years, unemployment is spiralling higher and higher every month, inequality is becoming the order of the day and the poor are becoming increasingly powerless, irrationality becomes a choice (Muller 2007:45).

## **5. “What have we done?”: Some propositions of addressing violence in South Africa**

Senzeni na is an African song of protest traditionally sung at meetings of crisis. During the apartheid struggle it was sung especially at the funerals of people who died in the struggle. The song literally means “What have we done?” with the implication “what did we do to deserve this suffering?”. The lyrics of the song run like this:

What have we done?  
 Our sin is that we are black  
 Our sin is the truth  
 They are killing us  
 Let Africa return

The protest can now be directed to the ruling party as was the case during apartheid. What have the poor “black” people done to deserve being excluded from the wealth of the country which is concentrated in the hands of the few powerful elite in a country that is bestowed with abundance in terms of natural resources? The ANC-led government is believed to have buried the Freedom Charter, abandoned the Reconstruction and Development Programme, introduced the neo-liberal capitalist Growth, Employment and Redistribution Programme, and adopted many others that have not worked for the poor ([www.socialistworld.net](http://www.socialistworld.net) 2003) and instead have allowed the weed of crime to thrive and poverty to worsen while the wealthier live in abundance. Something more drastic and urgent should be done. The following propositions are considered as part of the way of addressing the insidious crime and abject poverty in the country.



## 6. Speaking truth to power

Speaking truth to power means maintaining the truthfulness of one's speech in the face of powerful and clear hostility (Higginbotham 2016:341) or even self-exoneration or intransigency. It implies standing up and comforting the afflicted and afflicting the comfortable. Those fighting for the cause of the marginalized and poor in South Africa should adopt this stance. The concept is taken from Anita Hill's book "Speaking Truth to Power" written in 1991 (Ibid:341). Speaking truth to power in the face of crisis faced by the country may compel it (the powerful elite) to accede to the truth. Unless the South African government is made or forced to own up to the challenges of violence and to start using the country's resources towards resolving these problems, the violence will not come down to controllable levels.

A classic example where the concept was used with a measure of success was when it was used by Leon Higginbotham Junior in 1986 against the South African white government (Higginbotham 2016:342). Leon Higginbotham was part of a group of American delegates who came to South Africa in 1986 to talk to the white government about the political reform of that time. During the visit it became clear that the Nationalist Party had remained enthusiastically committed to racial segregation and discrimination (Ibid:344). Without fear and hesitation, Leon Higginbotham (an African American) addressed Nationalist Lawmakers on human needs and argued that they are all part of human families. He further discussed infamous atrocities committed by people against others and how they were judged by history. Referring to the Nationalist's response to racial discrimination and why it should be kept in South Africa, Leon considered them as no longer part of the human family (Ibid:345). It is said that it was one of those meetings that softened the white government to open talks with the liberation movement (Ibid:345).

### a. Speaking truth to power in the South African present context

The idea of the church working in partnership with the state under the notion of a relationship of critical solidarity post-1994 resulted in a collusion that compromised the plight of the poor people. The notion of being 'in solidarity' with government compromised its prophetic voice where it was critically needed. During the heat of the South African struggle, member

churches of the South African Council of Churches could also speak truth to power—a phenomenon that has disappeared from the Christian churches in South Africa today. In the run-up to the first democratic election, churches opted for a compromised position of ‘being in critical solidarity with the ANC government’ (Botman 2009:5). Coming from the painful history of struggle where the common enemy was apartheid and given the euphoria of the landslide election victory for the black majority, the church neglected its function as the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

In the 1980s the church could speak to power in an unequivocal way. One of the contributions the church made was unmasking two main white theologies of self-interest. Black theologians unmasked the monumental culmination of racism and racial agenda which was propelled under the cloak of Christianity. The white self-interest was somehow wittingly and unwittingly embedded in government policies as well as in mission policies of dominant white churches (Magwira & Kgatla 2015:447). The theologies of white self-interest were critically exposed by the South African Council of Churches in documents such as the debates in the Kairos Document of 1985, *The Oikos Journey, the Road to Damascus* and the *Journal of Black Theology*.

Government’s invitation to work with the church to fight challenges facing the country could easily become a way of implicating the church and making it carry the blame for the corruptive ills of the country. A partnership agreement signed by the National Religious Leaders Forum (NRLF) and the government in 2005 to form the National Religious Association for Social Development (NRASD) was one of the examples that compromised the prophetic voice of the church. Religious leaders were made to co-own the atrocities of crime and violence in the country. In a 2006 meeting where the researcher was present, President Thabo Mbeki, who chaired the meeting, accused church leaders of not preaching to their members to stop the crime and violence their members were committing in townships. The prevention of violent crime in the country was no longer the responsibility of the government alone but also of the church. It was at this meeting where the state, under the leadership of Thabo Mbeki, and the religious sector agreed to work together to foster sustainable community development and yet the religious sector had no resources (Botman 2009:8).

### **b. The voices of church leaders and marches of civil organisations to the Union Buildings**

Responding to endemic escalations of poverty, high unemployment, corruption (including state capture by powerful business entities) South African leaders representing 36 affiliated churches to the South African Council of Churches made their voices heard in 2015. Civil organisations recently organised marches on behalf of the poor, the marginalised and the unemployed to the Union Buildings to present memoranda; the recent marches included twenty-nine civil organisations and eight trade unions on 27 August 2016 (Eyewitness News 2016).

Equally concerned about the level of poverty, unemployment, inequality and corruption and twenty-two years of the ANC maladministration, church leaders met on 24 March 2015 to express their ‘grave concern’ of the tipping scale of state of affairs ([Online]. Available: <http://sacc.co.za> [Accessed 31/12/2016]. The church leaders were particularly concerned with the fortunes of the poor that was deteriorating from one generation to the other with ensuing spiral gross inequalities. But all these efforts appeared to be falling on deaf ears.

### **c. South Africa: the land “devouring its inhabitants”**

The metaphoric expression above is used in the Bible to denote the difficulties in the country of abode. In Numbers 13 and Ezekiel 16 this metaphor is used to refer to the defencelessness and helplessness people may find themselves in in the country of their abode. Crime and violence in South Africa have reached unprecedented proportions to the extent that everyone living in it is not safe. Chandre Gould (2014:12) of the Institute of Security Studies cites alarming crime statistics: in 2012/13, 827 children were murdered, 2 266 women were murdered, and 13 123 men were murdered. Apart from other causes of crime in South Africa, the country is permissible when it comes to violent behaviour. Although the violent culture was bequeathed from the apartheid state, South Africans have been socialised to disrespect the law, lack the courage to correct those who are wrong, fear becoming a victim for standing for the truth, and disrespect norms and rules for perceived safety.

South Africans have internalised fear and their psyche has been highly compromised because of the ponderous haemorrhage resulting from apartheid torture on the one hand and [false] persecution of being seen as spying for the enemy on the other hand. As people tried to survive between the two equally lethal systems, they were pushed into a survival mode that depleted their moral independence. Both apartheid rulers and insurgences left indelible marks in their lives, a connection the criminals are using today. As part of the strategic intervention to address the scourge of violent crime, psyche repair should also be part of the agenda.

## **7. Research and avoidance of reality**

Meth (2007:81-110) wrote an article entitled “Rational ignorance and South African poverty statistics” in which he argues for proper research into violent crime in South Africa. Although the government recognises that poverty results from high levels of unemployment and acute inequalities in the country, it still fails to act on the need for collecting proper information on the poor, inequality and frustration that the poorest of the poor are facing daily (Ibid:82). According to Meth, the most important research of all the topics in South Africa is on the extent of both inequality and poverty.

From government policy documents that chart a way forward for combating crime and violence, such as the National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS), one is able to deduce that the government interlocutor is not the poor and the marginalised in South Africa. Their interlocutor is the potential business people from overseas, their counterparts in Western countries and their colleagues elsewhere outside the country. Hence, they (government) are indulging in self-congratulation and self-glorification (Meth 2007:83) on the success against apartheid. An example of this is their claims in the defunct Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (AsgiSA) that they will ‘virtually eliminate poverty by 2014’ (Ibid:83). The government authoritative policy framework of the National Crime Prevention Strategy prepared by an inter-departmental strategy team demonstrates a lack of real facts on the ground. Of the seven crime categories in the document, not one of them connects violent crime with a lack of service delivery and wealth residing in the hands of the few elite. The document clearly demonstrates government’s biasness towards blaming crime elsewhere but not its own failure in governance.

The national programmes that have been adopted to prevent crime are addressing the issue of violent crime at a tangent. Behind violent crime there is abject poverty, inequality, frustration and anger which can effectively be addressed by equitable distribution of wealth. Lessons can be learnt from the failed oppressive measures of the apartheid regime which suppressed people into submission by using brutal laws.

Reacting to this “rational ignorance”, Meth (2007:83) argues for authentic research that will benefit informed decisions in fighting crime in the country. Research is not only energy-consuming but is also costly in terms of resources. It requires real commitment from the government to make the political decision to do what is right for its citizens. The truth about the real situation regarding poverty, inequality and resultant violence should be unmasked and attended to unreservedly. Reluctance on the part of the government about discovering the true extent of poverty and inequality, and the way they are affecting the poor people, should be exposed. The misnomer often used by the government after acknowledging the severity of inequality and poverty that “...this [is] not a challenge for government alone...” is a form of scapegoating and should be stopped (Petrus & Isaac-Martin 2011:49-61).

## **8. Towards a missiology of radical discipleship**

In this article, radical discipleship follows from what Jesus said in the Luke 14:26 ‘If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, his own life also, he cannot be My disciple’. Radical discipleship involves expanding one’s space of life unconditionally to embrace the other (the poor) in such a way that it could be seen by the “haves” as hating oneself. In his writings on political, anthropological and theological reflection on the poor in his country, Haitian theologian and priest Jean-Bertrand Aristide came up with what he called ethics of social activism and transformation for the poor (1991, 2000). In his thought-provoking works, Aristide calls the poor, the oppressed, the marginalised, and the excluded the community of faith. According to Aristide, God speaks through the poor and inspires hope in them and where the poor are heard and respected, the face of God is illuminated (Aristide 2000:73) and the gift of God is His presence among

the humanity, among the poor. His theology is grounded in the theory of radical interactionality, interconnectedness, interdependence, relationality, and Ubuntu and it is thus a theology of reciprocity and mutuality (Ibid). What follows is a brief discussion of radical missiology of discipleship based on the insight provided in Aristide's thesis.

### *Interactionality*

Radical missiology is premised on the biblical teaching that all humanity has been created in the image of God for a specific purpose of glorifying God as part of His creation. Their intersection is expressed in faith, hope, freedom, respect and common humanity. The interactionality of human creatures has its origin in God but not human agendas of self-interest. Missiology of radicalism is grounded in deep reflection of solidarity, commitment and pursuance of justice to the other and in that way demonstrates what God is in His solidarity with the poor (Aristide 2000:73).

### *Interdependence*

The biblical teaching of humanity created in the image of God affirms the interconnectedness in unity of purpose, interdependence and the salient unquestionable relationships of humans. Interconnectedness calls for solidarity and collectivity in the fight against exploitation by the powerful and the privileged. Radical missiology is a missiology of transformation of the social order in pursuance of total emancipation from any form of social evil tailored to deny others space of self-expression and authentic freedom.

### *Relationality*

Radical missiology emanates from the notion that “everyone is a person” and “everyone has been endowed with the same essential dignity and should be treated as such” (Hallward 2010:21). Human relationships are fundamental aspects of their beings and they form the cornerstone of their ontological interactions and being. If one member suffers, the whole body should suffer. The relationship is supposed to be regulated by loving one another and promoting equality and peace among each other. The prerequisite of any lovingkindness and harmony among humans includes the radical confrontation of oppressive structures and the elimination of human-induced poverty (Kgatla 2016:1). The intimate interplay between missiology of radical constructive discourse and authentic political

relationality in pursuance of social justice and critical solidarity is key to any attempt to address the ills of the country.

### *The Ubuntu concept*

Another way of expressing radical missiology of humanness is through the concept of African Ubuntu. Ubuntu as the spirit of common good for all and striving to achieve collective wholeness by definition resists any ideology that preys on other people. Ubuntu is based on God's love which signifies association with the very nature of a God who exists for the sake and wellbeing of humans. Those who are imbued with God's love are said to possess the quality of Ubuntu that seeks to empower and transform those who are socially dehumanised and rejected purely because of their material and social conditions.

Thus, radical missiology promotes a dialogue that views people as the highest form of wealth and crest of God's creation (Aristide 1993:178). Ubuntu is opposed to worldly wealth that arrogantly predisposes material possession as possession of truth and prestige, and therefore incorrectly believes itself entitled to dominate and oppress the other. Ubuntu underscores solidarity and relationality by all individuals and requires them to live, on a daily basis, for the wellness of the whole community without exception. Relationality, mutuality, reciprocity and interdependence are features without which Ubuntu cannot be said to have taken root in the community. Missiological reflection of bondedness, "betweenness", and relationality transcends individual life and stretches to the intentionality of the source and creator of life. Refusal to share is inconsistent with the spirit of Ubuntu; in fact, Ubuntu is a construction of good living.

## **9. Conclusion**

This article aimed to first map the landscape that led to the euphoria around the false hopes of a new South Africa. As the liberation from apartheid rule was welcomed and celebrated after 1994, the democratic election slipped through many hands. The new government tried to present itself to the world as a miracle to be celebrated and adored by world communities. Little did it realise it was creating a new society that would turn against it if the country's plight was not addressed adequately. The church, which was renowned for having fought apartheid tenaciously and having won the

fight, was equally complacent. Working in solidarity with the government was a form of idolatry that would lead to a form of compromise on critical issues.

Instead of transiting from the old regime with virility and maximum caution that humans are susceptible to evil and agility to sin, a laissez-faire attitude was adopted and “everything got lost” in transformation as Terreblanche (2012) so aptly put it. To use the metaphor of the angel to the church of Laodicea in the Book of Revelation, the church in South Africa should regain its vitality and become a prophetic voice in the midst of absurdity and brighten the way. As the ANC government is caught in the web of self-exoneration and blame-portioning and is worsening the plight of the poor, the church should speak to power to expose its intransigence. The article concluded by highlighting some elements of missiology of radical option for the poor in a transformative and empowering manner.

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