

Tumelo and Tshiamiso in perspective: Reading Romans 1:17 within the Marapyane Lutheran Community context

by

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Declaration

I, Jack Mokone Magoro, student number 16023506; hereby declare that this dissertation for the Master of Arts in African Studies, at the University of Venda, hereby submitted by me, has not been previously submitted for a degree at this or any institution, and that this is my own work in design and execution. All reference materials contained herein have been duly acknowledged.

Signature

Date

Dedication

This research is dedicated to the church that groomed me to who I am today, the Neu Halle Parish and my parents Mr Johannes and Mrs Rebecca Magoro.

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I wish to thank God almighty, my wife Reneilwe Magoro and children Onthatile, Omolemo and Ororiseng and my niece Molebogeng Moyo for being there for me during my studies. I thank them for encouraging me and supporting me throughout my educational journey.

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Abstract

The letter to the Romans congregation played an important role in defining theologies and doctrines in the early Church history period. The Church fathers and early reformers read this letter and other epistles meticulously to understand Paul's theology and mission. Martin Luther's reading of this letter, in particular verses 4 and 8, has always been referred to as the culmination of Luther's theology. Luther's theological statements on the Law and Gospel discourse became central in this case. Faith debates and discussions are critical in most communities. This research aims to look at how local congregations read Romans 1:17 especially focusing on the *Tumelo* and *Tshiamiso* biblical expressions. The key questions are: Are local community readings the same as those of Luther and other biblical scholars? Are context-dynamics of local community biblical readers essential in determining their reading of Romans 1:17? These two questions form the basis for this research study. The Marapyane local Lutheran community will be used as the research site. The research study will take into consideration current theories and approaches of biblical interpretation especially the works of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal School of Theology Ujamaa Biblical Studies Project. Some of the theoretical views will include the works of Gerald West, Itumeleng Mosala and Justin Ukpong. Contextual Bible study methodologies and instruments will be used in understanding how local communities read issues of *Tumelo* and *Tshiamiso* in this case.

Keywords: church, contextual bible study, faith, justification, poverty

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Abbreviations

ANC:	AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS
BMS:	BERLIN MISSIONARY SOCIETY
CBS:	CONTEXTUAL BIBLE STUDY
COPE:	CONGRESS OF THE PEOPLE
DA:	DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE
EFF:	ECONOMIC FREEDOM FIGHTERS
ELCSA:	EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA
IKH:	INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE HOLDERS
KH:	KNOWLEDGE HOLDERS
LBC:	LUTHERAN BAPEDI CHURCH
NT:	NEW TESTAMENT
PML:	PRAYER MEN'S LEAGUE
PWL:	PRAYER WOMEN'S LEAGUE
TV:	TELEVISION
UCDP:	UNITED CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY
UEC:	UNIVERSITY ETHICS COMMITTEE
YAL:	YOUNG ADULTS LEAGUE
YL:	YOUTH LEAGUE

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1. INTRODUCTORY BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to understand the key biblical phrases *Tumelo* and *Tshiamiso* in context. This is because in the twenty-first century faith without works or miracles seems to be outdated. The question of how one gets justified by God who is the Father, son and Holy Spirit still is at the heart of many believers. By faith, believing the good news brought by the apostles and receiving freely the forgiveness of sins and the gift of eternal life. This question comes because many believers have forgotten that the grace is the gift from God to us.

In the twenty-first century the justification and faith discussions are thought to be an outdated approach to religion (Christianity) in the modern world. It is in these times that one has observed people migrating from one mega church to the other in search of a better God or even a better religion. This implies that the teaching is not considered to be relevant to the present human context or situation. Thus Paul in the letter to the Romans 1:17 argue more on the just living by faith.¹ Despite this, Iwand (2007a) has indicated that justification can be viewed from the viewpoint that human beings have been justified as a result of God's concern for their social status. This aspect is of critical importance and of interest because it touches on the fact that justification involves God's relationship with humanity. Therefore justification, in one way, does have implications for human society.

In addition, some researchers like Mcgrath (2007), for example, have shown that the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith has been discussed in bringing a divided Christian group under one identity. These were the Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians of the Roman church. It is this aspect that makes the relevance of 'Justification by Faith' to social life unavoidable. Furthermore, Maimela (1988) points out that the understanding of Justification by Faith by Luther meant that men and women could now understand that a 'meaningful life' can be attained without a necessity of good works. This meant God accepts all human beings without condition, including the oppressed. This, therefore,

¹ For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, "The one who is righteous will live by faith."

explains that the discussion of this research will be relevant to most of the Lutheran believers in the Marapyane community who might not be experiencing any meaningful life due to their social status of poverty.

It is therefore the realisation of the situation of the believers in my area, Marapyane, Mpumalanga that influences this study. This is so because the pertinent question to be asked is *how the Justification does and Faith affects the lives of those who hold on to it as the main teaching of the church?* Another question to consider in this study is that how the church is doing to make this teaching relevant to the lives of the people. It will be after the discussion of Justification by Faith that social action will be recommended for the transformation of the lives of these Lutherans. Therefore, this discussion will take into consideration what West (1996) indicates when he maintains that in a Contextual Bible study the context of the poor believers become the subject of reading the Bible and its interpretation, meaning that the Bible is read to touch the real situation of the people, for example poverty (West, 1996).

It is clear that the present and persistent debate among Lutherans today is whether 'Justification and Faith' has any meaning in our everyday world. Koehler (2006) states that the grace of God is universal and it is not limited to the elite. He further indicates this in his work on 'Justification by Faith' and its social implications as he continues to say that one question may be whether the doctrine is too archaic for the modern world. The Lutheran understanding of salvation came as a result of Luther's struggle to find a gracious God. Luther could not experience wholeness and salvation through prescribed method of the medieval church; he found works of righteousness failing to satisfy his thirst for forgiveness from sin and freedom. However, certain scholars argue that before the United States civil war most of the white Lutherans avoided involvement in issues like slavery, race or racism. It is during this time that the concept of justification became a holistic doctrine amongst the African-Americans only because it concerns being justified as a result of God's involvement in human social situation (Koehler, 2006).

This is therefore suggestive to this research as one has considered the community of interest. In this situation, believers who are poor live under lack of basic needs like food, water and shelter. This makes their lives difficult and has led some members to find it better to leave the Lutheran church and to join other denominations such as the healing

mega churches which promises them wealth overnight and that make them believe that buying the supposed favour from God will make them move from poverty to wealth. Unfortunately, the result is that they find themselves even poorer. Therefore, while considering this unfavourable situation of Marapyane community's experience, this research will also try to suggest ways on how to deal with the situation in order for the church to work for the betterment of the lives of the community.

1.2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The Marapyane Lutheran community does not understand the doctrine of justification of faith. This is because in Marapyane Lutherans still leave the church and join churches that promise miracle money, planting the seed in order to see God at work. More than 1 000 denominations are registered in South Africa, mostly of the Pentecostal type. Moreover in Marapyane alone there are churches that mushroom with every new economical challenge that the locals face. In addition to this, Bible TV programs present a confusing mixture of truly biblical messages and straight unbiblical concepts, for instance the "prosperity gospel". Miracles pertaining to the physical wellbeing of the individual believer are advertised, while the biblical dimension of diaconal love is washed down. This stands in diametrical opposition to the Lutheran theology of the cross.

This socio-psychological climate has a fruitful side: biblical phenomena which played almost no role in the classical Lutheran tradition, for example the multitude of spiritual gifts or the anointing oil (James 5:14)² are also revisited and according to 1 Thessalonians³ 5:21, tested and retained if good. But there is also a confusing side. Not every Lutheran has the gift of discernment of spirit, so many are fed by the half-truths of Bible TV and other mega churches.

Moreover, the question may still stand whether those who confess that they are justified by Faith through grace understand and apply the doctrine and relate it to their everyday life or whether it has any influence in the way they experience their life. What can the church do therefore in order to make the people realise the relevance of this doctrine in such a way that both their socio-economic lives and those of their neighbours may improve? Myers (1999) indicates that the power of the spirit world and witchcraft play a part in contributing

² Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. (James 5:14)

³ but test everything; hold fast to what is good (1 Thessalonians 5:21)

to the poverty of the people. Money is spent on charms for protection as an attempt to adjust to the situation of poverty.

This situation leads to most of the mainline churches losing members to situations where they are more exploited or being made poorer materially. The church can teach both the poor and rich members the doctrine of Justification by Faith and its implications to their daily lives and on how it can help them to relate them to one another.

1.3. AIM OF THE STUDY

The study seeks to establish ways in which the local Lutherans in the community of Marapyane read Romans 1:17 in the light of the key biblical phrases *Tumelo* and *Tshiamiso*, as a contribution to current research and studies on African Biblical hermeneutics.

1.4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Many churches have been widely known for competition in activating the faith of people. Hence, some churches now in Marapyane are known as the churches of the spirit which make wonders. This study would add to a greater pool of knowledge available about the faith in Marapyane Lutheran community and also their ability to read the Bible in a way that is aimed at improving their socio-economic status, particularly in the alleviation of poverty. In addition, this study will assist the Christian community of Marapyane to find alternative ways of reading the Bible in a manner that is correct and that will enable them to lift themselves from situations that are caused by lack of understanding Bible. Furthermore, the study will also assist future discussions and debates through the discoveries of Justification and Faith in South Africa and beyond.

1.5. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The study aims to achieve the following objectives, namely:

- To establish local Biblical Hermeneutics of *Tumelo* and *Tshiamiso* in the light of liberation theology.
- To reflect on the local context and dynamics which are essential in reading Romans 1:17 in Marapyane community with those of Luther and other Biblical scholars.

- To understand how Romans 1:17 is read and interpreted by the local Lutheran Christians in Marapyane. Check spacing below.

1.6. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study focuses on the three outstanding research questions, namely:

- What are the local Biblical Hermeneutics used in *Tumelo* and *Tshiamiso* in the light of liberation theology?
- What are similarities and differences of the local context-dynamics of the local community of Marapyane with those of Luther and other biblical scholars which are essential in determining their reading of Romans 1:17?
- How do readers of the Bible in Marapyane Lutheran community understand the interpretation of Romans 1:17?

1.7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Ridley (2009) argues that the research methodology that is chosen directs and dictates how data is collected and organised. This research includes studies in the field of biblical studies and other related fields. For the purpose of this study the researcher has engaged the qualitative research methodology by using a contextual bible study to collect data from the Christian community of Neu Halle on how they read Romans 1:16-17. Furthermore this will be in relation to how they understand the two key terms *Tumelo* and *Tshiamiso* in their everyday challenges.

1.8. Theoretical framework

This study presents an interactive dialogue between the biblical text, the passage of Romans 1:16-17 and a contemporary socio-political community. For the purpose of this study the researcher has implored the use of a contextual theoretical framework. This is solely because this study is based on the experiences of ordinary bible readers and the challenges they may be facing on a daily basis. Moreover this text is read in the context of pure biblical misinterpretation and confusion, for example one will notice that people in Marapyane rely on the bible for everything. This means that to understand how a biblical text can be brought to context the researcher used the tri-polar theory. This theory was developed by Draper (2001) who argued that the role of missionaries and their widespread

dissemination of the bible in the process of colonisation of Africa problematised of its text most especially in South Africa where it was used to propagate apartheid (Draper, 2001).

1.9. DEFINITION OF OPERATIONAL TERMS

1.9.1. JUSTIFICATION

The concept 'justification' can refer to different meanings in different contexts. Therefore, the definition given in secular usage is that the word refers to 'the administration of justice or of the law'. The word can also mean an action of justifying or of showing something 'to be just, right or proper'. To justify can simply mean to defend a good reasoning or cause. As pertaining to the law the word means showing or maintaining in court a valid reason for doing the thing with which a person is charged for. The word can also mean the action of adjusting or arranging something exactly especially if it refers to an action of justifying printing lines (Brown, 1993).

So 'to justify' means 'to do justice to', 'to vindicate', 'administer justice to', 'to keep or bring under the rule of law'. It can also refer to inflicting a judicial penalty on a person, to punish or to condemn. To justify can also mean 'to prove or maintain the rightness, worth, or innocence of'. It also refers to 'giving support or back up by evidence in support of what is given to be true'. With regard to the law the word means showing adequate ground for doing the thing that one is charged for (Brown, 1993).

1.9.2. FAITH

The concept 'faith' in its everyday use means confidence, reliance, and belief especially without evidence or proof. It may also refer to belief based on testimony or authority. Therefore, in the case of what should be believed is a system of firmly held beliefs or principles (Brown, 1993).

The word 'faith' (πίστις) in Greek, means 'confidence', 'trust' with reference in this sense to personal relations and also relation to things. In so far as it contains an element of uncertainty, trust can be contrasted with knowledge. Nevertheless, it can also mean conviction. In many cases faith is firm conviction. According to the Greek understanding faith (πίστις) can denote only the confidence one has but also the confidence one enjoys,

that is, trustworthiness. This meaning can also relate to 'reliability'. Concretely then, faith means the guarantee which creates the possibility of trust, that which may be relied upon, or simply the assurance of that reliability. It belongs specifically to friendship (Friedrich, 1977).

1.9.3. POVERTY

Poverty can be explained as the condition of having little or no wealth; a condition of destitution, or a condition of want. According to Khumalo (2003) it can be seen as a relative lack of money or material possessions. Poverty can also be said to be caused by a denial of the right to individual ownership of property. It can refer to material deprivation, or hardships. It can also mean or refer to deficiency or lack of an appropriate or particular property. So 'the poor' refers to the people who have few or no material possessions at all as well as who lack enough amount of money to obtain the comforts or necessities of life. The reality of being poor is being characterised by poverty. So being poor means having small in amount or less than what is wanted, needed or expected.

So it can be said that this lack of material possessions which people need to earn a living can be caused by lack of employment, or by other human beings who could be disempowering others instead of empowering them.

Achtemeier (2001) shows that in the Scriptures, there are two ways in which the state of being poor is being displayed. He starts with the secondary way which is portrayed in the Proverbs. Poverty here is seen as the result of moral lassitude, especially laziness (Proverbs 13: 18). For the primary sense, when the poor are encountered in their needs or treated as a group, their situation is understood as the result of social factors, particularly injustice (Proverbs 13:23).

From the Hebrew perspective the poor are understood or addressed as the needy, and without power, and abused by those who are having power. In Leviticus the poor are defined as those who are lowly in their power (Leviticus 25: 35). It can be said that the poor have the capacity to provide for themselves the essentials of their lives. What is also fundamental in the biblical faith is the responsibility to the poor. It is also at the basis of the nature of God as the one who hears the cries of the poor (Psalm 12: 5). The deliverance from Egypt is seen as an example of God's justice to the needy (Exodus 2: 23- 24). So what is to be said is that, since the condition of the poor is caused by a lack of power, what is required is empowerment.

The biblical view shows that poverty can be caused by what is in the people's surroundings. This can refer to other human beings who can create a world of hostility, for example social and economic injustices. Poverty therefore is not a human condition created by God, but a human condition made by humans themselves (Khumalo, 2003).

Myers (1999) asserts that poverty is the condition of people whom we abstractly describe as the poor. Despite this Myers warns that referring to people by a label is dangerous for we may forget that the poor are not an abstraction but rather a group of human beings who have names, who are made in the image of God and for whom Jesus has died. Therefore the people who live in poverty are as valued, as important, as loved by God as those who do not live in poverty. This therefore is important, for the world seems to view the poor as a group that is helpless. Therefore the point of departure for the Christian understanding of poverty should be to remember that the poor are people with names, people to whom God has given gifts, and people with whom God has been working with.

Furthermore Myers explains that the poor are persons embedded in families, communities, and the corresponding social systems. It is also then important to realize that the poor are no lazier, improvident, stupid or arrogant than anyone else, rather all people suffer from these problems (Myers, 1999).

In his definition of poverty Myers explains that in the early days of development thinking, the people defined poverty as a deficit; a lack. This meant that the poor people do not have enough to eat, a place to sleep, or clean water to drink. So Myers (1999) argues that this view of poverty encourages plans to provide for the missing and if the missing is provided, then poverty will be alleviated.

What is made clear is that poverty is seen as lack of material property, which is basic to maintenance of human well-being. Although Myers argues this way, focusing on the needs of the poor who have faith in Jesus Christ is part of this research which also seeks to look in to ways on how to better the lives of fellow Christian believers who are experiencing poverty as we have explained it and as Walker explains it below.

For Walker (1990) then, these aspects might be said to embody the basic elements of poverty. It involves deprivation in its various forms. The poor then are usually an oppressed class or classes of people who are marginalized and exploited by social structures. Their condition often involves physical deprivation and sometimes destitution. This shows that the poor believers are often identified to be living under conditions which

deprive them a good life. But more important is that their condition calls for the attention of other believers.

1.9.4. CHURCH

The term 'Church' is used in two different, but closely related, ways. It can refer to all of Jesus' followers, viewed as a community. It can also refer to specific institutions, either the local congregation or a national or international body. It can even be used to refer to the building in which they meet. Nürnberger (2005) said: 'The church is a living community [of believers] that comes into being when the message concerning God's self-giving, redeeming act in Christ calls people into the fellowship of God through the Spirit' (Khumalo, 2003). The church is a living community because it has been called to God's mission of improving the lives of people. In the church, people do not only gather for God's Word and the sacraments but also to better the situation of the people who are suffering from poverty and economic injustices. The church also exists in the society because it is rooted from the society.

In the context of this study, ELCSA in Marapyane exists to be an institution that has to help the people of Marapyane who are living in the context of poverty. I shall use the name church as ELCSA or use them interchangeably.

1.10. DELIMITATIONS

Neu Halle Parish is divided into nine different congregations in different geographical settings. However, for the purpose of this study the research focussed on one congregation Marapyane. The sampling unit for the study is the leagues of the Lutheran church in Marapyane. The analysis of the sample was made as a unit solely because the participants were grouped according to leagues not individually or by gender.

1.11. ORGANISATION OF CHAPTERS

In order to fully engage with the concepts *Tshiamiso* and *Tumelo* in Marapyane the chapters of the dissertation are organised as follows:

Chapter 1 : Introduction to the study

This chapter will cover the following items, background of the study, purpose of the study, significance of the study, location of the study, delimitation of the study, research objectives, research questions, definition of keywords, organization of the study and the summary of chapter one.

Chapter 2 : Literature review

Literature review is about reviewing and providing both the reader and the researcher with information on other previous efforts, research and other relevant work done discussing matters relevant to the issues of the current study (Welman, 2005). It is therefore in this chapter that the researcher will cover the relevant literature for this topic. The aim of this chapter is to introduce and give a broader background of the major issues that are pertinent to the topic of this study.

Chapter 3 : Research methodology

This chapter will present the research design, methodology, data collection procedures, population and data sampling techniques as well as ways of analysing the data and conclude with ethical considerations.

Chapter 4 : Transcription and analyses of the fieldwork data

The fourth chapter presents a transcription of the fieldwork data and analyses of the data. The analysis of the data examines the manner in which the CBS participants either stick to their dogmatic teaching or whether they will be open.

Chapter Five : Findings, recommendations and conclusion

This chapter will present findings from the data analysis and offer suggestions for future research. Furthermore, this chapter will present the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

1.12. CONCLUSION

This chapter clarified the background of the study, the statement of the research problem, the objective and the aim. This chapter further dealt with the significance of the study and explanation of the key/ technical terms to be used and has also provided a brief overview of what this study is about. The subsequent chapter deals with the different literature that deals with the *Tumelo* and *Tshiamiso* and the theoretical framework of the study.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1. INTRODUCTION

Literature review is explained by Randolph (2009) as a comprehensive analysis of selected books, journals, articles, newspapers and other related documents which may speak about the broad research topic. Literature review is carried out so as to assess the existing information knowledge, to allow the researcher to fill the existing gap and expand on the previous studies. In other words, literature review is carried out to define research topic and shed light on the objectives of the study.

Literature review has shown that there is still room to read the biblical text from the perspective of the poor and marginalised. For instance, ever since the dawn of mega-churches in South African communities there is room for Lutheran communities to read and reread the Bible contextually.

Acknowledging what other authors wrote about faith (*Tumelo*) and justification (*Tshiamiso*), the present researcher shall build on what they have laid out, however the researcher will approach the issue from a different perspective. In this regard, the researcher shall focus on *Tumelo* and *Tshiamiso* in perspective. The previous authors generalised the issues as they never put the biblical text in a dialogue with the local communities. In this chapter the researcher will find what other scholars say in relation to the topic and add it with my own opinion.

2.2. EXPLAINING ROMANS 1:16-17

Since these verses are connected together it is therefore important to treat them together in order to understand their relationship as well as their relation to the theme in verse 17. Verses 16 and 17 are connected together by a series of subordinate clauses. The first clause explains why Paul is eager to preach the gospel in Rome. Paul therefore puts this in a negative form and says 'I am not ashamed of the gospel' which may be seen as the litotes, meaning that it is a straightforward positive statement that denotes, "I have a complete confidence" (Moo, 1996). Paul's statement needs to be understood as having the nature of the contents of the gospel in mind. The gospel is about a shameful event. This is made clear by Jesus' shameful crucifixion on the cross or even by Peter's denial of Jesus

for he was ashamed of going through the way of Jesus' suffering. Others who do not believe would view the fact that Jesus was crucified as foolishness. These are the temptations that Christians would fall into and as a result feel ashamed of the gospel (Cranfield, 1975). Paul therefore indicates that he is not ashamed of the gospel for it might be the way the Roman Christians may feel about the gospel.

δυναμις γαρ θεου εστιν εις σωτηριαν (v16) (... it is the power of God for salvation ...). It is here then where it is understood what the gospel really is. It is the power, the power that originates from God. It is a Supreme power, a power above others. It can raise people from death. It can turn death into life. It is also a power that can create something out of nothing. This power originates from God and it becomes active in human life. The power to salvation refers to the effectiveness of the power. The power that saves the world from what it really deserves.

It is the power that is always present. It has a saving activity. It is not something that will only take place in the future. It is present in human history. The power delivers human kind from God's final judgment. What this means is that this power reflects the eschatological salvation, the effects of which are reflected in the present. It is realized here that the future has come into the present and it is influencing the present (Cranfield, 1975).

Therefore, the gospel is the power of God to salvation. This is an achievement which cannot be accomplished by human teachings or worldly philosophy. This power that is always there serves the highest purpose of bringing salvation to everyone who believes (Mthata, 2017). Salvation is therefore used in the Greek world to depict deliverance from eschatological judgment. However, for Paul and in the New Testament these eschatological blessings are enjoyed by anyone the moment he or she believes. Although the word can negatively mean deliverance from something, it also can positively denote generally God's provision for a person's spiritual need. In Romans 8:24 the word 'save' is used and its meaning includes the restoration of a sinner to a share of the 'glory of God' (Moo, 1996). What is to be understood here is what Cranfield (1975) points out that faith is not to be seen as a human work, it is not a human being's contribution but for Paul this saving activity is altogether God's work. This means that God not only directs the message to the hearer but also allows the human heart to open for the message. Despite this however, faith is a human decision of freedom to obey God. But what is important is the gospel as God's effective power for all who accept it fully (Cranfield, 1975).

ιουδαιω τε πρωτον και ελληνι (... to the Jew first and also to the Greek). Although the word τε suggests the equality of Jew and Gentile before the gospel. The word 'first' indicates that despite this equality it cannot be denied that the Jew has that priority of having the Scriptures and the law of God (Cranfield 1975). In addition, Kasemann (1994) says the precedence is given to show that there is a continuity of God's plan of salvation.

Moreover, as Mthata (2017) puts it, Israel comes first before the Gentiles in terms of salvation history stated by God through election. This is confirmed by the gospel and not nullified by it. This gospel firstly addresses itself to the Jew, then to the Greek. For this reason, Jews and Gentiles can now live on the basis of grace of God by virtue of the gospel.

Verse 17 shows the order of this grace of God. To be revealed means that 'a long-hidden state of affairs is now disclosed by the message of the gospel and this is called here God's righteousness. The use of the present passive, 'is being revealed' in verse 17 suggests that Paul is thinking of an ongoing process that is connected with the proclamation of the gospel. This then would mean that, wherever the gospel is preached "the righteousness of God' in its eschatological fullness is being revealed" (Moo 1996).

What then is the meaning of the phrase 'the righteousness of God'? Its meaning is prominent in Romans 1:16-17 as well as in Romans 3:21-26. The meaning has also played an important role in the interpretation of Paul and the gospel generally. So, there are three main options for its meaning.

The first way of understanding righteousness which Achtemeier (1985) gives and which cannot be viewed as the way Paul is using the word is in relation to distributive justice. It refers to a sentence taking place in a court and this use is called forensic justification. So here the sentence is 'just' if the punishment given is appropriate to the wrong done. This view cannot be maintained because it would mean that if God declares human beings righteous in this way then human beings are left without sin.

The other way of explaining righteousness is in the sense of it being an attribute of God. This is a moral sense. Since God cannot do what is morally wrong so it is right to say God is 'righteous'. The problem comes when it is referred to human beings as righteous. It cannot therefore mean they are given a new moral nature because even those who are made righteous by faith cannot be distinguished from those who are not made righteous.

The other reference to the word is the perspective mentioned already when the theme was explained. This is when righteousness is understood by its connection to the covenant. It is explained by showing that to be righteous means an act whereby God restores a broken relationship. This means that to be righteous is to be put in a positive relationship with God by God. Therefore, to be righteous refers to having the effects of sin nullified.

Clearly, God's righteousness is the power that breaks the power of sin and that is restoring sinners to a positive relationship with God. It is a gift from God given through Jesus Christ. Moreover, as Christ identifies this restored relationship, this relationship is rectified or restored by human trust in Christ. This is what Paul refers to when he writes that justification is by faith. Stuhlmacher points out that the definition of 1:3 and 1: 16 and 17 shows that in verse 17 the righteousness of God is used as a summary of an expression for the saving activity of God in Christ. Christ is therefore God's righteousness in person, which has been made known to humankind. This righteousness is received therefore on the basis of faith or 'for all those who believe'. So, for Paul everything depends on faith (Romans 3:22; Stuhlmacher, 1994). Stuhlmacher acknowledges here that righteousness is God's activity but does not reflect the issue of status as righteousness on believers. Therefore, righteousness can be understood as God's act of making human beings right or as God's act of repairing a broken relationship with human beings.

In this sense, righteousness is not a quality or a meeting of the requirements of some legal norm; rather it is a positive relationship with God growing out of God's power to restore human beings through Jesus Christ. God's righteousness is God's power by which the powers of sin are broken and the restoration of sinners into a positive relationship with God is affected. It remains God's gracious gift (Achte-meier 1985).

The quotation from Habakkuk 2: 4⁴ confirms only that righteousness can only be attained by faith. Although it may be argued that there are textual differences between Paul and Habakkuk, the only problem seems to be that the text is about God's response to the prophet's complaint. For Paul the words characterize how one attains the right standing before God. It is therefore to be realized that the point in Habakkuk is about one's relationship with God. This can be supported by the fact that the meaning of faith in the New Testament is made concrete through its relationship to Christ in whom we believe.

⁴ Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith

Moreover, the Old Testament concept shares with the New Testament the quality of reliance on God (Moo, 1996).

It has been made clear that Romans 1:17 addresses points that define a status which can only be attained by God's grace. This means that it is only God who can declare a human being righteous and only on the basis of faith. So, this concerns human relationship with God on the basis of faith in Christ who is God's righteousness. It is also therefore realized that this status is not the result of any human effort or achievement; rather it is attained only by total trust in the God who repairs a broken relationship.

2.3. DEPICTIONS FROM THE WORLD BEHIND THE TEXT OF THE ROMANS

When one reads the text of Romans, one can realise that there was tension between the Jews and the Greeks. However, the text does not exactly tell that there was tension. This tension between Jews and Greeks is only evident from reading behind the world of the book of Romans. Ancient rhetoricians had noted that "... to know a person meant to know generation, geography, and gender" (Malina & Neyrey, 1996) of that person. This understanding made Greeks to think of humanity as two different species which on the one hand was a male, free, Greek and on the other hand a female, slave and a barbarian (ibid). This understanding was also packed with the status, it determined those superior and those inferior (Malina & Neyrey, 1996). Greeks were having the thinking that "some species were patently and inevitably inferior (slave/female/barbarian), while others were superior (free/male/Greek)" (Malina & Neyrey 1996). As a result of being superior it is right for them to rule the inferior ones (Malina & Neyrey, 1996). The Jews also had the same view of being superior and others being inferior (Malina & Neyrey, 1996). I then think that the genesis of the tension between Jews and Gentiles was as a result of each group regarding opposite one as inferior (Malina & Neyrey, 1996). In brief, I think as this is not given in the text, it shows how important it is to read the world behind the text of the book of Romans.

Though the tension is not clearly mentioned in the text of the book of Romans, one can depict it but fail to identify its causes clearly. Paul, who often calls himself the Apostle of

the Gentiles (Galatians 1:16; Acts 22:20) is the apostle of unity because most of the time he is dealing with unity. He was once a persecutor of people of the way but now is one of them. His special ministry to the Gentiles shows that he did not regard them as inferior to the Jews and also not regard the Jews as inferior to the Gentiles; unless Stendahl (2011) failed to understand Paul. Dunn (1991) describes words of Stendahl to be that message of Paul about justification as "...aimed to break down the barrier between Jews and Gentiles ..."

Therefore, the letter to the Romans in part is preaching unity between the Jews and the Greeks. The root of this separation is not that clearly mentioned in the text itself as it is mentioned behind the text of the book of the Romans. The Greeks saw themselves as people and regarded the non-Greeks as 'barbarians' (Wallace & Williams, 1998). This was normally done by the ancient elite who had the feeling that they were naturally superior to others (Malina & Neyrey, 1996). This brought division between the Greeks and Jews in Rome because the Jews responded to it. They (Jews) similarly have seen themselves as people and those not Jews as Gentiles (Wallace & Williams, 1998). The text does not mention the causes of this tension between Jews and Greeks that Paul was trying to address; it is only found in the reading of the world behind the text of Romans. Therefore, I think it is clear why it is important to read the world behind the text of the Romans.

It is also difficult to understand Paul because he often used oppositional names in this letter. Paul uses words like 'Barbarian' (Romans 1:14) and 'Gentiles' (Romans 2:14; 3:29; 11:11 and 13; 11:25). These names are totally opposite and sound discriminative (Malina & Neyrey, 1996). In some cases, Paul writes from the side of Jews and on the other hand he writes from the side of Greeks (Wallace & Williams, 1998). Wallace and Williams (1998) assert that Paul was "...a man who identified himself, not through a simple dichotomy, but through a whole complex of them". Given that Paul was concerned with the issue of equality between Jews and Gentiles (Dunn 1986); he was perhaps avoiding using a simple dichotomy (Wallace & Williams, 1998) which would be an obstacle to achieving his goal of bringing unity to the Romans. I think this is the reason that made him to decide to switch around "... using the traditional 'Greek/barbarian' dichotomy" and also "... as a Jew he contrasts himself with the Greeks, whom he again calls Gentiles". I therefore think this shows that it is important to read the world behind Romans so that one would know some reasons as to why Paul was using oppositional names in this letter.

The structure of the book of Romans also points out to something worth noting. Most of the New Testament letters are not structured like the ones that Paul wrote. Reading behind the world of Romans gives some information about what made Paul to write such structured arguments in this letter of Romans (Dunn, 1991). The context he grew in played a great role in shaping him to write these organised structured arguments seen in the letter. To strengthen this point Chilton (2004) says, “Knowing Tarsus is basic to knowing Paul”. The context Paul grew in was packed with philosophy. According to Blumenfeld (2003) there were popular lecturers who travelled around with “... the common fare of political reasoning: strips of Plato’s Republic, bits of Protagoras, morsels of the laws, scraps of Aristotle’s Politics and titbits of his Ethics” in their philosophical handbag wherever they went. Blumenfeld (2003) also argues that Paul knew philosophy. Blumenfeld furthermore states that Paul obtained most information “... from general school instruction and by listening to the orators who travelled around lecturing” (2003). Someone growing up in such environment and participating in it would surely be shaped by it. In brief, I think this shows how important it is to read the world behind Romans because one can know what shaped Paul to write such structured arguments. Jewett (1991) maintains that long ago it was recognised that the structure of Roman “... reflect some of the principles prompted by the rhetorical handbooks of antiquity”. Aristotle divides it in four parts, namely “an introduction, a statement or narrative of the issue, the proof, and an epilogue” (Jewett 1991).

Moreover, reading behind the world of Romans tells us that Paul lived in the time that was full of new ideas (Akenson, 2000). To illustrate this point Akenson says “Saul and Yeshua lived in an era that was the most inventive, most imaginative, most ideationally fecund in matters of religion” (2000). Yeshua and Saul lived in the world that way “rich with ideas, prophets, factions, priests, savants... (Akenson, 2000). Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism both claimed the “... authenticity upon a spiritual genealogy that back, from the second Temple era ... back to the creation of the human race” (Akenson, 2000). Each group had different ideas as opposed to the other. In the text Paul wrote extensively about law (Romans 2:12-29; 7:1-24 among other passages). It might be that he was giving his own views or ideas of understanding the law.

2.4. JUSTIFICATION AND FAITH IN ROMANS 1:17

Nürnberg (2005) makes it clear that, justification in biblical thought is the act of the creator God and therefore at the same time an act of new creation, by virtue of which those who are justified take part in the glory and righteousness which exists in God's presence. Therefore, for Paul, Jesus' atoning death is the legal ground for justification. For the apostle, justification by God is promised to all those who recognise themselves to be 'ungodly' (Romans 4:5), this to be transgressors who have violated God's will and in view of Jesus Christ as their redeemer and Lord. Such faith is, according to Paul, the sole ground for justification (Romans 3:28) because it acknowledges God's saving work in Christ and incorporates in one and the same act the life of confessing Jesus as the Lord and saviour of repentance and new obedience.

Maimela (1988) in the *Relevance of Justification in South Africa* explains that justification declares that life or salvation is God's gift and only God bestows it. Justification declares that God gives meaningful life freely when God accepts the sinner unconditionally in Christ. Justification declares that life does not reside in our capacity to please God not even on the background of gender or wealth, but on the gracious God who gives life to those who believe. Therefore, Luther's teachings meant that now women and men could understand that meaningful life was no longer on the basis of being successful or having qualities of good works. Then the good news of Luther's teaching is that God accepts sinful people out of grace and mercy. This gospel that Luther rediscovered for the church is the one that Christians ought to proclaim loudly and clearly to the people. It is the gospel they need to embody in word and deed in their relations with others then they will come to experience the delivering love of God in Christ (Maimela, 1988).

Believers who are materially poor may ask themselves how they can experience meaningful life in a way of finding employment in order to earn life or to get food for sustenance. They may not find it right to continue going to church if they are still under poverty.

Dahl (1977) sees the doctrine of justification not only concerning an individual in the question on how to find a gracious God but as having social function and implications pertaining to how Paul uses the doctrine. The doctrine has social relevance for it implies

an understanding of what a Christian community is, and it provides guidelines to show members of the community how to relate to one another (Dahl, 1977).

Vellem (2015) states that in the history of Black Africans, faith has always been linked with violence. For example, some Western African countries got to know the Christian faith through the conquest. He further states that Africans, from the arrival of Christian faith, know the only source of faith as the reason why they do not have land (Vellem, 2015). This suggests the many reasons why people fail distinguish between faith and good works.

Mosala (1989) states that both the Bible and Black experience and struggle must be analysed structurally using historical-materialist categories. In other words, Mosala (1989) believes that African interpreters must recognise that the biblical texts are rooted in the struggles of their material sites of production, just as life of ordinary black South Africans is rooted in a particular socio-historical mode of production (Mosala, 1989).

Ukpong (1999) notes that in this case, contextual Bible study shares the same goal as Black Theology, except that the starting point of the latter is black consciousness (Ukpong, 1999). He further states that the general experience of black African Christians was that African social and cultural concerns were not reflected in missionary or western forms of biblical interpretations (Ukpong, 1995). It is for this reason that the “inculturation hermeneutics” arose to pay attention to the African socio-cultural and the questions that arise from there.

Achtemeier (2001) also argues that there is enough evidence that when Paul wrote to the church in Rome the people there were already known for their faith. Thus he acknowledges the fame of their faith in the entire world. He further encourages the congregation to strengthen his faith as he will strengthen theirs. However, the twist to the whole story is that they still miss his version of understanding the faith.

According to Mbiti (1994) Africa and Africans has a very long relationship with the biblical text. Thus, at the time of Jesus, it is believed that the Bible was already being read in Africa. Mbiti goes further to state that since then, “ordinary readers” in African countries continued to read the Bible. (Mbiti, 1994).

2.5. LITERARY CRITICISM

Contemporary literary criticism is an approach to the Bible that focuses on the readers not the authors. Literary criticism is one of the approaches that developed in the last half century. It is also one of the approaches that have not originated from biblical scholars but is an “adaptation of methods developed in other fields, especially literary studies” (Clines, 2001).

In the past the term “literary criticism” has been referred to as historical criticism, and it dealt with the question of authorship, sources, and so forth (Clines, 2001). Today the term literary criticism “refers to the kind of criticism that scholars of literature-biblical and otherwise-undertake when they are considering texts as work of literature” (Clines, 2001), and the historical dimension is usually absent in it. In literary criticism, texts are considered as more or less independent of their authors and creating meaning through the integration of their elements. The approach of literary criticism is “synchronic” rather than “diachronic”, which simply means dealing with the text as it stands rather than with its (presumed) prehistory (Clines, 2001). Contemporary literary criticism includes a variety of dimensions such as, genre criticism, rhetoric criticism, new criticism, reader response criticism and reception criticism. However, my focus is mainly on the reader response dimension.

In reader response criticism, the focus is on the reader as an important contributor to the meaning of the text. It also regards the meaning of the text as coming into being at the meeting point of the text and the reader, or as created by the reader in the act of reading. Another element of reader-response criticism is that “any quest for determinate meanings is invalidated, the idea of a definite meaning of the text disappears and meaning becomes understood as relative to the various readers who develop their own meanings” (Clines, 2001). Therefore, in that case, a text means whatever it means to its readers. With this kind of method, there is no right or wrong interpretation of the text. The interpretation of the text has to lie on the “interpretative communities” (Clines, 2001). The reader response-criticism is de-historicizing; hence the historical circumstances of the text’s composition makes no difference to the meaning that readers finds in the text (Clines, 2001).

2.6. AFRICAN BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

In recent decades (1930s to the present), new ways of reading the Bible in Africa have been developed by African biblical scholars (Old Testament), such as comparative approach, contextual reading with the “ordinary readers” and so forth. Additional explanations of these approaches will be discussed later. According to Ukpong (2000) the origins of African Biblical Interpretation can also be traced from the early Church, even though the approach at the time was different. Throughout the early church, most African scholars, for example Clement of Alexandria and Origen of Egypt, made a foundation for the interpretation of the Bible [in Africa], and their approach was allegorical and uncritical in the modern sense, but African biblical scholarship retained its pioneering work in the 2nd and 3rd centuries of the Christian era. Ukpong (2006) further asserts that in the 18th century, the allegorical approach was replaced by historical-critical methods; it was then followed by literary methods in the 20th century. Both the literary and historical-critical methods were developed in the West (Europe) and to this day, they are still recognised as scientific tools of modern biblical research methods. In Africa, the current biblical scholarship is to some extent “a child of these methods” (Ukpong, 2006)

Moreover, to the historical-critical methods, African scholars have been able to develop parallel methods of their own, as already mentioned previously. One of the features of these methods is their concern to create an encounter between the biblical text and the African context. West (2010) asserts that parallel methods that have been developed by African scholars link the Bible to the communities of faith that read the Bible, rather than just focusing on the authors and what the text means to its original recipients, as it is a case with historical-critical methods. In other words, all of these methods are more contextual. Therefore, there are two different ways of interpreting the Bible in Africa, the Western pattern (historical critical methods) and the African pattern (contextual approach) (Ukpong, 2006). Gerald West (2010) articulates that the African Biblical Interpretation consists of three poles, “the pole of the biblical text, the pole of the African context and the pole of appropriation” (West, 2010), which Jonathan Draper refers to as the “tri-polar approach” (Draper, 2001). It is always a reader that activates this pole of appropriation, in a form of a dialogue, and it has a theological dimension. In other words, the reader is the one that characterises the pole of appropriation.

West (2010) also articulates that there is another approach which is called, the “bi-polar” approach. He argues that this ‘bi-polar’ approach is the most characteristic of African

biblical hermeneutics, whereby the African context and the biblical text interpret each other [comparative method] (West, 2010). One of the factors that led African biblical scholars to develop some African biblical hermeneutics was the fact that they wanted to identify the presence of Africa in the Bible. Using a comparative method in African Biblical interpretation is due to the fact that in the past the Bible in Africa was used to legitimise colonialism and slavery.

The Bible has also been used and is still being used by certain Africans to legitimise some oppressive cultural aspects. In response to this, African biblical scholars developed critical methods, through contextual reading of the Bible, such as the comparative methods. Holter (2008) is one of those scholars that use this kind of an approach. He argues that the Old Testament interpretation is contextual, in a sense that the reader/interpreter's hermeneutical experiences are used to analyse the material under investigation, and that there are some religious and socio-cultural parallels between the Old Testament and the African culture. Holter (2008) goes on to argue that the comparative approach reflects two sets of comparisons, either letting the New Testament interpret African culture/experiences or using the African culture/experiences to interpret the New Testament. West (2010) argues that the real reader who brings the biblical text and African context into dialogue tends to be hidden in Holter's (2008) explanation of the comparative method and emphasises that the biblical text and African context are only able to illuminate one another through the mind of the reader. I therefore agree with West due to the fact that in the past, the Western biblical scholarship has failed to acknowledge the importance of the local reader, or even communities that interpret the text. The commitment and aim of African biblical scholarship is to bring social and personal transformation and this requires the involvement of the reader within the process.

Ukpong (2000) presents the developments of biblical interpretation in Africa in chronological and topical issues (three phases). The first phase is from the 1930s –70s, and it focuses on legitimizing African religion and culture and it is dominated by comparative method (Ukpong, 2000). According to Ukpong (2000), this phase was a response “to the widespread condemnation of African religion and culture by the Christian missionaries of the 19th and 20th century”. Therefore, this phase involves research that was undertaken to legitimise African religion and culture, and it “took the form of showing continuities and discontinuities between African religious cultures and the Bible, particularly the Old Testament” (Ukpong, 2000).

The second phase is from the 1970s -90s, and it focuses on using the African context as a resource in the hermeneutical encounter with the Bible. It has two main aspects, such as inculturation and liberation, and it recognises the African culture as a preparation for Gospel. Nonetheless, Christianity was still looked upon as a foreign religion expressed in foreign idioms and symbols (Ukpong, 2000). This created a need for African biblical scholars to make Christianity relevant to the African religio-cultural context and this gave rise to the inculturation movement in theology. During this period, there was also an influence from social ideology, whereby there was a need for theology to show concern for secular issues, for example, oppression and liberation (Ukpong, 2000). Out of this, arose the liberation movement in theology “which seeks to confront all forms of oppression, poverty and marginalisation in the society” (Ukpong, 2000), and this is expressed in liberation hermeneutics, black theology and feminist hermeneutics.

The third phase is from the 1990s up to date. In this phase two main aspects from the previous phase (inculturation and liberation), are carried forward with new orientation. The first orientation is the recognition of ordinary African readers/non-scholars and their contribution to the process of academic Bible interpretation. This is exemplified by Contextual Bible Study Method. The second orientation, apart from recognising the ordinary readers, is that it recognises, and makes the context of “ordinary readers” a subject of Bible interpretation. This is exemplified by inculturation hermeneutics (Ukpong, 2000).

2.7. THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC ISSUES

Luther's article on justification is without a doubt the heart and soul of his theology and thus the basis for all theological questions relating to Luther's theology. This doctrine is as Luther declared "the summary of Christian doctrine", "the sun that illuminates God's holy church" (Luther cited in Althaus, 1966). In the Smalcald Articles Luther states:

Nothing of this article can be yielded or surrendered, even though heaven and earth and everything else falls... Upon this article everything that we teach and practice depends, in opposition to the pope, the devil, and the whole world. Therefore, we must be certain and not doubt this doctrine. Otherwise, all is lost, and the pope, the devil, and all adversaries win the victory and the right over us (Althaus, 1966)

What is at stake in the doctrine of justification is exactly that which haunted Luther for years: "How can human beings with its entire sin stand in front of God?" "How can any person survive the wrath of God, due to the sinful nature of the human?" Luther's answer to these questions is simple. From his perspective on human being in relation to God he declares that all are sinners and thus utterly deprived. Yet all are "justified freely, without their own works or merits, by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, in His blood. This is necessary to believe and cannot be otherwise acquired or grasped by any work, law, or merit.

Therefore, it is clear and certain that this faith alone justifies us (SA IT, I, 3-4 - Concordia). This means that only by grace, and only through faith (faith that trusts God in everything and at all times in Christ Jesus who redeemed us on the cross can we be justified and made right before God, thus enabling the human being to stand before God with a consoled conscience (Luther, 1520: OS, 28-32). For Luther Christ's work and justification became one and the same thing and hence the doctrine of justification nothing else than properly understood faith in Christ (Althaus, 1966). Based on reflection on Scripture, the basis of all his theology, Luther took and reinterpreted that which was there all along: God's presence, which had become a source of fear and anxiety, suddenly became the source of life and a new life (Shaull, 1991). It is no wonder this had a profound effect on all spheres of life: religious, political, social and economic.

2.8. DEFINITION OF CULTURE AS A CONCEPT

First, we need to look at culture as a concept and try to define it. The definition that to us looks more desirable and acceptable is the one that has been expounded by Charles H. Kraft, quoting Hoebel, the anthropologist, "culture is the integrated system of learned behaviour patterns which are characteristic of the members of a society and which are not the result of biological inheritance" (Hoebel, 1972). Kraft goes on to quote Kroeber and Kluckhohn who have summarized the culture concept as follows;

Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiments in artefacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (that is historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values." (Kraft, 1984).

Kraft goes on and tells us that culture does not only govern our physical behaviour, but our mental behaviour is likewise pervasively influenced by our culture. Our culture shapes both our acting and our thinking (1984). We find Clifford Geertz to be supporting Krafts when he says, “culture denotes some historically transmitted patterns of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions embodied in symbolic forms by means of which human beings, communities perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitudes towards life (Geertz,1995). These two definitions for me point to what I believe to have been the case when Jesus was conversing with Mary and Martha. I believe they must have also been the case in Luke’s both acting and thinking and I believe it must obviously also be the case in my hermeneutics on this text of Romans 1:16-17.

2.9. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CULTURE IN BIBLICAL HERMENEUTICS

Another important aspect of culture as expounded by Kraft is that of God’s attitude toward culture. For Kraft, God, who is not bound by culture like us human beings, is at the same time the source or the originator of culture. God is responsible for the presence and the existence of culture because he created human beings in such a way that they are culture-producing beings (1984).

Based on Kraft’s assertion therefore, it is going to be very important for this study to strive to investigate what kind of attitude toward culture this all-knowing and all-powerful God who created human beings with a capacity to produce and modify human cultural system have (1984). Lastly, in its hermeneutics, this study is going to endeavour to align itself with Kraft’s view that while in some way God can be understood to be against culture, he should also be understood to be above culture, but most importantly, it must be kept in mind that God, in Jesus Christ, should be viewed as the one who is transcendent and absolute completely beyond and outside of culture. While he should be seen as above culture, he must be seen as the one who uses it as the vehicle for interaction with human beings (Kraft, 1984).

Kraft is not the only scholar who sees culture in this perspective. In my opinion, I see him receiving a good amount of support from Niebuhr (1951), who after having defined culture as the social heritage human beings receives and transmit, goes on to maintain that a theological definition of culture should be based on the Christian conviction that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Father Almighty, who created heaven and earth.

With this formulation, it is introduced into the discussion about Christ and culture the conception of nature on which all culture is founded, and which is good and rightly ordered by the one to whom Jesus Christ is obedient and with whom he is inseparably united. Where this conviction rules, Christ and the world cannot be simply opposed to each other. Neither can the world as culture be simply regarded as the realm of godlessness (Niebuhr, 1951).

Lastly, lest we find ourselves unconsciously giving the impression that all human culture with its patterns and traditions is palatable and pleasing to God, we also need to indicate that both Kraft and Niebuhr make us aware that God can indeed be against culture. For Niebuhr, because the world, the sphere or container of human culture appears at the same time as a realm that is under the power of sin or evil, it is characterized in, hatred and corruption. Culture is concerned with the temporal and passing values... “Hence the loyalty of the believer is ultimately directed entirely toward the new order, the new society and its Lord” ... (Niebuhr, 1951).

For Kraft, while he is quick to point out the dangers of God- against- culture position as that which will inevitably recommend withdrawal, rejection, escape, isolation and insulation for Christians, he however acknowledges and admits that Satan does indeed have access to human culture and can therefore use and exploit it for his own ends. Perhaps at this point we can just in passing point to the relevance of these ideas, albeit specifically just of our African leaders, especially in South Africa, how cultural traditions have come to be used as a defence mechanism for political corruption.

2.10. THE AFRICAN DEFINITION OF CULTURE

Talking about Africa, we now take a look at how some of the African cultural scholars as well as at how African Biblical exegetes are adding some value to this discussion on the value of the investigation of cultural contexts in Biblical hermeneutics as well as on the need for women’s self-empowerment. Thuli Madonsela, our former South African Public Protector who is a woman, summarizes the concept of culture as follows: “Culture refers to the ideas, beliefs, values and knowledge which constitute the shared basis of social action within the group” (Madonsela, 2009).

For John Mbiti, the African Culture is composed of traditions that have been handed down from forefathers, and each generation takes them up sometimes with modifications suitable to its own historical situations and needs (Mbiti, 1970). While cultural traditional concepts are still forming the essential background of many African peoples, there is a possibility and room that these traditions can be abandoned and modified by the changing situations (Mbiti, 1970).

Mbiti therefore does admit that culture, and more specifically the African culture is also not static but is changing. For me the transformation of African culture can never happen automatically, but it needs to be ushered in by the Africans themselves. The transformation of some aspects of the African culture becomes a necessity if we again take a look at what Mbiti is making us aware of. The majority of our people with little or no formal education still hold on to their traditional corpus and practices. Anyone familiar with village gossip cannot question this fact; and those who have eyes will also notice evidence of it in the villages, towns and cities (Mbiti, 1970).

2.11. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

My theoretical framework will be based solely on the contextual for I will deal with the context of the people who were born and raised in faith. While most confuse good works and faith, people in Marapyane still believe that the Bible contains answers to both their problems and success. The researcher will rely on the use of the Tri-polar method. And this means *Distantiation*, *Contextualization* and *Appropriation*.

2.11.1. DISTANTIATION

In order for us to bring Paul's letter to the church in Rome and context into contact with the Lutheran community in Marapyane, the *researcher's distantiation* will have to be not just expanding, but also be making use of or adopting the three steps of biblical hermeneutics as expounded by both Draper and West (2001). Draper calls the first step to this approach the *distantiation*, it is in this step that we will try to allow the text to speak for itself without falling into the temptation of speaking on texts behalf. According to Draper (2001) *distantiation* allows the text to talk while the reader becomes the listener.

According to West, attention to the text must be given the priority and not too much on the attitude of the exegete (de Wit and West, 2001). Surwumwe (2006) agrees with Draper when he states that, this aspect of the Tri-Polar method treats the text as a raw material or object of research, because the text will always be found to be not only unique but will also always be found to be having its own peculiar and intrinsic meaning which will need to be discovered by the exegetes (Surwumwe, 2006). In addition, Nyirimana (2010) goes further to summarise Draper's (2001) point by highlighting *distantiation* as a critical analysis of the text by the reader in an attempt to retrieve its most appropriate meaning. However, *distantiation* does not shut the mind of the reader because it is a well-known fact that readers have their own independent thinking to the text. Moreover, if the text has on its own created a point of interest for the reader, the latter will come back and read more.

Kraft (1979) further argues that we who are not part of the biblical culture cannot simply trust our own interpretational reflexes to give us the meaning that the original author intended (Kraft, 1979). This means that what *distantiation* aims to do is to help the ordinary reader avoid assuming that they know what the author wanted to say in full to his or her intended audience. In the first step the reader will not just read the text but will also listen to what it has to say and think loudly in order to proceed to the next step called contextualization.

2.12. CONTEXTUALISATION

This study will first acknowledge that every reader has a world that he or she is reading from. For example, the text is currently read from the post-apartheid South Africa with its own challenges. However, the first step does not mean that one has to entirely distance oneself from the text and look at it as some foreign book with no direct message to the current. For example, Draper strongly believes that we must insist that any reader of the text should keep in mind the whole hermeneutical exegesis process which means that we keep the text as sacred for the faith community in its context. In the *distantiation* we have alluded that any reader of the Bible needs to listen and think and the reader can do it with ease in the vacuum of one's socio-cultural context. The socio-cultural background of the reader cannot be overlooked when reading the text. It needs to be considered in relation to the text at hand.

Draper (2001) further states that it should be kept in mind that the context of the first century reader is different from that of the modern reader (Surwumwe, 2006) quoting Draper (2001). Bevans (2005) further adds to Draper's (2001) notion by arguing that the cultural context of the reader will naturally include people's experience or that of the group. Biblical scholars such as Nyirimana (2010) are amongst those who concur with what Draper is pointing out. Nyirimana (2010) also points out that it is during this moment of hermeneutics that the interpreter speaks back to the text, challenging it with her or his life-situation and from his or her context. For this form of a dialogue to be good, the reader or the interpreter must have a good knowledge of his or her own context. The reader must not just know the context but also know what issues need to be addressed (Nyirimana, 2010 citing Draper, 2001).

2.12.1. APPROPRIATION

Both Draper and West (2001) contributed vastly to this step which Draper (2001) calls the *appropriation* while West (2001) mostly refers to it as the ideo-theological pole. According to West (2001) the way in which one chooses the social and the location is very important and it also plays an important role. For Draper, this step is basically called *appropriation* only because it included the interpretation of the text by connecting it with the socio-context of the reader. West (2001) points to the importance of the reader's social location and on the choices the reader has to make about it, because it is true; the reader will have to decide and determine what exactly is the aspect which the text wants to converse with. Be it the religious aspect, the political aspect, the racial aspect or the economic inequality or the lack of education. I strongly believe that West (2001) is not only cautioning us about the danger of making sweeping generalizations but also that we could be specific in terms of the reader's geographic location. For instance, in the case of this study of my home village, I know I should be careful not to sound as if all the Batswana of Southern Africa are the inhabitants of Marapyane village, but just to be specific and refer to Marapyane as a SeTswana-speaking community within the larger group of the Batswana of Southern Africa.

The Tri-Polar approach of this study, therefore, can at its best be illustrated by imagining and realizing a situation where Paul, who is not only a writer to the community of Rome, a teacher and a moralist and Jack Mokone Magoro, a member of a SeTswana speaking Marapyane community are engaging in a dialogue. The ultimate objective of such some hermeneutics will be, as Nyirimana (2010) puts it, for the interpreter to accept and own the

message that he and she gets from the text. He and she should accept the implications of this meaning for his and her situation as he and she is at the same time allowing it to stand against him and her, challenge and even judge him and her by its original message so that the meaning acquired from the text challenges his and her whole life style (Nyirimana, 2010).

2.13. CONCLUSION

Literature have shown how culture as a concept can be both anthropologically and theologically defined and have also seen how significant culture is in dealing with any biblical hermeneutical exercise. We noted the fact that culture can be in danger of becoming exploited both by Satan and human beings for their own ends. We have also looked at the world behind Romans looking at the original text. This is what many readers fail to do because some just read and start making noise on the text which is misinterpreted. Chapter three will focus on the research methodology used in the study.

Chapter 3. Research Methodology

3.1. INTRODUCTION

Chapter three of this study deals with the research methods used in this study, including all the associated methodologies such as the qualitative approach, research design, population, instruments used for data collection and also data analysis of the data collected.

3.2. RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design may also be understood as how the research would proceed. According to Hakim (1987), before a building of any consequences is built, there is a need for an initial stage. The research design articulates the required data with regard to the understanding of the *Tumelo and Tshiamiso in context*, the tool that the researcher used to collect and analyse this data, and how all this was going to answer the research question. Trochim (2001) in turn argues that a research design is comparable to the glue that holds a research fit together. Therefore, there is a need to clearly explain which method was used, as well as the processes that were utilised as the research proceeded.

According to de Vaus (2001) in Mashigo (2007), a research design is a work plan that details what the researcher does in order to complete a certain research project. The main duty of a research design is to make sure that all the evidence gained allows the researcher to answer the research question as explicit as possible (Mashigo; 2007). Hence Welman et al (2005) agrees with Mashigo in this definition as he further defines research design as the plan according to which the researcher obtains research participants and collect information from them. Leedy and Ormrod (2005) asserts to what other scholars say by saying that the research design offers an overall structure for the procedures the researcher follows, the data the researcher collects, and the data analyses the researcher conducts.

The research design articulates the required data with regard to the misuse of *Tumelo and Tshiamiso*, the tool that the researcher used to collect and analyse this data, and how all this was going to answer the research question.

Basically, the research design describes how the study in question will be conducted or was conducted in the case of a completed study. McMillan & Schumacher (2006) asserts that it also summarises the procedures for conducting the study which includes when, from whom, and also under what condition was the data obtained.

3.2.1. STUDY TYPE

The study design is the descriptive in nature because it attempts to describe, interpret and explain the current conditions. The main purpose of using descriptive research is that the researcher can apply correlation research to collect numerical data that would enable the researcher to examine how Romans 1:17 is read and interpreted by the local Lutheran Christians in Marapyane and to explore the relationships between two or more variables. Some of the variables that were measured in this study are the social-cultural and economic structures that lead to people reading the bible in a way that does not allow self-empowerment.

3.3. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Given (2008) argues that in social sciences, qualitative research is the type of research that produces findings not arrived at by statistical procedures or other means of quantification. This means that qualitative research explores the different positions, lived experience, and emotions of all people involved in the community. It seeks to appreciate the participants' values and beliefs and it is concerned with the explanation of reality from the participants' perspective as well as observing their natural surroundings. Given (2008) further says that in the human and social sciences qualitative research is widely used to provide answers to different phenomenon. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the qualitative research is most definitely a valid method to be used.

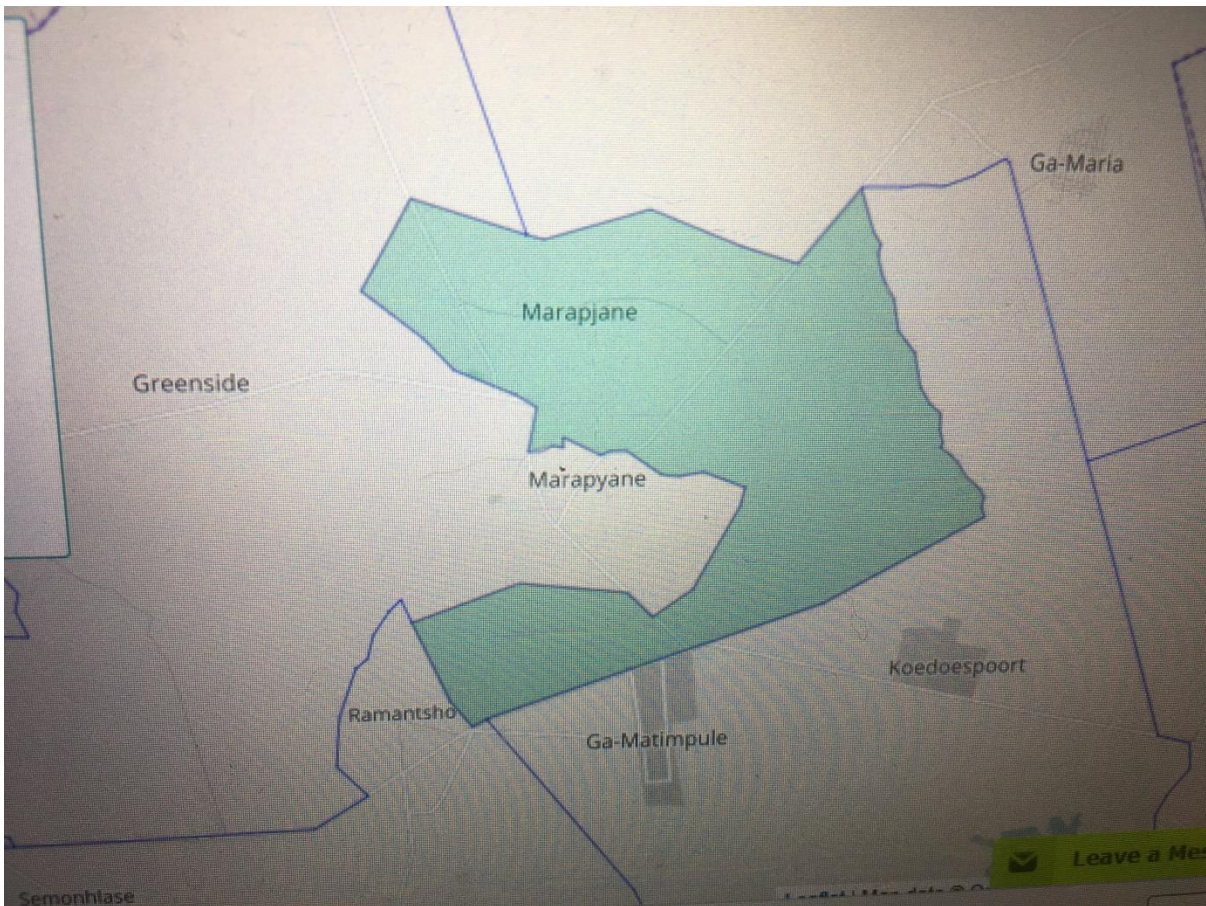
The research approach to be followed in the study will be qualitative research methodology, intended to find ways in which the local Lutherans in the community of Marapyane read Romans 1:17 in the light of the key biblical phrases *Tumelo* and *Tshiamiso*. Qualitative research is a type of primary research in which the researcher collects first-hand information directly from participants (Miles & Huberman, 2004). The

researcher chose the qualitative method because the researcher wants to obtain information first-hand from the participants.

3.4. LOCATION OF THE STUDY

Neuman (2006) describes a location as a place or venue where the researcher will conduct the study in which the events and activities will be conducted and it is a socially defined territory with shifted boundaries. This study will be located in Marapyane village in the Dr J.S Moroka Municipality in Mpumalanga Province. This community was started by the then Berlin Missionary Society in 1887 after moving from what is now known as the Bosman area, Tshwane (Pretoria). This community has a number of tribes, for example Ba Kgatla, Barolong, Bakone, Tsonga and Vhavenda but the Batswana dominate the whole village. Where I use the word Batswana I will be referring to the Batswana in Marapyane (Bakgatla ba Mocha). This study is conducted amongst Lutherans who are Tswana speaking in the community of Marapyane. Figure 3.1 shows the map of Marapyane.

Figure 3.1 Map of Marapyane



3.5. POPULATION OF THE STUDY

Nagy, Biber and Leavey (2007) as well as Magabane (2009) all maintain that a population refers to the general group from which the targeted few are drawn. Moreover, Pamela (2003) defines population as the group upon which the researcher is interested in making inferences. The population of this study consists of member of the Lutheran church in Marapyane village in the Dr J.S. Moroka municipality and comprises different league members in the church with at least five years in the league. This study was selected solely from Lutheran church in Marapyane commonly known as Neu Halle to the locals. This church has several wards in which there are leagues members, but for the purpose of this study the researcher used members in their different leagues rather than wards.

3.6. SAMPLING

Kumar (2014) defines sampling as the process of selecting a few (a sample) from a bigger group (the population) as the basis for estimating or predicting the prevalence of an unknown piece of information, situation or outcome regarding the bigger group. A sample is part or a fraction of the whole, or subset by the researcher to participate in the study. A sample consists of a selected group of elements or units from a defined population (De Vos, 2004). The researcher will select the stakeholders such as the elders, the youth, Men's League, knowledge holders, Women's League, and the Young Adults to find answers of the study.

3.6.1. SAMPLING METHODS

Sanders, Lewis and Thornhill (2000) indicate that sampling methods provide a wide range of methods that enable the researcher to reduce the amount of data that need to be collected by considering only the data from the sub-group rather than all possible cases.

The sampling approach is the process of selecting a portion of the population to represent the entire population. The sample used for this research was selected by means of non-probability sampling, specifically purposive or judgemental sampling because only the Christians attending church services and regular league prayer meetings at Marapyane Lutheran Church during the period of study were allowed to participate in the study. Babbie (2005) define purposive sampling methods where the researcher uses his/her judgement when selecting sample members. Thus Babbie (2005) asserts that a researcher's judgement should be based on his/her knowledge of the population and the nature of the research.

3.7. SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

The percentage distribution of 250 active members in the league in the Lutheran church in Marapyane, based on active participation of the members in the affairs of the league, belong as decided by the parish council (c.f Table 3.1). Kumar (2014) emphasises the need to sample when he says that it is impossible for any scientist to study all people who constitute the population that one needs to understand. Therefore, the researcher narrowed down the study to a representative sample of 250 members were identified as

active after monitoring their attendance of the church services for four successive prayer gatherings in the church. The members were invited to a special meeting that was held in the church. During the general meeting the Pastor who in this case worked as a project gatekeeper briefed all members about their possible participation on the study and the invitation letter explaining the details of the study was read to them (Appendix C). A total number from active 25 members in the beginning was reluctant to take part in the study. Because participation is voluntary their names were deleted from the participants register and the remaining 175 who indicated their willingness to participate were further informed that they would be notified if they were selected to participate as described in Table 3.1 below:

Table 3.1 SELECTIONS OF PARTICIPANTS

League	Membership Percentage	Total population	Active membership	Willing to participate	Selected sample
Men's League	20%	50	30	30	30
Women's League	55%	138	130	110	110
Young Adults	10%	25	20	15	15
Youth League	15%	37	20	20	20
Total	100%	250	200	175	175

3.8. SELECTION CRITERIA FOR PARTICIPANTS

For every selection there is a criterion that is set to select. Selected participants had to meet the following criteria to be included in the sample:

- Member of the church for at least more than five successive years.
- Must be in the league for at least five years.

The most important criterion is that they must be affiliated members of the Lutheran Church in Marapyane.

3.9. RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The research instrument is mostly understood as a general term that most researchers use for a measurement device for example questionnaire (Neuman, 2006). Because this study made use of the contextual bible study there was a set of questions formulated. Focus will be on a Contextual Bible study questions to be asked in SeTswana. In other words, the Contextual Bible study was not conducted in any other language except in the native language of the participants to enable them to feel free to express their views.

3.9.1. CONTEXTUAL BIBLE STUDY (CBS)

In her project, Mshubeki (2014) discovered that the CBS method originates in Brazil. It was first introduced as the Bible movement which was aimed at searching for the challenges of the “ordinary poor” and the marginalised readers. It was quite relevant given the traditional way that was exclusive to the poor and the marginalised.

The CBS method attempted to read the Bible from a new perspective that would enable them to relate it to their context. As early as the 90s, the CBS method grew to the extent that it moved to countries that were experiencing some form of oppression such as South Africa. Hence the establishment of the Institute for the Study of the Bible (ISB) (since the merger of universities is renamed to The Ujamaa centre) in the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal. This institution is a Faith-based community project which works with all churches in South Africa. West (1991) also confirms that the rise of ISB is deeply rooted in the assumption that the reading of the Bible in this country has a vital contribution to make to the “ordinary readers” understanding the Bible and a deeper understanding of God’s work in South Africa (West, 1991).

The CBS method, according to West (2014) is “...a South African contribution to the trajectory of biblical liberation hermeneutics...”. The methodology contains two major sections, and these are field work and text studies of Roman research history. I will then present what the CBS method is about and how it can be used effectively in the field as a research method.

This study is very complex in nature. Though it is mostly based on a theological discipline some disciplines such as the sociological and anthropological issues are raised through the use of the CBS method as developed by West (1999) and other socially engaged biblical hermeneutics scholars who continue to read the Bible in context.

Methodologically, 'CBS' starts by understanding the social background of the reader, but acknowledges to more than the contextual nature of all interpretation. Some scholars argue strongly that in the world that we live in the interpretative innocence has been lost. Hence Tracy (1998) appropriately shows that, "there is no innocent interpretation, no innocent interpreter, and no innocent text". However, the CBS is not merely happy with the admission of the emphasis on context. The purpose of CBS is not just to acknowledge and also advocate context. Implicit in the notion of "contextual" as it is used in the phrase "Contextual Bible Study" is commitment to a particular context, the context of the poor and marginalised. West (1999) states firmly that this method is a tactic for interpreting the Bible which allows the researcher to access "informed and safe spaces" of groups of Bible readers.

Even though the CBS puts the major emphasis on the context it continues to make about four commitments towards making sure that the marginalised and the poor are able to raise their voice. In South Africa, as per West (2010), CBS began when a number of socially engaged biblical scholars and displaced communities worked together through a thorough reading of the Bible during the trying times of the apartheid. We must remember that the basis of apartheid was started and supported by a biblical interpretation. West states that many cried that the situation "impels us to return to the Bible and to search the word of God for a message that is relevant to what we are experiencing in South Africa today" (West, 1993).

The biblical scholars' personal experiences taught them that the alternative message from the Bible can only be found through an interrogative new way of doing or conducting Bible study. Biblical scholars, trained readers and "ordinary readers" came together acknowledging each other, something that resulted in CBS (Breen, 2009). Therefore, the practitioners of CBS commit themselves to the following four goals. Which are as follows:-

3.9.1.1. TO READ THE BIBLE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE POOR AND OPPRESSED WITHIN SOUTH AFRICA

According to the CBS method, reading the Bible starts with the lived truths of the different classes within the community. For example, the realities of the poor and marginalised are different from that of the working class and the rich. This first approach of the CBS is founded on what we can argue to be the incarnation and the life of Jesus. Thus, the Ujamaa centre states that “the incarnation and life of Jesus give clear testimony to God’s preferential option for the poor and marginalised” (The Ujamaa Centre, 2016). The daily life and the struggle that poor readers faces are the starting point for their biblical reflection. This is simply to say anyone who reads the Bible reads it with their own context in mind.

West (1993) states that “a commitment of CBS is that we acknowledge and recognise the environmental factors that have formed us”. According to West this commitment has its own demands like that “when we choose to read the Bible from the perspective of the poor and oppressed in the South African context we choose to hear the concerns of the vulnerable and marginalised and God’s concern for them” (West, 1993).

3.9.1.2. TO READ THE BIBLE WITHIN COMMUNITY WITH PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXT THAN THE ONE OF THE TRAINED READER

This second commitment to the method flows directly from the first one. It argues that the CBS method is not an individual process. The emphasis in this commitment is that the CBS method is a process whereby people come together to study the Bible through Bible studies in communities while they learn and share experiences. “We cannot just make the Bible say what we want it to say, and by reading the Bible with others we allow the views and experiences of others to shape us and our readings” (The Ujamaa centre, 2016). The task of learning and sharing is not an easy one for the trained reader, thus West asserts that “for us reading the Bible with ordinary readers requires something of a conversion experience; we need to be converted to a sense of community consciousness” (West, 1993).

3.9.1.3. TO READ THE BIBLE FROM A CRITICAL POINT OF VIEW

The third commitment requires that even if CBS includes many people who are not well informed with biblical hermeneutical matters the trained reader should journey with the readers on reading the Bible critically. This then means that structured and systematic questions about the Bible will be asked and a process whereby reference is often to biblical scholars who have made a particular contribution. “Ordinary readers”, unlike trained readers may not have access to the resources they need to ask the much needed and critical. That is why West argues that the resources needed are complimentary and “deeply valued because they open up the Bible in ways ordinary people do not usually experience” (West, 1993). The aim of this commitment is not to deny ordinary readers of the Bible of critical thought.

3.9.1.4. TO TRANSFORM PERSONAL AND SOCIAL LIVES THROUGH CONTEXTUAL BIBLE STUDY

Unlike other conventional Bible studies the CBS advocates for both personal and social transformation. This means that this method is not just about teaching the Bible but also to help participants gain knowledge of the Bible in a way that will change aspects of their lives. In other words, the Ujamaa centre (2016) states “South African society has been shaped by biblical interpretation, often in damaging ways. The challenge that lies before us is to allow the Bible to transform our society for the better.” The difference between the CBS and other forms of Bibles studies is that CBS is used for transformation of the lives of the poor, oppressed and the marginalised than in the way it was done during the times of the apartheid regime. Thus, Breen (2009) further states that “CBS is used differently from the times of the apartheid in which the Bible was used to oppress or uphold the status quo of negative discrimination” . In its process of individual and social transformation the CBS include the “existential, the political, the economical, the cultural and the religious spheres of life” (West, 1993).

Furthermore, the CBS participants expect a transformation from internalised and uncritical teachings of their faith community. According to CBS, transformation method is not a thing that comes from the outside communities but it must be understood within the context of the society and community seeking liberation. All the other four commitments are fundamentally and intricately connected to one another. Therefore, my analysis of the CBS

method which will be implemented and used under a specific context of cultural oppression and economic poverty among the local Lutherans will be partly based on these four commitments of the CBS process.

The current South African context is different from that which prompted the South African liberation theologies. However, the primary focus of the study is purely biblical interpretation within the post-apartheid Marapyane community. And this community like any other South African community is not immune to the mega churches way of interpreting the Bible. Berryman (1987) states that liberation theologians sought to interpret Christian Faith through the poor's suffering, their hope and everyday struggles. Thus, Boff (1986) traces the emergence of the liberation theology in the Latin American discourse and struggles of exclusion and marginalisation.

In this research the approach is not confrontational nonetheless, but it is a struggle for transformational liberation. I will use the CBS method with the leagues in the Lutheran church in Marapyane commonly known as ELCSA NEU Halle parish. The aim was solely to read and reflect on Paul's letter to the church in Rome in light of *Tumelo le Tshiamiso*. Data was collected through various group discussions in the CBS sessions over the period of field work. The researcher used the CBS method with the men, women youth and young adults during each session we gather. The researcher has chosen to use the text Romans 1:17. This text is central to the Lutheran doctrine of Justification by Faith.

Therefore, as someone already in the field, the researcher was fully aware of his delicate role as a mediator between presenting the texts as models of good Christian behaviour and not texts for legitimizing wrong Christian beliefs and practices. The researcher used a facilitator who through a opened the texts for discussion through the use of questions that will encourage discussion. Questions such as, "what do you think Paul is trying to achieve by writing the words in Romans 1:17?" "Who are the just?" "Can we say, looking at the letter that we have Faith?" These types of questions led the participants to share their reflections on the chosen texts and relate their first-hand experiences in their lives. The idea here is to follow the pattern of prepared guideline of questions after the model proposed for the contextual Bible study method by West (1999).

3.10. PILOT STUDY

Windsor, Baronowski, & Cutter (1994) recommends that if a research instrument exists and there is no fault with it researchers must use it, instead of developing a new one. For the purpose of this study the researcher pre-tested the instrument with a group of willing participants. The researcher pre-tested the instrument both in Setswana and English for correctness. It is through this pre-testing that the researcher was able to note misunderstandings that needed clarity before the bible study sessions could start. As per Windsor et al. (1994) recommendation, pre-testing of the research instrument ensures that the research is of good quality and that the instrument is a relevant one to be applied on the selected sample.

3.11. REFERENCE PERIOD

A number of six bible studies were conducted during the months of December 2016 and January 2017. Each group were asked open ended questions that encouraged participants to raise their individual view without fear of victimisation from the local church leadership. Questions such as, 'As a Lutheran member, what is it that you understand by the concept of Justification by faith? (*Jaaka modumedi wa moLutere ke eng se o se tlhaloganyang ka Tshiamiso ka tumelo fela*).

3.12. VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE STUDY

The measurement of human behaviour and understanding belongs to the positivist view Smallbone and Quinton (2004), an empirical analytic approach to discern a reality. Validity is further referred to as the ability of the instrument to measure the truthfulness of the intended findings. The validity of this study was maximised by making sure that the results are credible and defensible by double checking all the data after each and every entry.

Qualitative methods seek to represent holism and to provide contextual knowledge of the phenomenon being studied. One goal of qualitative research is to increase understanding of a phenomenon as opposed to generalizing data extrapolated from the sample to the population at large. Rather than having a quantitative research outcome of generalized findings, qualitative researchers have an onus of richly describing the findings so they can be transferred to other situations.

The qualitative researcher's responsibility includes providing enough description about the context of the sample so that others may adequately judge whether the findings apply to their own situations. This phenomenon is supported by Myers (2000), as author maintains that the outcomes of qualitative research can potentially contribute valuable knowledge to the community. Thus, the finding of this study will not be generalised.

3.12.1. CREDIBILITY

According to Cresswell (2003) credibility is mainly concerned with the question “How congruent are the findings with the reality”, whilst Neuman (2006) argues that ensuring credibility is one of the most important factors in establishing trustworthiness. The researcher is well aware that some of the CBS participants are unable read and write, but they are important Knowledge Holders (KH) to the study. The researcher did the member checking on information provided by the participants to strengthen credibility of the study through prolonged engagement. In addition, the researcher has ensured that the findings have been accurately recorded under scrutiny.

3.12.2. TRANSFERABILITY

Mouton (2012) indicates that in a qualitative study transferability rests on those who will be willing to use it appropriately at the receiving context. The researcher has ensured that the findings are easy to be applied to the related study from another environment. The researcher ensured that the transferred data from collected information recorded with the participants is accurate.

3.12.3. CONFIRMABILITY

Creswell (2014) states that confirmability refers to the objectivity or neutrality of the data, such that there will be agreement as to check whether the data is relevant and meaningful. The researcher ensured that the findings of the study are true reflections of the CBS participants' responses during our Bible study sessions. The researcher previewed the findings by replaying the recordings, images taken and reading responses with the participants.

3.12.4. NEUTRALITY

Neutrality implies that the researcher will not take sides when conducting the research. This relates to the fact that the findings of the study are influenced by the participants and not by the researcher's bias, interest and motivation during an interviewing process (Brown, 1993).

3.12.5. TRUTH VALUE

Truth value (Brown, 1993) infers that the researcher will not interfere with the findings of the study. As a researcher I have not interfered with the findings of the study to ensure that truth value is well applied. The researcher applied all relevant methods to make the study trustworthy.

3.12.6. MEMBER CHECKING

Guba and Lincoln (1985) consider member checking as an important provision that can be made to bolster a study's credibility. Member check may take place from the beginning of the study and at the end of the data collection dialogue. To that effect, the researcher engaged participants to read the transcripts during the data collection sessions. The researcher conducted double checking of the findings as a way to ensure trustworthiness of the study.

3.13. DATA COLLECTION METHOD

According to Welman, Kruger and Mitchel (2005) data collection refers to the methods of gathering data from a social interaction with participants, field or studies participations, observation and other sources or information. Nagy, Biber and Leavey (2007) explain data collection as referring to the process of actually obtaining the information that will help answer the research question. In grounded data collection studies, data is collected through social interaction with participants, field studies, participant observation and semi-structured interviews. For the purpose of this study contextual Bible study was conducted. Kelley et al. (2003) advises that researcher should approach data collection in a rigorous and ethical manner. For example the following information should be recorded clearly:

- How, where, how many times and which potential participants were contacted?

- How many people in general were approached and of all the people approached. How many agreed to be part of the study?
- What was the difference between those who agreed to participate and those who refused?
- How was the information obtained? For example, was it an interview or the focus group?
- How was the participants' response rate?

3.13.1. PARTICIPANTS' SATISFACTION DURING THE BIBLE STUDY SESSIONS

After each bible study session participants indicated that they were more than happy to be part of the study. Some even went as far as saying that because the church celebrates 500 years her wish is that more bible studies be conducted. Because of the scarcity of the planned bible studies in one session participants said pastors should be empowered to conduct such studies because some for their members are clueless when it comes to bible discussion.

3.14. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The researcher will use the Cresswell (2003) six steps to analyse the qualitative data, which are as follows:

Step 1: Organise and prepare the data for analysis

This involves transcribing interviews, optimally scanning materials, typing up field notes and arranging data into different types depending on the sources of information.

Step 2: Read through all the data

The obtained general sense of information can reflect or cover all the meaning of the information given by the respondents.

Step 3: Begin detailed analysis with a coding process

The process of organising the data, segmentation of sentences into categories with a term or step based on the actual language of the respondents.

Step 4: Description involves a detailed rendering of information about people, place in a setting;

The analysis is useful in designing detailed description for case studies and narrative research project.

Step 5: How the description and themes will be presented in the qualitative narrative;

The researcher should classify his information into categories in order to reduce it into small, manageable sets of thesis.

Step 6: Making interpretation or meaning of data.

The researcher recorded and arranged all the information that was given by the bible study participants into categories so that it is simple for the researcher to evaluate and avoid missing any information. The researcher read through the recorded information several times before evaluation. The researcher interviewed the respondents in their own language so that the questions and communication by the researcher was fully understood by the participants. This strategy will enable the researcher to accumulate sufficient and reliable responses from the participants.

The researchers also took into consideration and respect the ethnicity, culture and gender of the participants when analysing data. The researcher's recorded and observed expressions and gestures of the participants when responding to the questions will be taken into consideration during data analysis.

The researcher will organise and prepare the data for analysis; begin detailed analysis with a coding process, give a description involving a detailed rendering of information about people, place in a setting and making interpretation or meaning of data.

3.15. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, (2009) define ethics as lists of principles used to clarify behaviours that are right/wrong or acceptable/unacceptable. Ethics are concerned with whether the researcher's behaviour conforms to the code or set of principles. Ethics helped to prevent research abuses and enabled the researchers to understand their responsibilities (Rensik, 2007).

It was important therefore for the researcher to consult in the development of the proposal the code of ethics for his professional association. The researcher ensured that the research plans were reviewed by the University Ethics Committee (UEC) of the University of Venda, for protection against Human Rights violations. The researcher filed an application with the UEC to review the risk on the side of the participants during the time of the study. The researcher has also ensured that the participants signed designed consent forms which will be found under Appendix D before they provide the data as a way of protecting their Human Rights.

The researcher adhered to various ethical considerations for the purpose of this study such as informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity. The researcher sought the consent of the participants and ensured that their identities remain anonymous. The researcher has ensured that the information collected remains strictly confidential and there was no harm that was be subjected to the participants, meaning that the information obtained from the participants will not be disclosed without their permission (Sarandakos, 2005).

The researcher has acknowledged all sources in terms of referencing of other scholars and authors' work. The researcher has respected the dignity of the participants and the protocols of the University of Venda with regard to research ethics. The researcher designed a letter seeking approval of individual on authority to obtain permissions to interact with communities and to study participants. The letter also specified the extent and duration of the study. The researcher conveyed the purpose of the study to the participants, as recommended by Sarandakos (2005). The researcher further allowed the participants to take part voluntarily during the data collection process. The researcher ensured that participants' cultural, religious and gender differences were e respected. The researcher made sure that all participants received benefits at the end of the study, for example the researcher may engaged participants as core-searchers throughout the research process such as the design, data collection and analysis, report writing and

disseminating of the findings (Patton, 2002). The researcher has informed the participants' active involvement in the research study by providing clear instructions to remind them about the importance of the study.

The researcher used pseudonyms for individuals and places to protect the identities of the participants. The researcher shared data with others by releasing the details of the research with the study design so that the readers can determine for themselves the credibility of the study (Neuman, 2006). The researcher has also provided copies of reports to participants and stakeholders and made distribution of the reports available on websites. The researcher gave credit for the work of others and information from participants by using quotation marks to indicate the exact words claimed from others (Creswell, 2014). The researcher has also acknowledged all sources in terms of referencing of other scholars and authors' work.

3.15.1. NO HARM OR TRAUMA TO PARTICIPANTS

Contextual Bible Study participants were not in any way subjected to any form of harm. The physical and psychological state of the participants was not unharmed.

3.15.2. CONFIDENTIALITY

Throughout this study, confidentiality was maintained. Prior to the group sessions participants were given assurance that all results would remain anonymous (Appendix C). Participants' names were protected by using codes instead of using their names. The codes were linked to their names and files information containing is kept in a place safe where only the researcher can access. Both the researcher and his assistant were conscious of the need to adhere to the prescribed ethical research conduct at all times.

3.15.3. VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Bless (2006) states that voluntary participation incorporates the freedom an individual's action and choice to decide whether or not to participate in research. The research participants have a right to know what a research is and what is it about, how is the research going to affect them, the risks, and the benefits of their participation (De Vos,

2005). It is therefore for the responsibility of every research to clarify this information to the participants.

3.15.4. INFORMED CONSENT

Research participants, as I have mentioned above have the right to know what the research is about and how is it going to affect them. Monatte, De Jong and Sullivan (2008) define informed consent as telling the research participant of issues that might reasonably influence their decision to participate in the research.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher informed the respondents about the study so that they are able to feel free to participate. It was further accompanied by the researcher letting them know in detail what the study is about. This was done to ensure that participants were aware of what they are getting themselves into in order to avoid unnecessary withdrawal.

3.16. CONCLUSION

Having outlined the research method, research design, location of the study, population, sampling, sample size, research instrument, data collection, data analysis, as well as ethical issues and having dealt with issues related to the research methods in the third chapter, chapter four will deal with the findings from the study.

Chapter 4. TRANSCRIPTION AND ANALYSES OF THE FIELDWORK DATA

4.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains a presentation of data from the field. Furthermore, this chapter will further discuss the presentation of findings. It discusses the research methods which the researcher has used to collect data and information about finding liberative messages from the Bible. The main sections that I will present in this chapter are as follows: a brief description of the area where the research the interviews were conducted, the demographic profile of the participants, the research process on how the data was collected, limitations and presentation of results. The themes that the researcher will present in this chapter are social themes from the interviews and some textual themes.

4.2. RESEARCH PROCESS

For the purpose of this study the researcher conducted empirical research which used in-depth interviews and group discussions in a form of Contextual Bible Study. This was conducted in Setswana language. The research took place in Marapyane, Lutheran Church, in the North of Mpumalanga Province (South Africa). Marapyane is a rural semi urban in the Northern Mpumalanga province near 40 km Siyabuswa, in the west, 60km north of Bela Bela and 80km from Marble Hall in the south. The language that is used in the village is Setswana. The village is ruled by tribal authority under a chief. We have a number of political parties: the ANC dominating and the UCDP, EFF, COPE, DA in the minority. There are a few shops in the village, mostly owned by foreign internationals, and a shopping complex. Many people are unemployed and there are people who sell their livestock for a living. Many people migrated to Pretoria and Johannesburg for greener pastures and come home during holidays and on certain days in a month, particularly weekends. As a researcher, the reason why I chose to do my fieldwork research in Marapyane is the fact that I grew up in the village, and I am familiar with the local culture. The Ward Councillor, who is also a congregant, helped the local pastor and I in finding the participants for my research, and he was my “gatekeeper” (a person who helps the researcher to gain access to do field research). He organised all members of the congregation and also the meeting place.

The meeting with my participants took place at the local community church hall, in Marapyane. Initially, the researcher had intended to do participatory observatory method, by visiting the participant during their weekly prayer meeting and observe how they read the bible and amongst others view Justification, before conducting the actual bible study. However, due to some budget and time issues, that was no longer possible. The gatekeeper advised that since we are running on a limited budget and time, it would be best if the data collection started by meeting with the entire group. Therefore, the researcher decided to follow the gatekeeper's advice by not doing the participatory observatory method.

The research was carried out in two phases. The first phase was a short introductory meeting with the participants, where the researcher introduced himself and presented the purpose of the research to them, and it was held early November 2016. When the researcher met with the participants, they did not seem comfortable or pleased to meet with him. The second phase meeting was held on the 30th November, 2016, where a Contextual Bible Study was conducted. When the researcher met with the participants for the second time, the gatekeeper felt it was proper to re-introduce the researcher as a church worker rather than using the term “ngwana wa gae” (child of the soil). It was after this new form of introduction that the researcher noticed a change of atmosphere. They looked more relaxed and comfortable than before. The researcher used background information questions to break the ice and also to determine the participants' level of education. Thereafter, Contextual Bible Study commenced.

In South Africa, the Contextual Bible Study method is one of the familiar ways for Christian communities to interact with the Bible, but it is not no all churches that use this method of Bible study. Even though the researcher chose to do Contextual Bible Studies with the participants, and despite the fact that they were used to the traditional Bible studies, it was evident that CBS was a new kind of a Bible Study for them. They are not used to an interactive Bible study method, because they are more used to the kind of a Bible study in which somebody teaches and interprets the biblical text for them, without being given an opportunity to interact with the text. This kind of Bible study is also common in some or most of the churches in South Africa. The researcher had seven prepared in-depth questions to use for the Contextual Bible Study with participants, and during the process there were also some follow-up questions that emerged during the discussions.

In South Africa, Gerald West is one of the biblical scholars who advocated Contextual Bible Study or the reading of the Bible with “ordinary readers”. Contextual Bible Study attempts to bring interface between scholars and “ordinary readers” of the Bible, particularly the poor and the marginalised in order to facilitate social transformation (West, 1991). This method of reading the Bible goes beyond biblical scholarship, by interacting with “ordinary readers”. In the South African context, the Contextual Bible Study method of reading the Bible has been used in addressing some ethical issues, such as HIV and Aids, poverty and so forth, with the communities of faith (West, 2001).

The Contextually Bible Study that was conducted with participants, was guided by the following principles: A commitment to read the Bible from the South African context, particularly from the context of the marginalised and the poor, a commitment to read the Bible with others in the community, a commitment to individual and social transformation, and commitment to read the Bible critically (West, 2001). The Contextual Bible Study generally begins with the question of needs, experiences, and resources of the community (marginalised or poor). This method of reading the Bible also allows the readers to bring their own context in the interpretation (West, 2001). However, Gerald West states that in a context like that of South Africa, there are many realities. For example, the Bible has been used to support the apartheid system by others, it has been used as a resource of struggle for liberation by others and it is still used by others as resource to maintain justice and democracy, therefore we have to be particular when talking about reading the Bible from the South African context (West, 2001). The researcher’s commitment to the participants is not just to recognise and acknowledge their context, but to understand and analyse it.

Gerald West argues that biblical scholars, due to their training in theology, tend to read the Bible *for* the “ordinary readers”, and that this may give an impression that they are not hearing the contributions of the ordinary readers, but they are telling them how to read and interpret the Bible (West, 2001). Gerald West further says that this might minimise and rationalise the contribution and experiences of ordinary readers. Therefore, the contextual Bible study attempts to avoid this by reading the Bible *with* “ordinary readers”. This means that that trained readers acknowledges their privilege and power as scholars and that they must empower the ordinary readers to recognise and acknowledge the significance of their contribution and experiences. This is particularly important when the trained readers read the Bible with the marginalised groups, because their interpretations have been silenced and suppressed (West, 2001).

Through the contextual Bible study, “ordinary readers” can also be empowered to read the Bible critically due to the fact that the main concern is that all readers should recognise the ideological nature of the Bible and its interpretations, and that all readers should develop critical skills so that they are empowered to do their own critical readings of the Bible and its interpretations (West, 2001). Reading the Bible with ordinary readers requires that the ideological nature and the interpretation of the Bible be investigated because the Bible has been used and is still being used to legitimise oppressive practices by some (West, 2001).

Contextual Bible study plays an important role in breaking the culture of the “silence” of the marginalised. In contextual Bible study the Bible is used as a resource for social transformation, and through this process, the “ordinary readers” appropriate and apply the Bible in their context, and this needs to be done critically (West, 2001). Appropriation by “ordinary readers” requires two steps, firstly, to critically read the Bible, secondly, to critically analyse the reader’s context. This (appropriation) makes it possible for the reader to identify the differences and similarities between their context and the Biblical context. Appropriation is the most important part of the contextual Bible study (West, 2001).

The participants of the CBS were between the ages of 25 and 68. The researcher divided them into three small groups. The researcher randomly mixed the participants in leagues where age differ. The researcher gave them the same task. They were given time and space to talk among themselves before reporting back to the entire group. From time to time the participants were asked if they were comfortable with the fact that a digital voice recorder was used, and they agreed. Some of the participants could not read, but they seemed to be familiar with the biblical texts and were able to interact with the rest of the group. During the Contextual Bible Study process with my participants, there were some problems that were encountered. A problem that was encountered was that during the whole process of the Contextual Bible Study, the gatekeeper was present and I could not ask him to leave us. I tried as much possible to be polite and to respect the culture. I felt that it would be difficult for my participants to participate freely in the discussion, more especially when it comes to issues pertaining sexuality.

However, it was the opposite of what I thought. They seemed to be comfortable with him being around. At the end of the Bible study session, the participants conveyed their words of gratitude to both the researcher and the “gatekeeper” and asked for the possibility of

having such meetings in the future. They expressed that such kind of a Bible Study was therapeutic to some of them. They further said that they needed such platforms, where they could freely talk about issues that concerns and touches their lives as Christians in the 21st century.

The participants were assured of the confidentiality of the information they provided. The names that will appear on the data presentation are not be their real names. Prior to the data collection process, the interviewees were assured that there was no financial reward for participating in the research, in order to avoid some misunderstandings throughout the process.

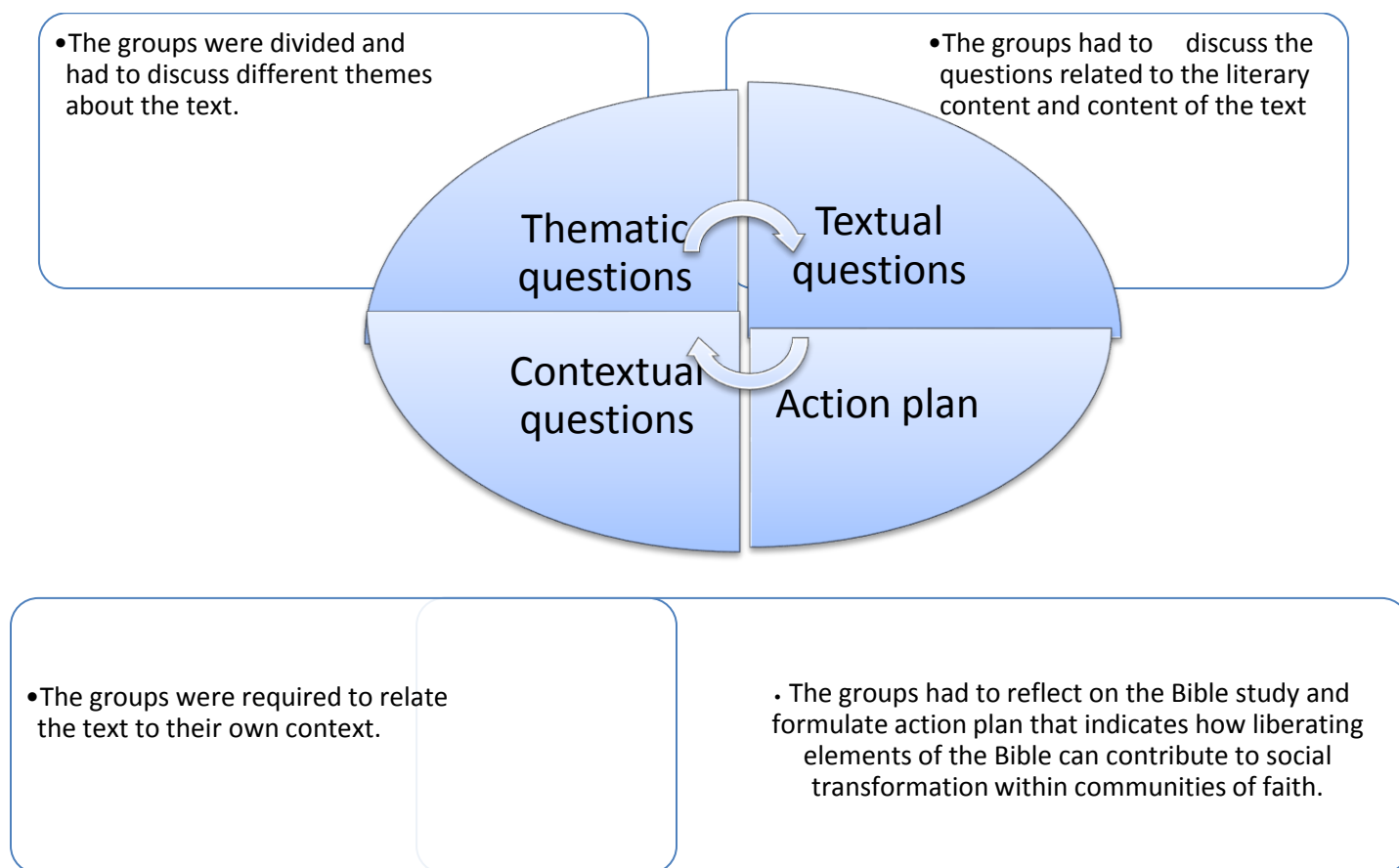
In this study I was not a neutral observer. By asking the questions that I have asked, my interest was to make a contribution to gender and social transformation. My focus was also on the physical reader, which Fernando Segovia terms as “flesh and blood reader” (Segovia, 2000), and I wanted the readers’ context to be part of the interpretive process.

For the Contextual Bible Study with participants, questions were categorised as follows:

- 1) Thematic questions: the groups were divided and had to discuss different themes about the text.
- 2) Textual question: the groups had to discuss the questions related to the literary content and content of the text.
- 3) Contextual questions: the groups were required to relate the text to their own context.
- 4) Action plan: the groups had to reflect on the Bible study and formulate action plan that indicates how liberating elements of the Bible can contribute to social transformation within communities of faith.

Below is the figure of how the bible study was planned

Figure 4,1 data analysis plan



The questions given to these groups were open-ended, in order to foster discussions in the groups. After spending time on the questions given to them, the small groups had to report back on the discussion to the entire group. During this time, the participants did not only share the text, but they also shared their own personal stories, and were able to relate them with the text.

4.3. FIELD ENTRY

According to Jackson (2012) ethnography remains vital, not because ethnographic methods guarantee certain knowledge of others, but because ethnographic fieldwork brings us into direct dialogue with others, affording us opportunities to explore knowledge. (West, 2010)

For the purpose of this study the researcher had to move for a few weeks from the usual setting to the research area. The purpose was solely to explore the advantages of ethnography that is highlighted by Jackson in the above assertion. The fieldwork was conducted in the Lutheran church within the community Marapyane. I arrived there in November 2016 after almost the whole days' worth of travelling because of

the heat. When I arrived there, I went to meet with the gatekeeper, for a briefing as to how things are going to happen and also to prevent taking things for granted when I spoke to these people. There were a few introductory sessions where the researcher introduced the participants to the topic and the study in general. However, before the sessions the researcher noticed the difference in lifestyle between that of Venda where the researcher resided and Marapyane where the study was being conducted.

Church policies dictate that before a study of any sort is conducted the leadership should be taken through so that it does not victimise members of the congregation. So, then this means that before the bible studies could commence the researcher held a meeting with the local leadership. The meeting paved a proper way for the research to continue with all the conditions tabled.

Before the first meeting with the CBS group in Marapyane Lutheran church, the researcher had some time with the congregational council to take them through the selected text for the contextual bible study sessions with the groups. The researcher informed them that it would be easier for them to coordinate the discussions at the bible study sessions with the group. The researcher also went through the prepared questions for discussion on each of the texts with them. From this moment onward, everything was set for the first bible study meeting which was going to be held the following Thursday.

4.4. FIRST CONTEXTUAL BIBLE STUDY SESSION WITH THE WOMEN'S LEAGUE

This session was held on a Thursday afternoon in the church hall and this was a hot day. Which led to too many women complaining that they cannot cope with the heat, but interesting enough they were still eager to participate. At the time of this research the Neu Halle congregation was undergoing a huge transition in leadership. From an old pastor who is very good with administrative issues and very conservative with our Lutheran culture to the new young pastor who is very charismatic and believes much in the current healing practice. For example, every time when I went to the pastor's house I would find him watching one of the controversial televangelist and indicating how this man can heal. These two ideologies, in my understanding, have an influence on how congregants view certain important doctrinal issues that contribute to the increasing number of parishioners.

The Church building is in the form of the Modern Age architectural style which reflected the medieval notion of the pilgrim Church facing the East and moving onwards to heaven. The congregation numbered about 600. It was made up of mostly women and children, the youth, the aged and only a handful of men.

Sunday services at Marapyane Lutheran Church (commonly known to many as Neu Halle) starts at 9:00am. But parishioners are encouraged to come at 8:45am to avoid the rush and disorder. I was then asked to seat in the back of the Church while the pastor went to the vestry to prepare for the session that was about to start. As we started with the Women's League, the members of the league started filling into the church one after another. As I observed the people take their seats, I realised the seating pattern in the church was unconsciously partitioned.

There is a history to the seating pattern in the church. The upkeep of space amongst men and women in public gatherings is seen mainly in the church. But in the church, there is a reversal of the traditional seating pattern of men and women. Traditionally, men are always in front and they always lead in partaking in Holy Communion and other services. Interesting enough the role of men in the church is still kept to the minimal level because most come to church in the pre-election year because they want to be elected into different positions.

Every Thursday the Women's League is supposed to meet at three o'clock in the afternoon to allow those who are knocking off from to settle in. Normally they start settling in forty-five minutes later because some had to go to the local retail shop to buy lunch boxes for their children or grandchildren.

The women began taking their seats, some brought along "semphemphe" pap (pumpkin porridge). After a while, a good number of the women were seated but were busy chatting off to each other about events that happened in the community in that week. Then a woman rose to her feet and called the group to order through the favourite song of the group. She shouted out "*basadi tiang maatla*" and the rest of the group responded "*basadi bomme tiang maatla*". It means, "women, mothers be courageous". The pastor welcomed everyone to the session and he welcomed me to the meeting and asked me to tell the entire group who I was and why I wanted to meet the group. Before he could finish there,

were comments from some of the women saying: “Who doesn’t know this boy? Is he not the son of Motube Magoro next to the clinic?” Another one said, “Then why do you ask him to introduce himself to us? He is our own son. Just let him tell us what he has for us.” I heard another comment from a mother with her head buried towards the ground saying that “re tshwanetse re gopole gore pula e nele re tshwanetse re leme” (we should all be mindful of the fact that this time is the farming season and since it rained that morning). The pastor came in to call the group to order. I introduced myself as a student from the University of Venda in Limpopo.

After the introduction I explained to them why I was there and what I wanted to discuss with them. However, I explained to them that the discussion was not very much what I had to tell them but what they had to share with me on the texts we were to discuss over the period of my stay with them. Therefore, I was handing them over back to their leaders who would coordinate the discussions. The chairlady was asked and she accepted to lead the discussions and then straight forward told them that the text up for discussion for the day was from Romans 1:16-17. She went ahead and took the reading from the Setswana translation. The second time she re-read the text slowly for others to be on-board with what was read. After the reading there was a timid atmosphere of dead silence. Then the chairlady opened up the discussion of the text with the first question. Below is a translation of the responses that were given by the women at the contextual bible study. At this meeting, there were about 30 women present, including nine widows.

4.5. ANALYSES OF THE SECOND BIBLE STUDY SESSION

This session was commenced by singing from the youth and the words of the songs translated above portrayed a certain understanding of Christianity in relation to the Traditional African religion still practiced in the community. In the first song, the words call on all Christians to go down on their knees in prayer imploring God to bless the world and save the world from destruction by the gods (demonic forces). The words of the song portray an image of God as the Supreme Being who is all powerful. This Supreme Being even has power over other gods and can punish them for wrong doing or destroy the lesser evil gods completely. This is exactly the image of God the Creator and Supreme Being preached by the Church. The God of the Church is not a *Deus inter paris*. That means the God of the Church is not a God among equals.

The role and authority of the facilitator in the group was ambivalent in this session. Occasionally, she was suppressive by clamping down on the women to put an end to a point she thought was not appropriate for women to discuss. This was the case in the widow's alternative interpretation of Christ as a new husband. At other times, she pushed the women to talk when there was an easy silence after a question was posed on a sensitive issue in the community.

4.6. EMERGING THEMES AND SUB-THEMES

4.6.1. Paul's doctrine of justification by faith and the impact of poverty in Marapyane

Wright (1996) argues that justification by faith is to be understood as the inclusion among the covenant of people of God of all those who have faith in Jesus, both Jews and Gentiles. He further indicates that it has always been God's purpose, as one God of Israel, to establish one family which consists of Jews as well as Gentiles.

It can be argued from this observation that justification by faith has always played a part in defining the Christians as one people belonging to one God and it is here where its social concern is reflected. This is what Elliot (2008) points out that

"the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith has social relevance; it implies an understanding of what a Christian community is and it provides guidelines to show the members of that community how they ought to relate to one another. In Galatians Paul presents the doctrine in the context of his polemic against the requirement that the Gentile believers in Christ be circumcised and at least obey some of the ceremonial commandments and ordinances of the Mosaic Law. He completely rejects the demand; if Christ makes justification and salvation available at all, he (sic) makes them available to those who have faith; there is no other requirement".

The above quotation therefore indicates that Paul used the doctrine in the context of bringing together a divided group under one identity. It is therefore this undeniable social implication that Dahl (1977) argues for. Therefore, consideration of the context in which

justification was discussed leads to this argument that the doctrine has social implications. This also reflects that Paul's concern was that justification is about Christian relationship and about Christian identity.

In addition to the above-mentioned reasons Elliot (2008) continues to highlight that it is not a necessity that the Christian Gentiles should become Jews for them to be part of the Christian identity or full members of the church. They are rather to remain part of their ethnic group, for an example Greeks, Galatians and Romans.

Again, Elliot (2008) shows that the argument "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3: 29) in the context of the doctrine of Justification by faith is one reason to support the fact that this doctrine has social implications. In spite of this the apostle is not denying the fact that there are differences among the Romans, the sexes, the nationalities as well as social positions. So, this theological statement about equality before God should not be seen as having no practical social implications. It can therefore be realised that Paul takes support from the doctrine of justification by faith when the church unity is threatened (Elliot, 2008).

It is, therefore, realised that Paul's concern in the application of justification by faith is mainly unity in the church. What is being brought to the fore is the situation of the church which can be said to have experienced God's grace, the church which proclaims that God has acted in its life.

As in Paul's letter to the Romans, Gorman states that "Justification does not simply involve the individual and his or her salvation. Paul's perspective includes history and eschatology: Adam, mankind and Christ, the promise to Abraham and to the law given to Moses on Sinai, the Apostle's own work in the present is evident, the first fruits among the Gentiles and the remnant of Israel, the unity of Jews and Gentiles in the congregation, Christ dominion over all principalities and powers, and the all-encompassing ultimate goal of God for his creation" (Gorman, 2009). It is these aspects in relation to justification where it is shown that in God's dealings there was mainly a concern for the whole Israel and all people who believe at the end.

Throughout his letters, Paul shows that believers did not gain justification through their own efforts. They received everything because they are members of Christ's church; they belong to Christ. So, Paul here is not individualistic, rather when he mentions growth toward Christian maturity and perfection he refers to serving one another on the foundation laid once and for all by Christ. The phrase he usually uses is 'fruits of the Spirit' but this does not mean that good works automatically follow faith. The Spirit helps one to see or to discern what is good and the power to do it (Gorman, 2009).

Christians have to endeavour to realise what they have become due to grace, so that they can understand what God wills in situations that demand moral decisions and social actions. It will therefore be their actions that will show whether they have understood what is justifying faith. The exhortations that Paul emphasises on Christians relationships with one another, the commandment to love one's brother or sister (Romans 13: 8-10) is the fulfilment of the requirements of the law on the basis of Justification (Romans 8: 4). This is according to life in the Spirit that Christians are to live in mutual love (Gorman, 2009).

The view that Justification by faith is having social implications has also been contented systematically. Maimela points out that Luther's teaching on justification by faith was revolutionary. This is so because it meant that women and men now understand that meaningful life was no longer obtained through quantities of good works. Instead life was open to the weak, the poor, the powerless, and the unfortunate classes. For him Luther upheld dignity and human worth of every individual before God who accepts repentant sinners without condition. So what Luther states is that God accepts the oppressed.

Giving an example of how justification was misunderstood in the South African context he points out that "life is not as a gracious gift from God rather justification is determined by the state, on the grounds of 'natural worthiness', that is, on the basis of race, culture, and economic status. The state grants such a life to those whom it judges to be the fittest and racially qualified. In South Africa unconditional acceptance of other human beings is not the presupposition of human existence" (Maimela, 1988).

The same point is raised by Dahl when he asks the question: 'has the message of the doctrine of justification: that 'there is no distinction', had any impact on the social structure

of the churches? He goes on also to think that social standards have become the ceremonial and ritual of our time (Dahl, 1977). These are a concern because of the fact that it has been contested that Luther's interpretation of Justification is one sided as it does not focus on life in its practicality for some. Despite this, Dahl points out that he cannot take on this debate other than to focus on the social implications of justification. This is also the intention of this paper.

As for this reason of insufficiency, which is a one-sided view of the doctrine of justification sometimes leads even some of the Lutherans to move the doctrine of justification into the background in order to bring other aspects of Christianity into the foreground, for example social responsibility. For this Dahl argues that it is a mistake to try and restore a distortion in the presentation of the doctrine of justification by emphasizing other doctrines, at its expense. So what is urgent for this distortion is to rediscover the doctrine (Dahl, 1977).

I agree with Dahl here that what needs to be done is to focus on the present Christian situation and relate the message of justification to other aspects or situations of life; aspects which hinder the message that there is no distinction (Dahl, 1977).

So it will then be important to consider the fact that justification by faith was used by Paul to support the argument that aimed at demonstrating that Jews and Gentiles have both received God's grace and at the same time both have access to it on the basis of faith (Wanamaker, 1982). It is therefore this fact that God has justified human beings through grace and not because they have done something good that should represent Christian proclamation of the gospel.

Maimela (1988) points out that this is the gospel that we as Christians need to embody in word and deed in our relations with others. In this way those who find themselves rejected or excluded by societies might come to know and experience the liberating love of God in Christ. Therefore, this experience of 'God's unconditional acceptance' of human beings can direct Christians to struggle towards accepting one another unconditionally (Maimela, 1988). For Christians, this will therefore mean that they should even serve other people not because they expect something in return. Christians should also not serve others because they are of their tribe, nationality, gender or because of their social status.

4.6.2. The experience of the Lutheran Believers in Marapyane

Marapyane is a big village that consists of people of different denominations. This therefore indicates the fact that the lives of the people in Marapyane are mostly regulated by Christian values as well as religious values. Despite this, lack of proper biblical interventions is a reality among many Lutheran believers. At least among the Lutheran believers this is made evident by the lack of understanding that more tithing in church does not provide material needs such as food, clothing as well as shelter. Besides, it is clear that this situation affects the believers in their day to day Christian life. The other factor is that this situation cannot escape the attention of the literate, the illiterate members of the laity, as well as the clergy as these people constitute part of many Lutheran congregations.

In order to relate the above observation to the rest of the research I want to quote Ukpong (1996) who also refers Knut Holter and states: “biblical scholars in Africa have their own method of biblical interpretation”.

This method is characterised by a concern to make an encounter between biblical text and the African context. Putting this in practice would mean that the main focus of interpretation is on the community that receives the text. So as according to Ukpong (1996) one method follows the Western way and the other the African way but is the African way which this research follows as it considers the African context when reading the Bible.

It is then realised that in the African biblical studies there is recognition of the importance of ordinary readers of the Bible as vital partners in the academic reading of the Bible. Although Ukpong's (2006) method which can be called inculturation hermeneutics, which makes African context to be seen as providing the critical resources for biblical interpretation, this method also makes African context the subject of interpretation (Ukpong, 1996).

Ukpong's view is in agreement with that of West who maintains that in a contextual Bible study, the Bible is read against an existing human situation. This human situation involves racial oppression and poverty in South Africa. Therefore, the whole process is done within the context of faith, and with a focus to 'personal and social transformation'. The contextual Bible study aims at the uplifting of critical study of the Bible and the transformation of the society (Ukpong, 1996).

What actually is reflected here is that the African context or situation is taken into consideration because Africans interact with the Bible in their everyday lives. This as a result helps them to realise the importance of the text and the meaning of the Bible in their midst and how its message affects their lives. So, when we take into consideration the social situation of the poor believers in Marapyane their interaction with the Bible needs to be of benefit to them. This therefore refers to both the academic and the non-academic members of the community whose responsibility together is to better the lives of the community. In addition, believers need to be helped to reflect their African views in as far as what justification means to them.

Besides, West (1996) points out that 'Africans do not transact with the Bible 'empty handed'. Their encounter with the Bible considers their experiences of reality. These can be social, religious and political experiences. This citation reveals how Africans usually relate and consider their context. So, the Lutheran believers in Marapyane also can be viewed in this context. To relate the Bible message to their own context means that the believers can also take part and can also contribute to what they believe can better their lives.

4.6.3. Justification by faith in the context of the Lutheran Believers in Marapyane

It was discovered that in all the CBS groups that participated an average of four in every ten are not familiar with the doctrine of justification by faith at all. This therefore further explains that they do not even know where the concept of justification by faith in the Bible is found.

The other areas where believers show some agreement is in the way they read the text and understand it. They all point out that the text talks about the goodness or loving kindness of God who does a lot of good to human beings. For example, it is God who protects human beings from all evil. In addition, they explain that the text talks about how people are made right before the eyes of God through faith. But as for righteousness they all agree that there is no one right before God. Human beings are ruled and controlled by sin. Human beings cannot be right before God because they have hatred to others - something which is not pleasing to God.

Participant B: “Go re rere motho o siame fa pele ga Modimo le gona o siamisitswe ka tumelo o tshwanetse go gana go wela molekong”

(To be made right through faith is to believe in God and to refuse to be controlled by temptations).

For the ordinary poor person, this text can also express that it is faith that makes a human being to be a friend with God.

(Participant A): “Se se reya gore ka gore Modimo ke yo o molemo, rena batho re tshwanela go dira se sekgatlang Modimo”

(This therefore means that because God is good then people also need to do what pleases God).

Here it is realised that believers are quick to reflect on their context. But what is central here, is the question of how people relate to one another

Believers here share the idea that poverty is not a good thing in a person's life. They all indicate that they cannot just sit and believe that faith in God will provide. No one can stay in idle while he or she is starving and thinking that food will come down like manna from heaven. Besides, CBS Focus Groups indicate that although they are poor, they still believe in God but at the same time they need to struggle and earn a living for themselves. The only problem is that it is difficult for them.

In addition, other members of the CBS Focus Groups were able to share their own personal experience from their family which they she believes to have been caused by poverty. One explains a situation whereby her sister left home leaving her children behind and went to an urban area where she found some employment. Although she is employed, she is doing nothing to support the family.

Participant B: “Ge a le teng ko tirong o ile a nna leloko la kereke. Madi a nengn a tshwanetse go romelwa bana a dirisitswe ko kerekeng yona eo”.

(She is said to have become a member of a certain church in town and she is spending all she earns on this church because she was told that she would become rich).

This explains that poverty can make a person leave home in search for better life but sometimes the very little a person gets can be wasted or be used carelessly with the belief that he or she will be made richer. This tells us that the situation of the poor is not only sad but is also open to exploitation. Poor people usually find themselves in a situation where

their poverty is exploited to benefit those who are already rich so that while they are getting poorer, the rich are getting richer at their expense.

This shows that the believers' social status has painful consequences in their lives. Although they continue to believe in God their experience affects their family life as well as their religious life.

CBS Focus Groups expressed their wish that they are looking forward to life without poverty because poverty is not an enjoyable experience. But there is always a problem because sometimes they are exploited by those who are wealthier than them. The tendency is that because they are powerless, those who employ them take advantage of them and employ them as cheap labourers. They are therefore paid little money which cannot sustain their families. They are not only under-employed but they are also underpaid. What they earn is far below bread level.

The other fact brought forward was that the poor people are always undermined wherever they go. Besides, poverty has become a problem for people of all ages, both adults and children. It causes some instability in the family and even the children cannot go to school or to church. The tendency is that if the church cannot address their hunger they better go and search for a better life somewhere. Some choose to steal, something that is not good for the society. Some go to the extent of changing churches every Sunday looking for that one church that promises them wealth if they do strange things all in the name of faith. Again, poverty makes the alleviation of hunger a priority in one's life and as the result the idea of God's existence and of faith in him or her becomes either secondary or it is pushed aside.

As for the other CBS Focus Groups, it is only God who justifies them. They do not consider what the other people have to say about their social status of poverty. To believe is all about trusting in God. Although it is tough sometimes they only hope for the better as days pass by. The only thing that worries them is when this poverty makes them to be undermined. In addition, some argued that the youth choose to steal when they are in search for a better life. Some give money to the schemes that cheat them by promising them that they will have more money or become rich.

The other point indicated is that the poor sometimes blame God because of their unchanging life. Sometimes other people are blamed for bewitching others to be poor.

This, as a result, can cause people not only to turn away from trusting in God but also from trusting their fellow community members. This tells us that poverty is not only detrimental to the physical, psychological and religious dimensions of human life but it is also a source of suspicions, which lead to divisions in the community.

A conclusion to be drawn from the above reflections is that people do not enjoy the poverty they are experiencing and are therefore searching for a new life and that is life without poverty. This is a clear reflection of their context and their relation to other people who are more powerful than they are. This indicates their powerlessness in the midst of their society. This surely creates a hostile world for them. The question we need to ask here is: if the believers are justified by faith and have a positive standing with God, do they not have to worry about their livelihood? This question remains to be important because justification means that the person justified by God is supposed to enjoy life to its fullest and everything that hinders this new life of positive relationship with God has to be nullified.

As to whether believers realise any impact of justification by faith in their lives there was an indication that some believe that it has some impact but some think that it is having no impact in their lives at all. The impact of justification by faith cannot be realised because the doctrine is not known. Besides, poverty has been dominating their lives for a long time and faith in God has never changed their situation.

Another interesting observation is that whatever little they get in life is believed to be from God's providence. This then means that whatever they get from other people who are their friends they believe it is from God because they have put their trust in Him. On the other hand, however, it was that the impact of justification by faith is never realised because other Christians are doing nothing to help those who are poor.

The other point that was raised, which contributes to the impact of justification by faith not being realised is that there is no unity among Christians. Although Christians can preach about the love of God this love is not reflected in their lives and it is not extended to believers. In order that there can be a change in people's lives Christians need to be united. There must be no discrimination among people. Service to others should be done without considering that the person is poor or not. This is the point shared by the other

CBS Focus Group that Christians do not have love for one another. They are not standing together in God.

If justification by faith has been utilised by Paul to define Christians under a new entity then this is supposed to have implications for this kind of community. The problem is that there is still some discrimination and undermining of those who are poor and powerless. This, therefore, raises the need for the retelling and the readdressing of the doctrine of justification by faith so that in its light the socio- economic lives of the believers can be improved.

4.7. Conclusion

The preceding chapters have set the stage to introduce the objective of this research, which is to understand how Romans 1:17 is read and interpreted by the local Lutheran Christians in Marapyane. This was done through a thorough engagement with the local community. A strong case has been made in this study that there is a need for a contextual reading of a biblical text. It is also imperative that the researcher ensures that a paradigm shift from a classical literary criticism to a contextual reading happens amongst ordinary readers.

Chapter 5. Findings, Recommendations and Conclusion

5.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of this study. Furthermore, this chapter will also discuss the recommendation made by the researcher.

5.2. The teaching of the doctrine of justification and its relation to the context of believers

It should be realised that the poor believers live within a context that may deny them a completely new and enjoyable life. Therefore, it remains to be the role of the church to teach the word and see how the socio-economic life of the people can be transformed. Besides, the main teaching of the church, that is, the doctrine of justification by faith, which is confessed as a doctrine, should have an impact on their everyday life. Although it can be contended that Christians need to understand themselves as neighbours of one another, the basic practice can be the rediscovering of the doctrine of justification in the context of the poor in a way that leads to the alleviation of poverty.

It has been realised from the interviews that believers in Marapyane are aware of God's active role in their lives, but as to what extent justification plays a role in their everyday life, the majority of the poor in Marapyane seem not to know. This means that they are also not able to relate the concepts Tumelo and Tshiamiso to their everyday life. Of course, they are also aware of the fact that they have to make a contribution for the transformation of their social lives. In other words, they do not expect that everything should be provided to them.

What needs to be adopted is the contextual bible study; this is where it is made clear that in the bible study the context of the poor is taken seriously. The context of the poor becomes the subject of the reading of the bible and its interpretation. Again, in this process the bible is read against the concrete situation of the people, for example, oppression, poverty, and cultural dynamics. This process is done in the context of faith (Ukpong, 1996).

Therefore, the study of the doctrine of justification by faith in a form of a bible study can help in keeping the believers in Marapyane hoping that their situation can be changed. Again, it may help them to realise that they are not alone in their situation rather God is

with them together with other believers. The poor believers can also have ideas of how to deal with their situation of poverty rather than adopting other ways of finding a better or new life in other ways which can only make their situation worse. This is where the teaching of the doctrine must come in. It should be clear that human beings rely on God for justification. The bible study will help the believers to operate within the lines of faith in God whenever they seek ways of acquiring a life which is different from that of poverty.

Although it is important for human beings to take care of their worldly needs, what is basic in Christian life is to have a right relationship with God. Poor believers in Marapyane can be helped to realise that it is this God who has great power above all powers, who has the power that can save human life. It is in the light of a clear understanding of this doctrine that whatever God gives in life can be shared by people. Therefore, this consideration of the context of the poor believers and the application of the doctrine of justification by faith in their context will be a rediscovery of the doctrine of justification in the context which takes seriously the betterment or transformation of the lives of the poor people of Marapyane.

It is here where the educated Christians as well as the rich ones will have to be taught to take part and to initiate the process of bringing believers together. This will no doubt benefit the poor believers first, but it will also keep members in the knowledge of realising the grace of God.

5.3. Recommendations

5.3.1. Justification and the need for sharing

For the starting point here, it should be understood that poor believers are people among others. This needs not be understood as an emphasis of other doctrines for the sake of making justification by faith relevant to the situation of the people. It should be understood first that believers, with their knowledge that God is gracious and that he has acted in their lives through Jesus Christ, will begin to understand that they are also called to show love to others.

In this situation Christians need also to learn from what Dahl (1977) says as I have mentioned before that “Christians have to strive to realise what they have become due to grace, so that they can understand what god wills in situations that demand moral

decisions and social actions”. This will be a reflection of what they have understood about the justifying faith (Dahl, 1977).

It has also been realised from the interviews that the poor believers of Marapyane are very much concerned about other believers who are not ready to show love to others. Highlighted also from the interviews is the fact that their social status leaves them in a position where they are always undermined by other people. This shows that there will also be a need to conduct workshops as well as bible studies on how this doctrine of justification by faith educates all members of the church community. The message of justification by faith should include the fact that by being made righteous human beings are new creatures before God. Therefore, while they are enjoying this status they should learn to accept other human beings without considering their social status. In this way social status will not be a line of division in the churches.

While we are talking about love to others, it has to be made clear that there are among Christians in Marapyane some who are wealthier than others. These needs to be taught the challenge the doctrine of justification is making to them. This challenge is that they have been called to change the situation of the poor. It is not only the poor members who must strife together to provide but also the rich members of the community should be asked to give to the poor. The rich believers should be able to realise that God has acted in their lives; they should realise God's grace which He has shown by bringing them into a positive relationship with Him not only by forgiving them, but also by blessing them with all their material possessions.

In addition to sharing, the way to improve the lives of the poor people in Marapyane is to help initiate and get them involved in community projects which will benefit all of them. Projects should be able to provide employment for the people. In return this will help them to earn a living in terms of material provision, shelter as well as clothing. In this way believers will be able to realize God's love and in that way their lives of poverty may be transformed.

The carrying out of projects for the poor to earn a living can be a reflection of the actions of believers who have understood well the doctrine of justification by faith. It will also be a reflection of mutual love that has to dominate their Christian lives.

5.3.2. Empowering the poor believers to earn a living

The empowerment of the poor believers to earn a living is another factor. It can be verified that most of the believers are capable in the sense that they have abilities to think, to be creative and to work with their own hands. This has also been realised during the interviews. The poor believers in Marapyane have within themselves the enthusiasm to show their capabilities. One thing that Marapyane interviewees have in common is that one has to work hard in order to find a new and a better life. So, what they expressed is that it is not their expectation that what they need will come from nowhere or from heaven without them doing anything about their situation. This shows that they always have the will to improve their lives but they lack power and resources for this to take shape. The church can have a way of acquiring resources from those who can give, and as to how the resources should be used the responsibility should be given to the poor believers themselves.

If they can acquire resources whether in the form of money or anything else, the poor need to know first what their needs are. In this way they can be able to implement projects that will benefit the community as a whole. Here reference can still be made to the study of the doctrine of justification by faith in the form of a bible study as the starting point. The reading of the bible in a group that has the same aims and objectives will be able to act in a way that will be understood by everyone involved. So, this activity of empowering must be based on encouraging the poor to see themselves as a community that is sharing the little resources they have.

This is also what has been realised from the bible study sessions; that life has to be lived in mutual togetherness in order for it to be meaningful and to be pleasing to God. The empowering responsibility should consider at most the fact that life is meant for communion with other people.

The bible text can also be used to help the poor believers to understand how their understanding of the bible encourages them to work with their own hands. A text that can be utilised at the onset can be Genesis 3: 23 where God sent Adam from the Garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. Believers in Marapyane are aware of the fact that everything has its beginning with God; they believe that what human beings possess is from God. So it will be important to refer them back to the biblical text which teaches how God provided human beings with the land for a living.

Besides, it is to be realised that the purpose of creation is God's will. Creation is the work of God's holy love. It is this love that God wants to show to human beings in creation. So that what God gives is received in freedom. It is in Jesus Christ that this reason is revealed. This is clear in John I (Brunner, 1955). In addition, since in the New Testament Jesus is depicted as the redeemer who is the same agent of creation (John 1: 1-3), this means that God is interested in human life in a holistic way.

This means that through Jesus Christ in whom God's love is revealed, humankind is united with the whole creation of God. Therefore, human beings' participation in the tilling of the land reflects this as well as the fact that what God gives is the love which is to be received in freedom. The fact that God has provided human beings with land and with the ability to till it in order to earn a living from its ties with the doctrine of justification by faith in that though human beings have become rebellious against their creator, God did not decide to wipe them away, but through grace still allowed them to exist. The gift of land therefore is in itself evidence of how God is continuing to put right and to restore the relationship which human beings themselves had destroyed.

The bible study will also help the believers as they turn to the understanding of the text. This will help them to recognise their needs as well as to know how they can go about dealing with their situation. The poor believers will easily relate the text to their needs. Again, the reading and understanding of the relationship between creation and justification can provoke ideas to discern the similarities between the situation of the bible and theirs.

In empowering the poor believers, the church needs to be on the side of the poor. In the proclamation of justification where a relationship with God has been realised, the church should proclaim to the government that there is a need for the poor people to experience the newness of life in relation to their social status in the community. So, the church needs to be the voice of the poor by alerting the government about the situation of the poor and in that way provide what the poor need for their survival.

The church therefore needs to take efforts to remove poverty which is without doubt a line of division both in the societies and in the church. The starting point as I have indicated is the teaching of justification by faith through bible studies in order to try and readdress the doctrine as it applies to situations that need social attention in Marapyane. The church needs to extend its concern on social issues by proclaiming the message that is inclusive to all people irrespective of their social status. It needs to find its identity by its concern for those who are less privileged especially the poor.

5.3.3. Future research

Future studies could narrow their study to the impact of misunderstanding the biblical faith, the other possible future research is the impact of African traditional belief systems on how Africans relate to faith and Justification.

5.4. Conclusion

In my discussion of the concepts of Justification and Faith, it has been realised that the word is used mainly to describe a relationship between two people. Justification involves how God has taken the initiative to make sinful human beings to have a right standing before Him. This therefore means that human beings produced no contribution to impress or to influence God towards this right standing.

This is the argument that is followed by Paul that human beings are only justified by faith. It is also the discussion that Paul introduces in his introduction of his letter to the Romans chapter 1: 17. It is here where Paul intended to show that in matters of salvation there is no distinction between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians. This means that Paul wanted to show equality among these groups in matters of salvation. Justification served to support the argument, focusing on the unity of the two Christian groups.

What Paul makes clear, therefore, is that there should be no requirements for the fulfilment of the law for the Gentiles to become fully recognized members of the Roman Christian community. So this shows that the whole discussion had to focus on social implications for the fact that the word itself is a relational word because the doctrine of justification by faith was engaged in solving a social matter of exclusion or inclusion in the Christian community. Justification by faith has proved that in the Christian church what matters is faith for inclusion. It is this inclusion in the Christian entity that marks the beginning of life in its fullest or life as God has originally intended it to be.

It is on the basis of these observations that this research has considered the situation of poor believers in Marapyane, where the experience of it in its fullest is not present. For this to happen to the poor believers in Marapyane who understand themselves to have been justified by faith, there has to be an application or a revisit of this doctrine of Paul in relation to their context. The point here is to engage the doctrine in this context of poverty

for the transformation of the lives of the poor believers in Marapyane. In all the efforts taken to make their lives better, their context should always be taken into consideration. Where these poor believers might be found to be not familiar with the doctrine of justification by faith, it must remain the task of the church to readdress the doctrine in a way that the poor believers may get to learn and understand it. It is the improvement of the poor believer's lives that will also help them focus on keeping them within the confines of faith in God.

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Appendixes

Appendix A

Workplan

Activity	Targeted dates of completion
1. Submit proposal to the department	May 2016
2. Submit proposal to the school of Human and Social Sciences	June 2016
3. Submit to the Higher Degrees Committee	July 2016
4. Application for the ethical clearance certificate to the University Ethics Committee	August-September 2016
5. Submit Chapters 2 and 3	October 2016
6. Data Collection	November 2016
7. Data Analysis	November 2016
8. Submit Chapter 4	December 2016
9. Submit Dissertation	January 2017

Appendix B

Research budget

Table for the Research budget

Activity	Item	Unit cost	Total
Travel (Marapyane)	Travel from Thohoyandou to Marapyane		
	-brief Parish Pastor	425 km x 3.30	R1402.50
	-Bible study with the council members	425 km x 3.30	R1402.50
	-Bible study with the Women's League.	425 km x 3.30	R1402.50
	-Bible study with Men's League	425 km x 3.30	R1402.50
	-Bible study with the Youth	425 km x 3.30	R1402.50
	-Bible study with Young Adults	425 km x 3.30	R1402.50
		2550 km x R3.30	R8415
Catering	Catering for the Bible study participants	500 x 6 sessions	R3000
	Catering for the research assistant	125 x 2 x 12 days	R3000

	and the researcher		
Stationery	1 x flip chart	3299 x1	R3299.00
	6 x artline marking pen	32.90 x12	R197.40
	1 x canon digital camera	R 6990	R6990.00
Editing and proof reading	Editing and proof reading (R30 per page X80)	30 x 80 pages	R240
Printing	8 dissertations x 80 pages @6.50 per page	8 dissertations @ 6.50 per page	4160
Binding	120.00 x 8 dissertation	R120 x8 dissertations	R960
Research assistant	Will help the researcher in collecting data and capturing and also with the facilitation	2000 x 6 Bible study sessions	R6000
Accommodation: Dikolobe Guest House	1 Researcher	12 nights @ R500 per person per night	R6000
	1 Research assistant	12 nights @ R500 per person per night	R6000
The Total cost of the Research			R48261,40

Appendix C

Dear Participants

Madam/Sir

REQUEST TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT FOR MASTERS DEGREE

You are hereby requested to participate in a research project that is undertaken as a requirement for a Master's degree with the University of Venda.

The title of the dissertation is: **Reading Romans 1:17 within the local Marapyane Lutheran community: *Tumelo* and *Tshiamiso* in African Biblical hermeneutics**

The study will consist of three phases namely:

Phase 1: Literature review

Phase 2: Empirical research done by way of scheduled contextual bible study sessions

It is in phase two of this study that requires the participation of the league members.

- The objective of the study is to establish local Biblical Hermeneutics of Tumelo and Tshiamiso in the light of liberation theology.
- The study aims to establish ways in which the local Lutherans in the community of Marapyane read Romans 1:17 in the light of the key biblical phrases Tumelo and Tshiamiso as a contribution to current research and studies on African Biblical hermeneutics.

The duration of each session should last for at least 60 to 70 minutes.

You are assured that participation and input obtained will be treated with care to maintain confidentiality. Your name will not be divulged in any way to maintain confidentiality. You are also assured that standard ethical obligation and consideration will be adhered to.

Lastly, participation in this research is voluntary. Should you decide to withdraw your participation at any time, you are free to do so.

Kind regards

Rev J.M. Magoro

Date

E-mail address : jckmagoro@gmail.com

Contact : 083 4660571

Appendix D

Informed consent

I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the investigator about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of the study. I have also received, read and understood the above written information (Participant information leaflet) regarding the study.

I am aware that the results of the study, including data about *Tumelo* and Tshiamiso in perspective would be relevant to the church in Marapyane.

I may, at any stage without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study. I had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.

Participants's Name _____ (please print)

Participant's signature _____ Date: _____

Investigator's name __Rev J.M Magoro (Please print)

Investigators signature _____ Date: _____

Appendix E

Contextual Bibles Study Questions

1. As a Lutheran church member are you familiar with the Doctrine of Justification by faith as to where it is situated in the Bible? If 'Yes' how do you understand it?
2. Have you ever found yourself reading Romans 1: 17? If yes how do you understand it?
3. According to you, does to live by faith mean you should not own anything material with the belief that faith will provide for you?
4. How do you think God justifies you in this life, is it by what you possess (material possessions), your social status or by faith?
5. Does justification by faith has any impact in your life?. If yes, how, and if no, why do you think it is like that?

Appendix F

The following designations were used for speakers in the bible discussions: *F*: Facilitator; *M*: league member; *G*: Group.

F: “We are now going to have a conversation on the text we just heard from Romans 1:16-17. My first question to all of us is; what do we think the text is about

F : First let us identify the key words in this texts

M: Tumelo (faith) and kgaugelo/tshiamiso (Justification)

F: What do u think this text is about?

M: I think this text means that we ought to have faith.

G: The text teaches us that it only the faithful who are saved but grace alone.

M : It doesn't make sense because Moruti it is in the bible where we are told that good works gets people closer to God.

F: I understand your concern or confusion mma, but I want us for the purpose of this study to focus on this text.

F: Who else has something to say about the text?

A pause for a moment with women now reading the text amongst themselves

M: the way I understand it, is much broader than the chosen text. In the garden of Eden, we see human beings committing a sin against God and it is from that sin that humanity was cursed. Therefore, human beings are controlled by sin and it is in this regard that human beings cannot be right before the Lord. The only way to be made right is if we have that God will purify us.

M: This then conforms what I was saying earlier that God is good we only need to do something that pleases him.

F : But then what is the role of faith if we are to add our good works?

M: So we are to have faith and wait unto the lord like Abraham did.

F : Now let me understand something my mothers. I see nowadays people doing strangle things like eating grass, being doomed or even selling their property because the “Man of God” said is a sign of faith. Now does faith mean that one has to lose both property and dignity.

M : Ngwanaka kana le re bontsha metlholo baruti ba matsatsi. Akere le baruti ba Lutere ba fodisa matsatsi a. We truly don’t know what is happening.

M : That is not the faith that we were introduced to be our grandparent. They told us that God is a God of Order. I mean Doom is for killing insect and grass is food for cows. Gore who gave them powers to change that order we really do not know.

F : interesting but people say your church is cold. Hence, they do all these things.

M : Maar ba bowa le bana ba batla kolobetso teng mo go tonyang moo. Translation.

M: It’s true people lose their dignity because of greed they want more money and more of everything. I mean the explanation that most of them give when asked about what is happening all they say is we are in another spiritual realm.

M : According to me faith should be compared to that of Abraham where one does not lose the little that God has given to him or her. Faith and hope has never made one loose what he/ she has.

F : ok if we say that then in God how does one get justified.

G: (started singing ke gaugetswe ke mong' aka). One of them then says: rona Moruti we are true Lutherans we do not take chances. We know that matters of absolution belong to God.

M: We hear people on a daily basis saying that faith without Good works is fruitless but I for one believe that there's nothing I can do besides present a repentant heart to God in absolution for the remission of our sin.

M: I do not want to sound out of tune but my child when God justifies it's like as if he closes his eyes and opens his ears only. He does not care about any social status or amount that one offers in church but the only thing that matters is how one repents after realizing that one has sinned.

F: It looks like this is your favourite topic.

F: Having discussed all that we have discussed do you think as Lutheran the notion of being Justified by faith has an impact on your daily live

M: Religion in general has an impact on all of us. One cannot subscribe to a religion and still claim that it doesn't bring about a change in how one views life.

M: To tell you the truth some of these sessions are really helpful to us as people who are just ordinary members. Because we are used to a bible study that is more like a sermon.

M: Moruti the fact is that we cannot live like as if we are pigs. You know a pig can be cleaned now but a few minutes later it will play again in the mud. The same applies to us Christians we cannot sin and cleansed then go back to sin again.

F: The purpose of this bible study was not to give instant solutions. Nonetheless my parents let me take this opportunity to thank you all for participating in this wonderful event even if I should say so myself. Maybe lets us sing a hymn.

F: ga nkake ka e latlha tumelo ya ka.(chorus sung)

After a brief silence, one the very old mothers who had earlier on identified herself as a widow for over fifteen years raised her hand up. Some of the mothers were by now becoming impatient and others were tired and hungry. Some of the women told her to keep her question till next Sunday. But the facilitator pleaded that we just hear her out. She was given the floor to talk.

M: “My question is to our son (referring to me), why have you a young man decided to come all the way from the Venda to have this conversation with the PWL of Neu Halle?

I must say for a moment I was caught spot on when the facilitator, I stood up and told her that I have come to converse with them based on the selected text.

The facilitator of the study session, chairlady brought the bible study to a close by asking the mothers to sing a closing song before one of them would then give us a closing prayer. Spontaneously, one of the mothers in-toned a song which they rest of the group joined in to sing enthusiastically.

After about three minutes of singing the facilitator took the closing prayer herself after which she wished every one safe journey home. She, however, reminded them that they would meet same time next Thursday.

ANALYSIS OF THE FIRST BIBLE STUDY SESSION

After presenting the data on the first session of the contextual bible studies, I now analyse some of the important responses of the women in the first session.

The prepared questions on the texts that were used in the bible studies were of two categories; text-based questions and socio-cultural or community-based questions. The text-based questions were directly related to the keywords in the texts. The community or socio-cultural based questions were an application of the text to the context of the participants; these questions invited a personal interpretation of the texts by the women. The aim here now is to try to make sense out of the new material obtained from the bible study session. The analyses on the first session seek to bring out what the information obtained from the fieldwork means in the context of the participants.

In contextualising the story of Romans 1:16-17 through sharing their personal life experiences, I got the impression that the women were sending a message across to the churches, mainly Pentecostals churches which preaches salvation for sale. For instance, some of the women said that the new culture of the churches of people doing strange

thing in order to show faith was just shocking to them. Yet, the fact that the women still made offering at Church even at that difficult time meant for them their gift to God had an extra value because it was a voluntary act.

In her contribution, a widow shared her story that revealed an interesting image of God. Occasionally the women laughed at some of the questions that the facilitator asked them. For instance, a thunderous laughter from the women greeted the question from the facilitator when she asked them if any of them was ever given money by their husband for offertory in Church. This laughter subtly revealed that the women had the economic power at that time of the year contrary to public opinion that the men always had the economic power.

SECOND CONTEXTUAL BIBLE STUDY SESSION WITH THE YOUTH

I realised that for members of Neu Halle, when it concerns church attendance, time is not an issue. For example, the church service takes up three to four hours. That is why some start with their daily chores and join in later; knowing that church normally takes more time.

The next Friday, as usual, the gatekeeper was up early to get his daily chores done before we prepared the church for the youth.

It was announced to the congregation that that Friday was going to be different for the youth so many were encouraged to come.

At the last session, I observed that the bible study was delayed in starting because most of the PWL did not observe time and some decided to cook the Semphemphe before coming to church. Since most of the youth were coming from school, we asked the local caterer to organise finger food for them, and it was announced in church as well. During the earthly ministry of Jesus, he often fed the crowds (Mark 6:30-44) or attended to their physical needs before preaching to them. I saw myself in a similar situation as Jesus in his ministry to women. It did not take long for the youth to gather, but we had to wait for them to finish taking their finger food before the session could start. Because time was no longer on our side the pastor called on the youth to stop eating so that we could get started and after we are done they could eat their food. I came in to plead with him to allow them to take in something first since the food was meant to be taken before the start of the bible study. He agreed but still asked them to hurry up. That Friday, the youth had turned out in their numbers for the bible studies. Probably my presence in the village could have accounted for this high turnout. There were over 46 youth members at the start of the meeting and some joined us as the discussion went on. As usual, with their daily schedule the youth started off by rehearsing the songs they were going to sing in church on Sunday.

The text for discussion that week was read in Setswana by the elder youth member, the general secretary of the group. Below is a transcription of the responses that were given by the youth after reading the text:

F : Now let's all read it out aloud together. Let us mark the key words. What are they?

M : Faith and justification

F : As you read through the text what do you think the text is about.?

Silence and now they read seriously as if I was not read before.

F : Remember that there is not right or wrong response.

M : This text is about the salvation of human beings and that there's nothing that human being can do to save themselves.

M : What I gather is that we shouldn't be ashamed of good news and that it is through our faith in God that we get to be given Salvation by God. It is by faith that we are able to experience the righteousness of God in our lives. Through faith God lives in us, He is by our side every step of the way that is why we are able to be righteous to other people. We are able to love, respect and be kind to everyone. We are able to love another as we have been commanded. Therefore, through faith, through hope we are able to focus on the positives of life as much as we may endure challenges but we know that God shall be merciful upon us and shower us with His grace. All in all, through faith we are able to let God be the God in our lives, we are able to acknowledge His presence in our lives...Faith, faith, faith.....

F : But what about all the good works like tithing, cleaning the church? Does that not please God and God will have mercy on you.?

M : You can do works, yes, but you cannot help God.

F : I see people selling all their belongings, some your age even giving away your God to the extent of retreating themselves from the world all in the name of Faith. Now, does to live by faith mean you should not own anything material with the belief that faith will provide for you?

M : Having Faith in God is about believing that He will provide for me to have something God has permitted it to happen. He reveals to us what He wants us to see or have. Therefore, if through faith in God I want to get a job or pass at school and if it is the will of God it shall happen. I can own anything but I should know that the material things I gather are blessings from God.

F : God cannot give people brains to design such beautiful things and then expect us not to use them as a sign of faith. If it's a test what kind of test is that?

All share in a huge laughter

F: How do you think God justifies you in this life, is it by what you possess (material possessions), your social status or by faith?

M : We are justified by the faith we have in God. The faith we have in God makes us do the good works. What good is it, if we perform good works and yet we don't have faith. Having faith means having hope. It's about having a relationship with God.

M : The material things that I own for me I think it's part of the bigger blessings from God. For example, in Genesis God says you shall reap what you sow. And after every hard work there's a reward.

F : If I understand what you are saying. It is your faith in God that really matters more than all the material wealth that you own. Now doesn't the material make one lose faith in God and start believing that all that he or she has is not because of God but rather hard work?.

G : No

M : It is only people who do not understand the role of both faith and God in our lives. But I am certain that if these two are understood properly without confusion. Then the material world will not be equated to God.

F : Does justification by faith has any impact in your life?. If yes, how, and if no, why do you think it is like that?

M: Yes, it does because of faith I am able to have a relationship with God no matter how broken I may be, because through hope, I believe that God shall rescue me, forgive me all my sins and see me as His child. First, I have to believe that there is God, to believe that He is able, that He is love and that I am nothing without God and I am everything with Him. It all starts with having a little faith. In that I can go through it all knowing that I have God or Christ by my side and that is faith

M : I do, because, for example, we believe that God loved us and it is that faith in Him and his love that we are able to do the same to others.

M : Yes, it does because faith becomes sufficient for me to live my life. This means that I do not have to do anything drastic to attain my salvation. When I say drastic I mean drinking your petrol and sleeping on the ground for you pastor to ride on me.

F : Now you want us to start a new discussion. So you are saying that these people who do these things do not consider the faith?.

M : I think that we first have to understand this new term that misleads people "deliverance". Because people do all these things because they want some sort of spiritual deliverance. Whereas for me it should not be like that.

F : Interesting. Go on.

M : When I am at school there is this song that we sing *Rock of ages cleft for me*. Now there is a stanza which says "nothing in my hand I bring simply to thy cross I cling". Unless

I do not understand this message better but this simply means that faith that Christ died for us is enough. We simply hold on to that. I hope I am not talking too much, but this issue makes me angry.

F : No, you are not in everything there's a solution. What do you think should be done to solve this problem?

M : I do not know anymore because we have tried education in religion, but you still find educated people moving around all in the search for justification or salvation. And I am talking about people who read and understand the bible but when it comes to reasoning with it they cannot. The only thing that we can do is wait for enlightenment.

F: Thank you very much everyone for such an insightful session.

The gatekeeper walks back in the church hall after being called back in.

Researcher: Thank you very much pastor for awarding me the opportunity to meet with such intelligent youth. Let us have a word from the pastor.

Gatekeeper: Well thank you. **Then he said some few announcements pertaining the church service.**

F: "Any other contribution from anyone? If no, then we can bring our discussion on today's text to a close. Who will volunteer to give us a closing song and prayer?" Spontaneously, one of the youth tuned a song which the whole group joined in sing enthusiastically. The song translates like this:

Father we adore you we lay our lives before you (2x)

Spirit we adore you we lay our lives before you

After a few minutes of singing and dancing, some of the youth members started pointing at me and saying, "Let our son pray for us, he has been too quiet during the discussion, so let him talk now".

APPENDIX G

Location of Marapyane on the JS Moroka Map

