

**REFORMING REFORMED LITURGY: AN AFRICAN DECOLONIAL STUDY OF
LITURGICAL PRACTICES IN THE BLACK REFORMED CHURCHES OF SOUTH
AFRICA (RCSA)**

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ABSTRACT

The introduction of Western Christianity has resulted in the colonisation of African societies, with little regard for the indigenous religious beliefs and knowledge systems of the people. A predicament confronts African Christians whereby adherence to integrity necessitates the observance of Western cultural customs in their religious practices, while simultaneously upholding their native African cultural heritage. This study focuses on the reading of African Decolonial literature, with the aim of Decolonising Christian Liturgy for the worship services in South African black Reformed churches, focusing on the order of worship in the African context. Research questions were used to unpack the problem in question and come up with strategies that help to Decolonise Reformed Liturgies and, in the process, enrich them with an African outlook.

The study was organised around four research models: exploratory, descriptive, normative, and action research. The population of interest for the study comprised male and female youths and adults at the black RCSA, specifically in Limpopo Province's Vhembe District in South Africa. The research utilises focus groups and interviews as methods of data collection. The purpose of these tools was to enhance the researcher's understanding of the participants' perspectives and viewpoints on the Reformed Order of Liturgy, as well as its potential for decolonisation. This has significant implications for the church's identity and the spiritual experiences of believers during worship.

Chapter One primarily aimed to introduce the process of reformation and decolonisation of Reformed Liturgy within an African setting, with a specific emphasis on the black Reformed Church in South Africa (RCSA). Chapter Two focused on presenting secondary material from multiple sources, specifically emphasising and demonstrating the historical development of the worship order in black Reformed churches. Moreover, it functioned as a manual for examining the decolonial viewpoint of black Reformed churches and striving to research methodologies used to obtain and analyse data as part of the research process. Chapter Four explored how missionaries utilised church rituals to achieve colonial domination over the African mindset. Furthermore, it examines the several approaches through which church ritual was used to establish control over the

African mindset. Chapter Five explored the reasons behind the need for the Reformed Liturgy to undergo reformation and decolonisation.

KEYWORDS

Black, Reformed, Reforming, Liturgy, African, Decolonial, colonisation, liturgical practices.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to all the Reformed churches' Preachers under the Soutpansberg Synod, South Africa.

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The researcher would like to express gratitude to the following peoples and institutions for making it possible for me to succeed in this endeavour:

- I am very thankful to the almighty God who called me into his ministry and gave me the necessary gifts, wisdom, and strength which enabled me to complete this study.
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- My brothers, Azwimpheleli, Lufuno, Tshifhiwa & Takalani were true brothers.

DECLARATION

I declare that the Thesis on Reforming Reformed Liturgy: An African Decolonial Study of Liturgical Practices in the black Reformed churches of South Africa (RCSA) is my work and the quotations used are true.



Signature.....

Date: 29 September 2024

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The historical account of the introduction of Christianity in South Africa is marked by contentiousness and a lack of understanding regarding African customs and traditions. Advocates of the Reformed Liturgy were successful in persuading Africans to relinquish their cultural identity and assimilate into the Western ideology. African communities adopted and integrated the religious practices and beliefs of the dominant Western culture, a process known as inculturation. In this environment, African individuals and groups began assimilating Western religious practices like as Christianity, Islam, and Judaism, languages such as English, French, and Portuguese, as well as traditions like Christmas and Easter. This frequently led to the repression or disappearance of their native cultural customs and identities. The success of the proponents of the Reformed Liturgy in this setting illustrates the influential role that dominant cultural elements have in transforming the cultural and religious landscape of minority communities. As African nations embraced Western religious practices, they underwent a significant transformation in their cultural identity, aligning themselves more closely with Western norms and ideals. Assimilation facilitated the integration of African individuals into Western society and concurrently led to a significant deterioration of their traditional cultural elements, hence emphasising the impact of inculturation. The African Reformed churches in South Africa need prompt reformation that accurately reflects their African identity and fosters a sense of pride in their heritage. The church must acknowledge that individuals who identify as African Reformed are of African descent and possess a distinct culture that holds significant personal value to them. Furthermore, their worldview may not necessarily align with that of Europe, including its values and cultures. Chan & Ananthram (2019:651) argued that being incorporated into the Christian faith meant, in all cases, the renunciation of one's indigenous faith and belief system.

Martin (2004:80-83) asserts that Western academic endeavours since the 17th century have consistently utilised the dehumanisation of Africans to demonstrate the

superiority of Western European cultures and beliefs. The African lifestyle, which diverged from that of the settlers, was deemed uncivilised and savage. The researcher has been motivated to conduct a study aimed at identifying potential solutions to rectify the current situation.

The introduction of the Gospel to the African population by Europeans and other Westerners was carried out without due consideration for contextualisation, resulting in the presentation of the Gospel within a Western framework.

Mofokeng (1987¹ : 35) argues that:

The African people have accepted a new religion and the Bible as a guide in their lives. They have been introduced to new European cultural values, norms, and attitudes and that their entire society has been changed.

Masondo (2015:94) states that when Africans converted to the new religion and accepted the Bible during their first encounters with missionaries, it signified that they had abandoned their traditional faith. In the eighteenth century, while African states were still independent, a conversion meant renouncing tradition in favour of Christianity. Missionaries present African culture, tradition, and practices in a negative light to inject missionary goals and underline the need for conversion.

The process of Decolonial reading involves African churches returning to their culture, values, and norms and determining the order in which Africans want to conduct worship services. Ramantswana (2017:5) makes this point when he writes about the call for Decolonisation:

The call for decolonisation, therefore, is a call to not run away from our own things or our own vhufa (heritage). The deliberate move not to abandon our own heritage is to reject the Western cultural imposition that places Western culture as the universal to which the rest must adhere.

¹ The researcher used the old publication paper to emphasize the argument and illustrate that missionaries used the Bible to conquer the African psyche and make African people shift away from their culture before 1987. In addition, this title recounts historical events that occurred long before the arrival of missionaries to our continent with Bible.

Indeed, Africans should commit to restoring their heritage in all aspects of life, including inside the church when they worship God. Africans should be proud of their norms and use these to formulate their Liturgy.

Africans' expressions of their beliefs demonstrated that they interacted with God through nature and served him in their unique way. Oral religious traditions tell Africans that there is God, as confirmed by Waweru (2007:180) "The African Bible was passed down through oral tradition. Although they were unable to read or write in the modern sense, they were able to personally experience God."

Since God has made himself known to all people, including Africans, through our consciousness and his mighty work of creation, Africans experience God personally. Traditionally, Africans knew God based on what was happening in nature, dreams, and visions. Our forefathers experienced God personally due to what happened during their time. This study, therefore, centred on the examination of African Decolonial literature to evaluate the importance of Reformed Liturgy within an African setting. Additionally, the study explored the potential integration of African customs and traditions into worship services. The researcher views the current Liturgy as something that forced black² Reformed churches in South Africa (RCSA)³ to turn away from their heritage, insights, proverbs, values, and their wisdom as Africans. Thus, the researcher utilised different theological theories and African writings to overcome the colonial mindset in the black RCSA. In many African communities, culture is a big part of people's daily lives and a big part of who they are, what they value, what they do, and what they believe.

² Within the scope of this research, the researcher utilises a classification system based on population registration to identify black ethnic groups affiliated with the black church. The researcher identifies the Zulu, Xhosa, Bapedi, North Sotho, Batswana, South Ndebele, Basotho, South Sotho, Vhavenda, Vhatsonga, and Swazi as the primary groups. These ethnic groups are members of the RCSA within Synod Soutpansberg.

³ In the context of this study, the black Reformed churches are referred to by the acronym RCSA, while the white Reformed churches in South Africa are referred to by the acronym GKSA.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation in Europe is where the black RCSA have pride because of their historical, confessional, and theological roots. The black RCSA implicitly inherited and carried the baggage of Euro-Western Christianity. The study concentrates on the problem of colonial-liturgical baggage that these churches acquired by accepting Euro-Western Christianity and still bear today. This research illuminates how African values, customs, and knowledge systems were damaged by the Euro-Westernisation of Christianity. Consequently, the churches that have been established within African communities bear a striking resemblance to Euro-Western churches in their liturgical practices, particularly the sequence of worship.

The Bible and the church's practice and Liturgy were implicated in the extension of modern European colonialism in Africa. Within the South African Reformed Congregations, the liturgical customs of "black" RCSA are predominantly congruent with those of Euro-Western or "white" Reformed churches. The liturgical practices provided by black RCSA are commonly acknowledged as customary and are not subject to inquiry or opposition. The influence of Christian missionaries in Africa has been significant, as they have played a pivotal role in the propagation and establishment of Christianity in the region. Consequently, their impact has been deeply ingrained in the psyche of African churches, shaping their beliefs and practices. It is imperative to acknowledge that liturgical practices are not exclusively rooted in biblical doctrines, but also function as an embodiment of the community's traditions, values, legacy, and ceremonies. Hence, it could be argued that Liturgy has the potential to attain the status of a dogma, a commanding principle that must be adhered to. The examination of Liturgy through an African Decolonial lens necessitates that religious institutions engage in introspection regarding their Liturgical practices, as failure to do so may result in the continuation of colonial practices and the marginalisation of indigenous cultures.

1.3 Significance of the study

The study is both academically and ecclesiastically relevant because the researcher recognised and discovered that no academic researchers currently focus on

Decolonising the Reformed Liturgy, specifically on the order of worship. Pastors and theologians⁴ wrote about Liturgy and Decolonisation, and concentrated on other issues relating to Decolonisation, but not Reformed Liturgy. People who wrote about the Liturgy did not focus on the order of the Liturgy. Hence the researcher hopes his study will close the existing gap. The study is also essential and appropriate as the black RCSA are still operating under the Liturgy recognised by the National Synod of the Reformed churches in the Netherlands, Dordrecht, 1618–1619.

It is, therefore, vital to research the Reformed Liturgy because it has been 406 years since the Liturgy was adopted. Consequently, it can be inferred that the Reformed Liturgy lacks a contextual, situational, traditional, or cultural connection to South Africa. Furthermore, this presents the possibility of decolonisation.

Clasen (2008:2) affirms this:

There are different aspects of cultural change that ask for liturgical reflection and liturgical reaction. The most obvious aspect is the cultural and ethnic diversity within the world church. Further, it is essential since European and Western cultures shaped Christianity in Africa.

Selhausen (2019:4) supports this notion as, based on his perspective, Christianity has transformed a religion that was predominantly shaped by European culture and politics to one that has gained significant global influence. As a result, as Africans, we should begin to define Christianity through the lens of South African culture and politics.

⁴ Donald Murrell Williams (2019) has who completed his doctoral thesis on the topic of the Decolonisation and Africanization of ordination within the Methodist church of Southern Africa.

Hilton Scott (2021) who write an article on “Lest We Forget”: A Post-apartheid Perspective on Remembering in Liturgy for Healing and Justice.

Daniela Gennrich (2017) who completed a master's degree on the Liturgy, Faith and Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights: A Study of Liturgical Reframing in the Anglican Church of Southern Africa.

Nico Vorster (2018) who published an article on the Reformed theology and ‘decolonised’ identity. Finding a grammar for peaceful coexistence.

Louis van der Riet and Wilhelm Verwoerd (2022) published an article about Diagnosing and dismantling South African whiteness: ‘white work’ in the Dutch Reformed Church.

1.4. Aims of the study

1.4.1. This study aims to explore the Decolonisation of Reformed Liturgy and its impact on African church worship services in South Africa. Specifically, it seeks to examine the role of Liturgy in imposing a colonial mindset on black churches and to highlight the importance of adopting an African worship order.

1.5. Objectives of the study

1.5.1. To examine the evolution of the order of worship from its inception in order to gain a deeper understanding of reformed liturgy.

1.5.2. To identify the significance of the current order of worship in the black RCSA to African culture.

1.5.3. To determine African practices that need to be incorporated in worship services in the black Reformed Churches in South Africa.

1.5.4. To illustrate the damaging contribution of Liturgy in the colonisation of the African churches and the African mind.

1.5.5. To explore how black RCSA can transform their liturgical practices and incorporate Africanism.

1.6. Research questions

The following research questions are divided into two parts: primary and secondary questions, to help the researcher achieve his goal:

1.6.1. *Primary research questions*

1.6.1.1. How is African culture of any significance to worship in African black Reformed churches in South Africa?

1.6.2. Secondary research questions

1.6.2. 1. How has the order of worship evolved since its inception, and what insights can this evolution provide into the deeper understanding of reformed liturgy?

1.6.2.2. How were church Liturgies applicable to worship services in the African context?

1.6.2.3. What need is there for the Reformed Liturgy to be reformed and decolonised?

1.6.2.4. How do the black Reformed churches in South Africa incorporate African culture in their worship services?

1.7. Literature review

Tshaka (2014:3-4) asserts that the initial encounter of the Khoi community with Christianity in Cape Town was through the Reformed denomination. Upon initiation into this religious belief, they promptly encountered the inconsistencies that typified it. These inconsistencies facilitated the missionaries' ability to establish colonialism in Africa under the guise of Christianity. The act of embracing Christianity entails a differentiation between African individuals and the early adherents of this religion. The presence of ambiguity prompted certain black theologians to scrutinise the validity of theology and scriptural doctrines that endorsed the oppression of black people. According to scholarly discourse, theologians such as Boesak⁵ utilised black theology as a tool to confront the apparent contradiction of being both black and reformed. Similarly, theologians like Tlhaagale⁶ sought to dispel the unfavourable connotations associated with African cultures in theological discussions and instead advocated for a theology that would meaningfully engage with these cultures.

⁵ Allan Aubrey Boesak, born on February 23, 1946, is a South African clergyman of the Dutch Reformed Church, a politician, and a prominent advocate against the apartheid system.

⁶ In his article titled Mission of the Church in Southern Africa: Critique of missionary activity.

Henry (2016:1) postulates that Christianity has always thrived in Africa within the framework of the empire, and its rapid expansion is well documented. The dissemination of Christianity throughout Africa presents both benefits and drawbacks. The remarkable cultural transformation witnessed in the past two centuries about the widespread propagation of Christianity across Africa and Asia is a noteworthy phenomenon in the annals of human history. Due, to its influence on Western culture and Christianity, as well as its transformative abilities, this is not without difficulties and criticism. Western Christianity's transformative abilities have resulted in the African culture being swallowed or overlooked. Through missionaries, Western Christianity was able to spread throughout Africa.

Masondo (2018: 209) asserts that Christian missionaries were used to colonise the mind, forcibly seize indigenous people's land, and alter African names, customs, traditions, and religions. The introduction of Western education by the empire in Africa caused the displacement of African modes of knowledge and native knowledge systems, resulting in what is commonly referred to as epistemic genocide. This was carried out under the guise of Western Christianity, according to Pillay (2018:1). The colonisation of Africa by missionaries and/or Western Christianity is to blame for the suppression of aspects of African culture such as traditional dress, polygamy, and ancestor worship, among others. For Reformed reflections to maintain an African identity, it is imperative that black Reformed Churches in South Africa exercise a discerning ear. This study aims to examine the scriptural guidance available to Christians residing in the African continent, to maintain a Reformed church that remains faithful to the scriptural teachings in the unique African context.

1.7.1. African religion

According to Ndemanu (2018:73), African religion (AR) is a belief and practice system indigenous to Africa and ingrained in the African peoples' culture and worldviews. Despite the diversity of its local forms, AR shares fundamental aspects that attest to its regional and continental cohesion.

The fundamental tenets of AR encompass the conviction in the existence of a solitary, omnipotent deity who serves as the origin of all existence and vitality.

Additionally, adherents of AR acknowledge the existence of an afterlife that transcends the perceptible realm (Mashau 2018:3). The community is the primary ground for the expression of religion. The community stays together because everyone shares the same moral and ethical values. One of these is the idea that life is a gift to the community, which means that each person in the community is responsible for and obligated to look out for the welfare of the other people in the community (Masondo 2018:210).

Moreover, numerous aspects are recognisable in augmented reality, including stories, poetry, melodies, and music. Specific values of this religion are transmitted from generation to generation through stories, and music plays a vital role in the big AR festivals, serving not only to entertain people but also the gods (Mbiti 2015:2-4).

Observing the passage through the life cycle through spiritual practice. In addition to birth ceremonies, weddings, and burials, the seasons and the annual calendar are typically marked by religious rites (Salamone 2004).

Unfortunately, there are no formal elements or theology in AR, however, it does affirm their presence informally, which is why this religion is uniquely African and continues to be practiced by Africans. In AR, no sacred texts exist that are comparable to those of the Christian faith. In other words, AR lacks sacred written texts.

Despite the absence of written writings, there exists a correlation between the gospel of Christ and African culture. The relationship between the gospel of Christ and African culture is commonly seen as a division, yet it can be more accurately described as a dynamic and harmonious meeting point. The gospel of Christ, with its all-encompassing message of love, salvation, and change, surpasses cultural limitations, offering a shared foundation for various cultural manifestations, including those originating from African customs. The gospel of Christ highlights universal principles such as love, justice, forgiveness, and the intrinsic dignity of each person. These ideas have universal applicability and are not limited to any specific culture, including African cultures. The teachings of Christ align closely with the African values of communalism, veneration of elders, and the significance of ethical uprightness. The gospel can be better understood and expressed within the particular setting of African culture, which is characterised by its rich customs, rituals,

and social structures. Instead of perceiving the gospel as an external imposition, it can be integrated within African cultural values. This entails the interpretation and application of Christian beliefs in manners that are significant and considerate to African cultural traditions. For example, the inclusion of communal prayer and storytelling, which are essential components of African culture, can enrich the shared experience of the Christian faith. The gospel aims to enhance cultural identities rather than eliminate them. African cultural practices that are in accordance with gospel ideals, such as reverence for life, communal assistance, and warm reception, might be acknowledged and incorporated into Christian worship and lifestyle. On the other hand, cultural elements that contradict the principles of the gospel, such as specific behaviours that degrade the value of human beings, can be reassessed and changed based on the teachings of Christ. The dynamic between the gospel and African culture is not unidirectional. The gospel has the power to change cultural traditions, and African culture can provide valuable perspectives and forms of expression to the worldwide Christian community. The African emphasis on community and interconnectivity can present a challenge to Christian practices that may exhibit excessive individualism, while also providing an opportunity for enrichment. Adopting the gospel does not require giving up one's African cultural identity. In contrast, the teachings of Christ may validate and rejoice in cultural variety. African Christians can confidently preserve their cultural identity while wholeheartedly embracing their faith in Christ, thereby enhancing the worldwide community of believers with their cultural contributions.

1.7.2 Current Situation

Christianity in Africa is a Westernised faith, as African cultural practices were considered superstitious and even demonised (Simango 2018:3). Statistically, the number of AR adherents has decreased due to conversions to these new African religions, but this is deceptive. People continue to be inspired by and value AR throughout their lives. These Christians practice and believe in a syncretistic faith (Simango 2018:7).

This means that AR cannot be ignored as it has a meaning to Africans. Western and European cultures have contributed to the present situation of irrelevant,

foreign Liturgy used by black RCSA due to colonisation of minds, apartheid policies, and Western and European culture. Within the regional framework of Southern Africa, there exists a phenomenon that can be extrapolated to other parts of the African continent, Simango (2018:1) correctly concluded:

Christianity has not been fully contextualised in Southern Africa – Christianity has spread widely in southern Africa, but it has not fully penetrated into the society and culture of the Africans.

For Christianity to be fully contextualised, there is a need to Decolonise it from Western theological outlooks to African perspectives.

1.7.3. Decoloniality of Western Christianity to the Black RCSA

Although colonialism and apartheid are no longer physically present, epistemic coloniality persists. The objective of this epistemological movement is to surpass and decolonise the Western canon and epistemology (Snyman 2015:277). The emergence of Decolonisation in South Africa is evidenced by the contestation of town, street, and public space nomenclature, the public and judicial handling of racism cases, and the visible protests by students against colonial vestiges, such as the Cecil John Rhodes statue situated on the University of Cape Town campus (Jansen & Walters 2022:2-3).

According to Carey (2011:75), the onus lies on the African Church to rectify the adverse effects resulting from the amalgamation of the empire and Western Christianity. The issues of "naming," "cleansing," "healing," and "salvation" necessitate attention within the context of African culture, epistemologies, and religious practices. For Christianity to flourish in Africa, the African Church must Decolonise and Africanise its message. Contextualising Christianity in Africa, including South Africa's black RCSA, remains a pressing task for the African Church. Mbembe (2016:18) maintains: "Today, the decolonizing project is back on the agenda worldwide".

It is time for Africans to reread and rewrite the order of worship in anticolonial and Decolonial ways. The significance of a Liturgy that is characterised as a mode of existence is underscored in this context.

1.7.4 Response to Western Christianity to the Black RCSA

The practice of Liturgy is not a process that is unchanging and unmoving. Ruth (2021:49) & Mashau (2018:1) assert that a multitude of events can influence the adaption or modification of liturgy. These events may be social, economic, cultural, or political, to name a few. This concept has its origins in tradition, and according to the researcher, it is not a static process but rather one that changes over time. According to Kruger & De Klerk (2017:2) in Liturgy, this can also be interpreted as meaning that liturgical worship is an ongoing process that seeks to align Liturgy with community or societal changes. Methodists in Cambodia, for instance, have found acceptance in a church that incorporates their cultural practices into worship, thereby creating a future place of worship that reflects both Christian and Cambodian identities. However, Kruger & De Klerk (2017:7) discovered that the opposite was true for Methodists in Singapore, South Korea, and Africa, who maintained the British Methodist style of worship. This is particularly true of white Methodist congregations that continue to utilise hymnals published by the British Methodist Connexion. Incorporating the church's history, traditions, theological teachings, and dogmas, however, vernacular worship hymnals have been adapted to local languages. The black RCSA is also capable of bringing African Liturgical worshipping. It is vital, as Korie (2009:3) maintains, that the congregation should not fail to accommodate what he called “cultural repertoires.” Religious communities that do not make provisions for the cultural repertoires of their members are likely to experience reduced success in the competitive religious landscape. Africa has its own culture worth comparing to Western and European cultures.

Idang (2015:7) supports this notion:

African culture is embedded in strong moral considerations. It has a system of various beliefs and customs which every individual ought to keep living long and to avoid bringing curses on them and others. Adultery, stealing, and other forms of immoral behaviour are strongly discouraged and whenever a suspected offender denies a charge brought against him, he would be taken to a soothsayer or made to take an oath for proof of innocence.

It is indeed impossible to separate Liturgy from culture. Both parties are interdependent, thus necessitating the missionaries to respect and uphold African culture while introducing the gospel to us as Africans.

1.7.5. Christianity in South Africa

Dutch and British colonialism brought Western Christianity and the Gospel to South Africa's shores. The colonisers were convinced that they were delivering Jesus Christ's teachings to this region of the world to establish civilisation West (2016:2-4). As a result, chaplains and missionaries were needed to spread the Gospel throughout South Africa. Chaplains served colonial officials, soldiers, and settlers, while missionaries evangelised indigenous and colonised people. Many long-held conventions of indigenous peoples, such as religious and cultural practises, were considered incompatible with the dominant culture and hence rejected. Maluleke & De Jong (2020:2) opines that, when missionaries arrived in South Africa, they found a religion valuable to Africans, but they ignored it and forced their own upon indigenous people. As a result, South Africa, like any other African colony, turned away from its tradition and African wisdom to conduct its affairs like the Western and European people. Church services are conducted in Western liturgies, which do not encompass African views. For example, the Methodist Church of Southern Africa's ordination ritual shows minimal evidence of the dress code of African people and cultures, with presbyters and preachers obliged to wear colonial-era suits or cassocks and stoles (Williams 2019:35) & (Vuyani 2017). This means that Western culture has colonised the minds of South African believers.

1.8. Definitions of the key concepts

1.8.1. Reformed Liturgy

Wepener (2009:21) defined Liturgy as:

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

According to the researcher, this definition is appropriate. God created man to honour Him regardless of whether one is Christian or non-believer. That is why in African culture, specifically the Vhavenda culture, before the advent of the Gospel, the Venda people used to have their way of worshipping their supreme being.

To take a decolonial viewpoint, the researcher will now offer a succinct explanation of liturgy that incorporates the perspectives of African scholars. Black academics define Reformed liturgy as a type of Christian worship that promotes simplicity, the importance of scripture, and God's supremacy, but also embraces elements of local cultural traditions. This liturgical practice dates back to the Protestant Reformation, when reformers sought to connect worship more closely with biblical teachings while eliminating rites and ceremonies, they deemed unnecessary. Black scholars emphasise the dual purpose of Reformed liturgy, which serves as a method of spiritual regeneration and, in some cases, a tool for cultural assimilation. This is especially evident when Western missionary attempts intersect with African spiritual traditions. Allan Boesak, a notable South African theologian, examines the impact of Reformed theology and liturgy in African cultures. Boesak highlights the power of Reformed liturgy to accomplish significant transformation by honestly and respectfully incorporating African cultural realities rather than imposing Western norms (Boesak 2009: 38-40). Kwame Bediako, a Ghanaian theologian, highlights the ability of African religious rituals to supplement Reformed liturgy, resulting in a more holistic and culturally appropriate worship experience (Bediako 1995:112-115).

1.8.2. Reforming

The concept of reforming is not novel within the Reformed churches and mainline churches, yet the mainline churches do not value or accept change. Nevertheless, the issue of reform is of utmost importance, especially when it comes to black RCSA. Worthen (2017:304) states that starting from the nineteenth century, the idea of reform gained lasting popularity in British culture. However, it seemed to have little connection to any theological origins. Hence, to enhance the structure of worship, it is imperative to relinquish British culture and substitute it with African culture. Koffeman (2015:1) states that *ecclesia reformanda quia reformata*, or *ecclesia reformata semper reformata*, is a well-recognised and widely embraced slogan in the

Reformed tradition of Protestantism. It serves as a practical motto while evaluating the advantages and disadvantages, the possibilities, and limitations of church revitalisation.

1.8.3. Africanisation

Horsthemke (2016:571) assert that:

Africanisation is generally seen to signal a (renewed) focus on Africa, on reclamation of what has been taken from Africa, and, as such, it forms part of post-colonialist, anti-racist discourse. Regarding knowledge, it comprises a focus on indigenous African knowledge and concerns simultaneously 'legitimation' and 'protection from exploitation' of this knowledge.

In this study, the researcher wants to explore the African decolonial option to restore the focus to Africa. Letsekha (2013:5) defines Africanisation as a deliberate shift in attention towards Africa and the restoration of what has been taken away from the continent. In the context of this study, it might be interpreted as a plea to modify African culture to ensure that individuals can worship God while also adjusting to the specific circumstances and situations of Africa.

1.8.4. Blackness

The researcher employs Frantz Fanon's Wright (2022) theory to elucidate the notion of blackness, which is seen in this study's emphasis on black churches. "*Black Skin, White Masks*" by Frantz Fanon examines the psychological and sociological impacts of being of African heritage in colonial environments, with a particular emphasis on the notion of blackness. Fanon & Markmann (2020:12) emphasise the internalised racism and identity challenges encountered by black people within oppressive political structures. Fanon underscores the significance of collective mobilisation in addressing institutional racism and attaining authentic equality. Fanon & Markmann (2020:326-335) underscore the importance of community solidarity and the restoration of African history to confront oppression and attain authentic equality. In addition to that, the Fanon notion of blackness is a potent instrument for comprehending the lived realities of individuals of African heritage in a global context

influenced by colonialism and racism. Blackness is not merely a physical attribute but rather a social and political classification that has been formed over many centuries of systematic mistreatment and prejudice. Through an examination of how blackness has been subjected to exclusion and marginalisation, Fanon presents a conceptual structure for comprehending the challenges and acts of defiance undertaken by black individuals across the globe. In essence, Fanon's notion of blackness compels us to reconsider our preconceived notions regarding race and authority and strive towards a society that is fair and impartial for everyone.

1.8.5. Colonisation

Sommer (2011:189) "it has been defined as domination of people from another culture, where it embraces all forms of imperial rule, colonial or not, which by definition it includes cultural difference the rulers and the ruled."

Margolin (2016:12) "Those colonial administrators and metropolitan ministers who talked about their mission *Civilis trice*, their ethical policy, as in the Netherlands, or to quote Rudyard Kipling, the "white man's burden", should be taken seriously. The effect on today's foreign language abilities is visible, especially in the former British or American colonies. The political and institutional legacies are also important. Essential notions such as civil society, rule of law, political plurality, press freedom, secularism, and independence of justice, came to Asia with colonisation, even if the colonial governments and elites did not always respect their own principles."

Mentzer (2014:231) "The changes in the celebration of what Calvin and the Reformed tradition called the Lord's supper, or simply the supper, flowed from new doctrinal positions and were readily apparent to all believers from the most intellectually sophisticated to the largely unlettered and uneducated worshipers who formed the vast majority of the faithful. Reformed theologians and ecclesiastical authorities regarded the revised ritual as a return to the pure practices of the primitive church."

1.8.6. Liturgical practices and order

Liturgical practices encompass the prescribed rites, ceremonies, and traditions that are observed by a religious group. These practices are frequently unique to a given

faith or denomination and have a vital function in the manifestation of religious ideas and worship. Liturgical practices encompass a range of activities, including reading prayers, singing hymns, employing symbols, and administering sacraments. These practices serve to establish a sacred environment and cultivate a profound spiritual bond among the participants (Gschwandtner 2022:2-3).

RCSA (1997:2) describes the order of worship as:

Liturgical order refers to the order and not to the sequence of events during a service. The sequence may be a facet of the order, but liturgical order is not synonymous with sequence, nor with formal liturgy. Order particularly includes harmony in the actions during a specific assembly, as well as the liturgical content of the actions.

1.8.7. Church service

A church service is often perceived as a fixed and unchanging concept as if it were a structured plan with a definite beginning and end. The inherent dynamism of an assembly in Spirit and truth, which involves the act of encountering and obeying God and engaging in wholehearted listening and worship, is not consistently realised. The collective action carried out by individuals at a gathering is referred to as worship, also called as Gottesdienst⁷ in German. The act of hearing and engaging in worship takes place within the confines of believers' homes and private chambers designated for prayer, serving as a seamless extension of their collective gathering as the faithful followers of God (RCSA 1997:2).

1.8.8. Inculturation

Akah (2020:1) asserts that Inculturation refers to the process through which a group modifies its cultural practices and beliefs to align with the prevailing norms and

⁷ The many Lutheran denominations use the term "Divine Service" (German: Gottesdienst) to refer to the Eucharistic liturgy. The origins of this practice can be traced back to the Pre-Tridentine Mass, which was modified by Martin Luther in his Formula missae ("Form of the Mass") of 1523 and his Deutsche Messe ("German Mass") of 1526. The Kirchenordnungen, sometimes known as "church orders," of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, expanded upon the tradition established by Luther.

values of a dominant culture. This process may entail adopting the language, practices, and traditions of the prevailing culture to fully assimilate and integrate into society. It is crucial to acknowledge that inculturation is not a unilateral process, as the dominant culture can also assimilate elements from the minority culture through a reciprocal flow of ideas and practices. Although the interchange of cultures might result in a society that is more varied and enhanced, it can also provide difficulties. For example, the minority culture may face resistance or persecution, and unique cultural practices may be lost during the integration process. The process of inculturation necessitates the presence of openness, respect, and understanding from all parties involved in order to genuinely accept and value the distinctive contributions that each culture brings (McEvoy 2022:274). Ultimately, the process of inculturation facilitates the development of a shared understanding and collaboration among different groups, thereby cultivating a feeling of belonging and inclusiveness for all individuals within a society. By embracing and celebrating the disparities among cultures, individuals can cultivate a more profound admiration for the practices, traditions, and viewpoints of others. By adopting inculturation, the RCSA may cultivate a more welcoming and inclusive environment that guarantees the esteem and respectful treatment of every individual, regardless of their origins. The intermingling of cultures can foster relationships and enrich interactions among individuals from different backgrounds, ultimately fostering a more peaceful and harmonious global community.

1.8.9. Theoretical/ conceptual framework

According to Madina and Mignolo (2009:15) decolonial option:

The decolonial option is an option among many already existing ones, struggling against the oppressions and abuses, against the ignorance of the rulers of the state and corporation managers and for the knowledge and wisdom of all those human beings, around the planet, that do not, cannot play the game, historically established by the rhetoric of modernity and the logic of coloniality.

Decolonisation indeed is one of many options available. However, this is the most plausible choice in the current position of the black. This is because African people are deeply rooted in their culture. This option would allow the churches to return to some of the fundamental aspects of the African culture. Moreover, it would enhance the quality of the worship service, especially regarding the order of worship. Researchers such as Kane (1978:247), Malisa & Missedja (2019:3), Pali (2024:4), Senekal and Lenz (2020), and le Grange (2016), argued that the colonial missionary/academic (theologian) was employed by the colonial system to manipulate the belief system, thought processes, and mindset of the indigenous population. This is pertinent to the setting of the Black RCSA, since these churches have been subjected to colonisation in all three dimensions: space, body, and mind. Unfortunately, the perpetuation of colonialism in all three levels is now carried out by African leaders in the Black Reformed churches, rather than colonial missionaries.

The concept of decoloniality has garnered significant scholarly interest worldwide, particularly in regions of the global south. However, there is a potential for the project to become elitist, as noted by (Ndhovu 2015:485). To ensure the success of this project, it is imperative to liberate it from the constraints imposed by academic scholars and instead provide a platform for the voices of individuals from marginalised communities to be amplified. The process of decolonization must extend to the realm of churches, where vestiges of Western practices persist despite efforts by Africans to inter-Africanism.

According to Ndhovu (2015: 489)

Decoloniality is born out of the realisation that ours is an asymmetrical world order that is sustained not only by colonial matrices of power but also by pedagogies and epistemologies of equilibrium that continue to produce alienated Africans who are socialised into hating the Africa that produced them, and liking the Europe and America that rejects them.

Regrettably, these stereotypes are not only pervasive in the public domain but also within ecclesiastical spheres. It is regrettable to acknowledge that the Dutch Reformed Church and other reformed churches provided support for racial segregation during the apartheid era. However, it is noteworthy that racial implications persist in certain church circles intermittently. The pervasive influence of

colonial power structures continues to impact both private and public discourses daily, underscoring the urgency of a decolonial shift in contemporary times. This initiative aims to provide African individuals with an opportunity to challenge the prevalence of Western hegemony across all aspects of society. Additionally, it seeks to promote the utilisation of African and decolonial epistemologies, thereby facilitating a redefinition of the identity and prospects of African communities.

1.9. Research paradigm

The paradigm of anti-positivism was utilised in the present study. Ayeni et al. (2019:21) argue that the anti-positivism paradigm is a theoretical framework that questions the idea that the methodologies used in natural sciences may be applied to research social phenomena. On the contrary, it highlights the significance of subjective interpretations, values, and beliefs in influencing human behaviour and society. The anti-positivism paradigm facilitates scholars in examining the ways in which individuals and groups perceive and engage in liturgy within their unique circumstances, both at the individual level and within the wider societal framework. Reformed liturgy research is enhanced by anti-positivism as it allows for the exploration of the subjective experiences and interpretations that individuals associate with liturgical rituals. This method offers a more comprehensive comprehension of how liturgy influences and is influenced by the faith and identity of the community. Anti-positivism enables a contextual examination of Reformed liturgy, acknowledging that liturgical practices can exhibit substantial variations in diverse cultural and historical contexts. This methodology facilitates the discovery of the various manifestations of Reformed worship and their alignment with the specific local environment.

In contemporary theological study, there has been a growing inclination towards the anti-positivism paradigm. This trend has gained traction, primarily due to scholars acknowledging the significance of comprehending religious experience through the lens of the persons who uphold those convictions. This approach places significant focus on the subjective construction of meaning and how ideas and practices are deeply rooted within social and cultural frameworks. Furthermore, the anti-positivism paradigm within the realm of theological research also recognises the existence of various interpretations and the heterogeneous religious encounters of both

individuals and groups. The approach opposes the acceptance of a unique, objective truth and instead promotes a comprehensive study of religion from multiple perspectives. This enables academics to gain a deeper appreciation for the intricacies and intricacies of diverse religious beliefs and practices. According to Tekin & Kotaman (2013:8) including this approach supported the researcher in establishing a theoretical framework, ensuring consistency and reliability, and enhancing communication.

1.9.1. Research methodology

The study utilised qualitative research methods to examine the process of decolonizing the Reformed Liturgy to make it more understandable, compassionate, meaningful, and inclusive for the African population. The qualitative approach was employed in this study on black reformed liturgy due to its capacity to provide a comprehensive understanding of individuals' experiences, viewpoints, and emotions within the community. Moreover, qualitative research provides the opportunity to be flexible and adaptable while exploring emerging themes and ideas that may occur during the study. This research was conducted within the subject area of Practical Theology, specifically focusing on the sub-disciplines of liturgics and homiletics. Practical theology, as delineated by scholars like Ganzevoort (2009) & Dreyer (2012), is an academic discipline that examines the manifestation of religion in ordinary existence through the application of a hermeneutical methodology. It emphasises the dynamic and contextual elements of religious practices. Ganzevoort describes this process as the investigation of the supernatural within the complexities of everyday life, focusing specifically on how religious beliefs and experiences are expressed in real, ordinary circumstances. Dreyer highlights the notable impact of practical theology in South Africa by addressing specific challenges within the local context and demonstrating its practical usefulness and significance. Practical theology serves as a bridge between doctrinal ideas and the practical aspects of religious activities, offering insights into the application and experience of faith in different cultural and social contexts. Swinton & Mowat (2006: 90) state that Practical Theology can be understood as a “critical, theological reflection in the practices of the Church as they interact with the practices of the world, to ensure and enable faithful participation in God’s redemptive practices in, to

and for the world". The proposed methodology aligns with the methodology of the EDNA model, as established by (Heitink, 1999) which is considered the most suitable and relevant approach for practical theology.

The EDNA model is based on evangelical theology and comprises four distinct fields of research within the realm of practical theology (Woodbridge 2014:89) There are four types of research: exploratory, descriptive, normative, and action (EDNA). Although the four subject areas are relatively distinct, they are yet interconnected. According to Casula, Rangarajan & Shields (2021:1703) exploratory research is a methodological approach that is primarily focused on the discovery and development, or construction, of a theory. The exploratory inquiry asks, what led to the current situation? Concerning the present investigation, a pertinent inquiry may be formulated as follows: What are the historical and traditional factors that have contributed to the Westernisation of religion? Descriptive research aims to generate a precise depiction or representation of a specific incident or phenomenon (Vaismoradi *et al.*, 2016:101). Research that is descriptive asks, what is occurring now? Based on the study under consideration, the question could be, 'What is the current state of African Liturgy in black RCSA? Normative research attempts to prescribe how things should be performed (Osmer 2008:4). The goal of normative research is to determine what should happen. Matthew 21:13 says "My house will be called a house of prayer." How can the black RCSA ensure that the house of worship is truly a "house of prayer?" for all peoples despite their cultural diversity? Action research is a professional inquiry method that can be used in any social setting (Woodbridge 2014:110). How should we respond? This is the question posed by action research. What measures ought to be taken to create a Decolonial Christian Liturgy that is suitable for the worship services of black RCSA, with a focus on the worship sequence within the African context? In other words, the EDNA model as a research approach focuses on explaining and altering practical situations. The EDNA model emphasises elucidating a pragmatic scenario, comprehending it through intercultural and theological discourse, and transforming it through revitalised praxis.

1.9.2. Population Sample and Criterion

The target group of the study comprised of male and female youths and adults at the black RCSA. In this study, the population to be considered is of 18 years and above. Many children under the age of eighteen years go to church because their parents want them to be in church (Casteel et al: 2021). They cannot make decisions as to what constitutes their religious beliefs. The researcher therefore excluded this group to avoid gathering distorted data. The study concentrated on black RCSA specifically in the Vhembe area. In addition, some of the older people in Vhembe District in Limpopo still remember what happened when the missionaries came to proclaim the Good News in South Africa. Therefore, the researcher wants to use the knowledge attained from these people to reform Reformed Liturgy is the aim of the population of interest for the study.

Casteel et al. (2021:343) maintain this in support of the notion of the researcher:

The population of interest for the study is comprised of the individuals, dyads, groups, organizations, or other entities one seeks to understand and to whom or to which the study results may be generalized or transferred and is the principal group about which the research is concerned.

1.9.3. Sampling procedure

The researcher intends to employ purposive or judgmental sampling techniques to collect data. The utilisation of purposive sampling is deemed as the most appropriate technique for the researcher to obtain comprehensive insights into the experiences and desires of congregants in Black Reformed Churches situated in South Africa. Purposive sampling is a commonly employed technique for obtaining targeted data from populations. The sample population for this study consists of Christians belonging to the black Reformed Church in South Africa. This approach ensures that the researcher obtains information from individuals who have firsthand experience with the practical implementation of reformed liturgical practices in their daily lives. The study cohort consists of fifteen black RCSA members. A focus group consisting of members of the church was interviewed, while the individual interview was

conducted to five participants. A representative sample was chosen from this population. The researcher was assisted in selecting subjects by the Elders, Deacons, and Reverend. The selected participants, old and new members, were included in the sample to obtain insights, understandings, criticisms, and appreciation from different sides of the congregation. Although every member of the congregation has the same, known, and equal chance of being picked, a deliberate effort will be undertaken to ensure that the responders chosen to have the needed attributes. Therefore, no names were written, only letters such as A, B, C, and D will be used to identify participants.

1.9.4. Data collection procedures

The researcher interacted with the focus groups including youths, and adults, and interviewed them to collect relevant data. The researcher selected this method because of its effectiveness in collecting appropriate information and because semi-structured or open-ended questioning techniques can be used to ascertain how appropriate the people found the worship in which they participate specifically on order. The researcher sought to understand the participant's views and thoughts about the Reformed order of Liturgy and find out how appropriate they found the worship in which they are currently participating. Twenty participants were informed of the time, date, and location of the study and how it should be conducted in groups and independently.

Gundumogula (2020:299) maintains that when he was writing about informing the participants about the research he said:

All the participants should be informed about the date, time, and venue of the focus group session in advance once it is confirmed so that everyone can plan it accordingly. Refreshments can be arranged as well, depending on the time and duration of the focus group sessions.

The whole focus group consisted of fifteen participants, and there were five individual interviews independently. Fatemeh, (2004:2) supports the notion of focus group interview by saying:

Focus groups could provide information about a range of ideas and feelings that individuals have about certain issues, as well as illuminating the differences in perspective between groups of individuals.

Freitas et al (1998:2) maintain a similar notion in support of this:

Focus Group is a type of in-depth interview accomplished in a group, whose meetings present characteristics defined with respect to the proposal, size, composition, and interview procedures.

The research methodology will involve the utilisation of semi-structured interviews as a means of gathering data. The data will be documented with a tape recorder, notebooks, and notated observations of the participants' responses to probing questions. When conducting qualitative research, it is the proper method that makes people more open and accessible.

Hancock et al. (2009:16) affirm this when they maintain that:

The open-ended nature of the questions posed defines the topic under investigation but provides opportunities for both interviewer and interviewee to discuss some topics in more detail.

A semi-structured interview provides the interviewer with a certain degree of flexibility to expand on a response or follow up on a line of inquiry initiated by the interviewee, as opposed to a structured interview.

1.9.5. Data analysis

According to Mulovhedzi (2017:79) Data analysis refers to:

the analysis of the data refers to using the data to answer the questions the research sets out to answer and is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass collected data.

The researcher used thematic content analysis to analyse and interpret qualitative data on the significance of the Reformed Liturgy to the African context. The researcher employed these approaches since they are in line with the most recent results in practical theology, promote authenticity, and do not rely on any prior beliefs

or assumptions. Thematic analysis is an excellent tool for exploratory research because it provides a systematic component of data analysis, allows the researcher to link the frequency of a topic with one or the entire content, and allows the researcher to dive into the data without preconceived notions, Swami (2021:2-4).

In this stage, the data findings will be analysed and interpreted. This analysis was conducted in conjunction with the research inquiry. The researcher will derive conclusions based on the findings and subsequently determine the validity of the hypothesis. A thorough examination of data holds significant importance as it directly impacts the efficacy of a research endeavour. According to Sim, *et al.* (2018:624). The process of data analysis involves deriving meaningful insights by actively engaging with the data and utilising it to not only reflect on the specific context under investigation but also to generate findings or ideas that are potentially applicable or intriguing in broader contexts. The involvement of data is a continuous and integral aspect of the research project, persisting throughout its duration.

The researcher shall peruse the interview responses and document preliminary observations regarding the data gathered. The subsequent stage involves the generation of preliminary codes. The process of coding involves the reduction of data into smaller units of meaning. Following the coding process, the researcher proceeded to identify themes, which refer to recurring patterns that encapsulate noteworthy or compelling aspects of the gathered data. The themes necessitate a comprehensive evaluation to determine their coherence. Subsequently, the ultimate stage of the process involves the meticulous honing of the themes, to ascertain the fundamental nature of each theme. Conclusions can be inferred, and recommendations can be formulated based on the established themes.

1.10. Delimitation of the study

This research was carried out in Limpopo Province's Vhembe District. This study falls under the purview of practical theology in the subdiscipline of liturgical studies, and it focuses on inculturation, delinking from "Euro-western Christianity" and connecting to an African decolonial perspective.

This study is limited to that because there has been very little research done on academic writings about liturgical reform in the African context and decolonisation of the liturgy; few black theologians have written a little on this subject.

Maluleke (1996:29-30) confirms this when he states:

The absence of African voices in the academy is double fold. They are physically absent insofar as they are so few in the institutions of higher learning in the country. The literature recommended and prescribed in the academic programmes is also scarce, except for a qualification in African languages, because it is possible to do any other degree in South Africa without reference to any work by any African scholar.

However, a black Reformed theologian further affirms this concept when he maintains that:

Letšosa (2005: iv)

One of the most important yet most undermined aspects of the Reformed Churches in the resort of Synod Midlands is its liturgy. Little study has been done on liturgy and few Church Councils make liturgy their concern.

The researcher fully agrees with the quotation above, that many black Reformed churches do not make Reformed liturgy their concern. Why do church councils, Classis⁸, Synods,⁹ and researchers not make Reformed liturgy their concern? What makes Reformed liturgy lose value, and what makes people view Reformed liturgy as something that is not essential? The researcher contends it is because the Liturgy that Reformed churches use lacks African flavour.

Khosa (2019:32), in her research titled *Liturgical Inculturation of Tsonga widow's mourning rituals*, further confirms that "there has been a lot of work carried on African rituals and practices, but very little research has been done on Tsonga

⁸ The classis is a convocation of adjacent ecclesiastical bodies, wherein each constituent church appoints a representative minister and elder, or two elders in the absence of a minister, to act on their behalf.

⁹ A synod is an assembly of neighbouring classis to which each classis delegates an equal number of Word ministers and elders as determined by the general synod.

people, especially on Tsonga widows within the South African context.” Although Khosa refers to the Tsonga people in Limpopo, the same applies to the Venda people, as Tsonga culture and Venda culture are similar in many ways, especially when approached from a Decolonial perspective.

The researcher attempted to bridge the existing research gap by focusing on the order of worship in South African black Reformed churches. Therefore, the study will restrict itself to engaging different African theories, voices, and critics concerning the order of worship from a Decolonial perspective and engaging the congregation about overcoming the colonial mindset.

1.11. Ethical considerations

Liturgies are private and personal experience that reveals a lot about congregations and participants. The participants received a comprehensive elucidation from the researcher regarding the nature of their consent, encompassing the possible advantages and disadvantages. The researcher employed a consent form that encompasses a succinct account of the study and research techniques, the possible advantages and hazards of participation, the duration of the study, the researcher's contact information, and a reaffirmation of the participant's entitlement to withdraw from the research endeavour at any point without incurring any adverse consequences. The participants are guaranteed anonymity as their personal information, including names and addresses, were collected, and no visual recording devices were employed.

Cacciattolo (2021:18) further stems the following in support of this when he states:

The importance of ensuring that individuals feel safe and are not coerced or deceived into participating in a research project is central to the ethical dimensions of the research process. Ethics, essentially, ethical research opens collaborative and respectful dialogue between the researcher and his or her participants.

The research was conducted confidentially and anonymously so that participants can share without fear of repercussions or doubt because they feel protected. Data collected during the research was treated with the utmost confidentiality and was be

divulged to unauthorized parties. The investigator refrains from disclosing the outcomes of the study in public venues.

This study was ethically sound and conducted with top-notch tools to ensure its validity and reliability. Sürücü & Maslakçi (2020: 2723) endorses this idea.

“Validity and reliability are two critical features that should be present, in every measurement instrument. Evaluating studies with scales that do not have any of these features will not be ethically correct. Evaluating studies with scales that do not have any of these features will, not be ethically correct.”

1.12. Outline of the Study

1.12.1 Chapter 1: The introduction and background to the study

In this chapter, the researcher presented a brief overview of this study, the problem statement, research questions, objectives, and the methodology used to collect data.

1.12.2. Chapter 2: A literature review on the Diachronic Historical overview of the Reformed ‘Ordo’ of worship in South Africa

The history of the order of worship of the black Reformed churches was explored in depth in this research by exploring a significant historical period. The chapter served as a guide in analysing the Decolonial perspective of black Reformed churches and attempting to understand what was happening throughout history, enabling a better understanding of today's order of Reformed worship.

1.12.3 Chapter 3: Research Methodology

In this chapter, the methodology introduced was discussed thoroughly.

1.12.4. Chapter 4: The influence of church Liturgy on the colonialism of the African mindset

In this chapter, the researcher thoroughly discussed how missionaries use church Liturgy to colonise the African mind. Studying how the church Liturgy was used to colonise African minds assisted the black Reformed churches of South Africa in producing a Liturgy that can transform lives by turning them entirely to

Christ in their context, culture, and time. The researcher examined several theories used to colonise the African mind.

1.12.5. Chapter 5: The necessity of reforming and decolonising the Reformed liturgy

This chapter discussed the theories of African theologians such as Ramantswana Hulisani, Justin Ukpong, Achille Joseph Mbembe, Rantsoa Letšosa, and Tinyiko Maluleke to a better understanding of whether Reformed Liturgy can be Reformed and Decolonized.

1.12.6. Chapter 6: Empirical Data: Reforming Reformed Liturgy on a Decolonial Perspective

In this chapter, the researcher provided the interview results and analysed and interpreted them to reform Reformed Liturgy from a Decolonial perspective.

1.12.7. Chapter 7: Discussions, Findings and Recommendations

This chapter contains research findings, recommendations, and potential areas for the research.

1.13. Conclusion

The focus of this study was to examine the utilisation of Decolonised African literature and Decolonising Christian Liturgy in the worship services of black Reformed churches in South Africa. The study placed particular emphasis on the worship order within the African context. Western Christian colonisation of Africa ignored African religious practices and indigenous knowledge systems. To decolonize Reformed liturgies from an African perspective, we could use research questions to better describe the issue and propose solutions. The EDNA model of methodology is a useful tool that can assist the researcher in achieving the objectives of the study.

CHAPTER 2

A LITERATURE REVIEW ON THE DIACHRONIC HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE REFORMED 'ORDO' OF WORSHIP IN SOUTH AFRICA

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter, a significant period in history was explored in detail to understand the history of the order of Reformed worship. The purpose is to analyse the development of the order of worship from its beginning in order to enhance comprehension of reformed liturgy. The previous chapter of the study was a crucial component of the general introduction because it highlighted the research problems and gaps. This also paved the way for this current chapter, the literature review, which sought to show secondary data regarding the Diachronic Historical overview of the Reformed "Ordo"¹⁰ of worship in South Africa.

This chapter attained secondary data from various sources that were meant to highlight and illustrate the history of the order of worship in the Black Reformed churches. The chapter served as a guide for analysing the Decolonial perspective of black Reformed churches and attempting to comprehend what occurred throughout history, thereby facilitating a better comprehension of the current Reformed worship order.

The researcher will additionally explore the historical aspects of the Old and New Testaments, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and humanism. This is significant because the actions of reformers like Martin Luther and John Calvin, in their efforts to reform the church, specifically in terms of the order of worship, are based on the principles established in the Old and New Testaments. These reformers sought to address the excessive practices that had developed during the Middle Ages, Renaissance, and Humanism.

2.2. The order of worship in the Old and New Testament

2.2.1. *Oder of worship in the Old Testament*

¹⁰ Ordo is a Latin word meaning order, is a guide to the order of prayer in the Liturgy of the Hours and the celebration of the Eucharist.

The worship practices in the Old Testament consisted of many rituals and offerings that were mandated by God (Gane 2022:5). In the Old Testament, worship sessions commonly commenced with the presentation of sacrifices and burnt offerings as a means of seeking forgiveness for sins and demonstrating reverence towards God (Webber 1994:14-15). Subsequently, prayers, songs, and scripture readings ensued. Worship rites in the Old Testament frequently began with the presentation of sacrifices and burned offerings to atone for sins and demonstrate devotion to God (Webber 1994: 14-15). Prayers, hymns, and scriptural readings followed. The service would frequently feature the recitation of blessings and the sounding of trumpets. In addition, at the conclusion of the worship rite, the priests would pronounce a benediction or blessing. Overall, the worship session was about reverence, thanksgiving, and seeking God's forgiveness. In addition to formal rituals and ceremonies, Old Testament worship incorporates personal acts of devotion such as fasting, sin confession, and praise and thanksgiving offerings. The people would come together as a community to worship God, seeking His presence and guidance in their lives. The worship service was a sacred time apart from their regular activities, a time to focus solely on their relationship with God and seek His favour and blessing (Long 2001: 65). It was a time of humility and surrender as they realised their reliance on God and the importance of His mercy and grace. The worship service in the Old Testament showed the people's deep faith and devotion to God, allowing them to express their love and reverence for the Almighty (Martin 1982). During this time, people demonstrated humility and acceptance, acknowledging their dependency on God and their need for His compassion and favour. The worship session in the Old Testament was a manifestation of the people's deep devotion and dedication to God, giving them a way to express their affection and veneration for the Supreme Being (Martin 1982). The priests and Levites conducted these rituals either in the tabernacle or, later, in the temple. The position of priests and Levites in ancient Israel was of utmost significance in executing instructions for worship and sacrifices (Watts 2007:11). The priests were responsible for conducting a multitude of rituals and offering sacrifices to God on behalf of the people. They were perceived as the mediators between the divine and the populace, assuring the proper and organised execution of devotion.

In addition, the Levites played a crucial role in supporting priests and safeguarding holy sites such as the tabernacle or temple (Hundley 2013:754). They were responsible for tasks like protecting the shrine, vocalising praises, and performing their time with popular musical instruments during religious ceremonies. These technologies played a crucial role in enhancing the spiritual experiences of worshippers. The harp and lyre produced harmonious melodies, establishing a tranquil and respectful atmosphere. Trumpets, known for their powerful and grandiose sound, were utilised to announce significant occasions and signal the divine presence. Cymbals introduced a rhythmic element to the worship, infusing it with vigour and zeal. At these ancient gatherings, these instruments brought the assembly together in their dedication and created a spiritual atmosphere (Armstrong 2006).

To purify the individuals from their wrongdoings, the process of worship typically commenced with the act of presenting sacrifices, such as burned offerings or sin offerings (Routledge 2009:17). Subsequently, individuals would actively pursue divine guidance and sagacity using supplication, melodic expressions, and perusing sacred texts. At the end of the worship service, the priests would often grant the assembly God's favour and protection, as described in Numbers 6:22–27.

2.2.2. Order of worship in the New Testament

The order of worship in the New Testament is contingent upon the specific Christian culture being observed, such as the customs of the Greeks or Jews (DeSilva 2022). Common elements include the vocalisation of hymns and prayers, the recitation of scripture, and the presentation of a sermon. Moreover, the New Testament places significant emphasis on the Eucharist, also known as Holy Communion, as a recurring and prominent element in worship services (DeSilva 2022:1). The New Testament does not prescribe a particular sequence of worship, but rather underscores the need for congregating as Christians to venerate and pay homage to God. It also underlines the value of worshipping with a genuine and humble heart, in spirit and truth, rather than merely engaging in religious ceremonies.

2.3. The Order of Worship during the Middle Ages

In the Middle Ages, the Catholic Church exerted significant influence over how worship was conducted. In the Middle Ages, the Catholic Church played a pivotal role in establishing the hierarchy of liturgical practices. The establishment implemented a standardised form of worship and delineated specific ceremonies and traditions that were to be adhered to by both the clergy and the congregation (Clark 2014 & Ingalls 2018:207). According to (Roser 1995:52) worship services during the Middle Ages had many components such as invocation, confession and absolution, kyrie, hymns of praise, word of God and sermon, credo, and offertory. Each of these elements played a crucial role in a medieval worship service, offering a distinct purpose in guiding the congregation along their spiritual journey. The Invocation summoned the presence of God, while Confession and Absolution allowed worshippers to express remorse and ask forgiveness. The Kyrie entreated for clemency, while the Hymn of Praise accentuated dedication and adoration. The Word of God and Sermon imparted guidance and knowledge, the Creed affirmed the church's doctrines, and the Offertory allowed worshippers to offer their gifts and sacrifices to God. These variables converged to offer participants a thorough and profound worship experience.

During this era, the order of worship was meticulously structured and focused on the sacraments, with the Mass being the primary form of worship (Theuws 2004; Gibson & Earngey 2018:2). The Mass, which was the central religious ceremony in the Middle Ages, was characterised by its elaborate and detailed rituals, encompassing various rites, chants, and prayers. The priest would contribute garments and perform the holy ceremonies on the altar, while the assembly vocalised hymns and repeated answers. The Mass served as both a communal meeting and a religious ceremony, attracting individuals from many backgrounds who assembled to engage in prayer and pursue inner tranquillity. It served as a cohesive element in medieval society, strengthening the church's influence and authority. Moreover, all Christians needed to participate in the Mass, and any reluctance to comply may lead to disciplinary measures or being ostracised from society. The Church's influence fostered homogeneity in worship ceremonies across diverse regions and bolstered

the spiritual and cultural cohesion of medieval society (Horton 2017 & Root 2024:460).

2.4. The order of worship during Renaissance and Humanism

During the Renaissance and Humanism, there was a shift in the order of worship towards a more anthropocentric approach (Odumegwu et al. 2022:158). The era of the medieval period, characterised by a strong focus on God and the church, had long passed. Conversely, the Renaissance and humanism placed significant importance on the individual and their connection with the divine (Melé 2016 & Monfasani 2016:109). Consequently, there was an emergence of a more varied and all-encompassing style of religious devotion, placing greater importance on establishing a connection with the divine through the mediums of music, art, and literature. Furthermore, the reformers started incorporating additional secular elements into the hierarchy, acknowledging the significance of human accomplishments and intellect.

2.5. The Reformed Church, order of worship in Europe's Protestant Reformation in the 15-16th century

The researcher determined this period following Irwin's (2005) critique of the book: *Worship in Medieval and Modern Europe: Change and Continuity in Religious Practice*. The Catholic Historical Review.

Martin Luther is widely regarded as having started the Reformation with the publication of the 95 Theses on October 31, 1517, at the door of Wittenberg. Pope Leo X excommunicated him until January 1521 (Greer 2021:77). The Diet of Worms¹¹ in May 1521 condemned Luther and officially prohibited Holy Roman Empire citizens from defending or propagating his ideas (Philpott 2000:214). The spread of Gutenberg's printing press¹² enabled the rapid dissemination of vernacular

¹¹ In 1521, the Diet of Worms was a formal gathering of the leaders of the Holy Roman Empire. It was convened by Emperor Charles V in Imperial Free City of Worms.

¹²Gutenberg printing press was invented by Johannes Gutenberg in the 1450s and revolutionized how information was distributed throughout Europe. His printing press let information spread faster than ever before.

religious materials (Hippe 2015:7-8). The content of these 95 theses influences subsequent reformers such as Huldrych Zwingli¹³, Martin Bucer¹⁴, John Oecolampadius¹⁵, John Calvin¹⁶, and others. As the 95th thesis reveals, this naturally means that the reformation that occurred in Germany had the greatest positive impact on the order of worship in Reformed churches.

According to Marabello (2021:11-14) in 1518, Huldrych Zwingli began his work to reform worship in Zurich where made a lot of significant changes. The 1519 establishment of his Sunday service appears to have been derived from a Liturgy known as "Prone",¹⁷ a religious ceremony that took place in the late medieval period either before, during, or following the celebration of the Mass. The religious service included several elements such as a recitation of The Lord's Prayer and Hail Mary, delivery of a sermon, a memorial for the deceased individuals from the previous week, another recitation of The Lord's Prayer and Hail Mary, recitation of the Apostles' Creed, the Decalogue, confession, and absolution.

Martin Bucer, a prominent reformer hailing from Strasbourg, that adherence to the Bible is a crucial aspect of appropriate worship (Burnett 2001:114). As a result, the individual endeavoured to remove several of the theatrical rituals that had been integrated into the Liturgy. The individual's religious practices were limited to the acts

¹³ Huldrych or Ulrich Zwingli, a prominent figure in the Swiss Reformation, was born on January 1, 1484, during a period of burgeoning Swiss nationalism and mounting disapproval of the Swiss mercenary model.

¹⁴ Martin Bucer, a German Protestant reformer who resided in Strasbourg, exerted a significant influence on the development of Lutheran, Calvinist, and Anglican doctrines and practices.

¹⁵ Oecolampadius, a prominent Protestant theologian, engaged in discussions with notable figures such as Johannes Eck and Philipp Melanchthon, and held the esteemed position of Professor of Theology at the University of Basel.

¹⁶ John Calvin was a French theologian, pastor and reformer in Geneva during the Protestant Reformation.

¹⁷The Prone originated in the Middle Ages as a vernacular service in extra-liturgical settings and was later incorporated into the Latin High Mass on Sundays and other feast days. In its more developed form, the Prone included a translation or paraphrase of the Gospel reading, sometimes with an explanation, a catechetical instruction based on the creed, Lord's Prayer, or Commandments, farewell prayers, and notification of banks and other announcements.

of preaching, providing charitable donations, participating in the Eucharist, and engaging in prayer. Although the Bible does not offer comprehensive liturgical guidance. Basel's John Oecolampadius believed that adherence to biblical principles is imperative for the guidance of all forms of worship (Poythress 2019:295-293). As per his perspective, religious worship must be uncomplicated and devoid of any ostentatious display.

Osei-Bonsu (2013:85) asserts that William Farel¹⁸ influenced John Calvin's worship ideas during his time in Strasbourg beginning in 1538, upon his arrival in Geneva in 1536, it was noted that a Zwinglian reformation had already been initiated. The Liturgy he practiced placed great emphasis on the worshipper's unworthiness and included the singing of the Ten Commandments every Sunday. It is believed that this practice was influenced by Martin Bucer. The prayers were composed to provide instruction, thereby rendering the service highly informative, according to Zager (2006:87-90). The individual in question did not place a strong emphasis on the requirement for explicit biblical precedents in all facets of worship. Instead, he adopted the early church as a paradigm and retained only those elements that he considered to be instructive. The complete Liturgical ceremony was executed in the vernacular of the assembly, and active involvement in the supplications was promoted. During that period, Geneva under Calvin's leadership was regarded as the archetype for all Reformed worship practices on the European continent. During the period spanning from the mid-15th century to the conclusion of the 16th century, Reformed churches universally employed a predetermined Liturgy. As a result, Calvin's work had a great impact on Europe's Protestantism specifically in Dutch Reformed in Germany, particularly in terms of worship order. The Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) was formed by Peter Datheen¹⁹, who was a Dutch refugee who lived in the city of Frenkethal, Germany (Klaassens 2006:463).

Datheen and other Dutch nationals had fled their native country as they faced prosecution for political crimes and first settled in England before they migrated

¹⁸ William Farel, a French evangelist and Protestant reformer, established the Calvinist Church in the Principality of Neuchatel, the Republic of Geneva, and the cantons of Bern and Vaud in Switzerland.

¹⁹ Peter Datheen was a Dutch Calvinist theologian who greatly improved the liturgy and polity of the Reformed Church during the 16th century.

again in the year 1553 after Queen Mary I, had the throne; here they moved to Germany, first settling in an area called the Palatinate, according to (Calitz 2011:178-181). In Palatinate, Datheen, in the year 1563, started to form a church by first paraphrasing the Genevan Psalter, which was completed using the French language only 4 years earlier, and Datheen further translated into Dutch the church order that was adopted in Palatinate (Jongsma 2021:131) The Dutch church order that was adopted in the Palatinate was made up mainly of the Heidelberg Catechism and liturgical material known as the Palatinate Liturgy.

Zacharias Ursinus and Caspar Olevianus wrote the Palatinate Liturgy in 1563. This was accomplished at the request of Frederick III, elector of the Palatinate, who desired to unite Calvinists, Zwinglians, and Lutherans in his region according to Clemens (1995:123-125). The Palatine Liturgy was compiled based on the Liturgy of the Dutch exile congregation in London, primarily summarized in Micron's *De Christelycke* (1554)²⁰ and later expanded in the *Forma ac ratio* of Johannes a Lasco (1555).²¹ Thus, the Dutch Liturgy from London mainly represented the teachings of the Zwinglians, who were also influenced by the Sacramentarian's²² continental teachings. Therefore, the Palatine Liturgy adopted by the Dutch provided an outline for a Sunday morning preaching service in which the sermon was followed by long prayers, and a single psalm was sung by the congregation. Further, the second Sunday service was mainly for teaching purposes, also encompassing the teaching of the 10 commandments as well as the Apostle's Creed, and the Lord's Supper was administered once a month (C.F. Pettegree 1987:223-252).

In the year 1556, Datheen then translated the Palatinate Liturgy into Dutch, making a handful of changes before publishing his work with the help of his Dutch Psalter (Heusinkveld 1978:61). The use of Datheen's Psalmen by the National Reformed

²⁰ Catechism, that is the Christian doctrine, which all Christians ought to know.

²¹ Polish Calvinist reformer Johannes a Lasco wrote his *Forma Ac ratio* in 1555. He became known to the English-speaking world by the Anglicized form John à Lasco thanks to his significant work in England (1548–1553) during the English Reformation. (Or, less commonly, John Laski).

²² The individuals who rejected the notion of the presence of Christ's body and blood in the Eucharist, commonly known as "Sacramentarians," were prominent among the Reformers.

Synod of Wesel in 1568 paved the way for Dutch Reformed congregations to accept the prayers and formularies from the Palatinate. The following years saw changes in the Liturgy that was adopted by Datheen, with the Provincial Synod of Dordrecht in the year 1574 decreeing that the Lord's Supper be done once every two months (Faber 2019:17 & Pettegree 1986).

Further, other changes saw the lengthy confession of sins after the sermon replaced by the prayers of thanksgiving, and the 10 commandments were moved from the second service to the first service. The Great Synod of Dordrecht therefore ended the formal revision in 1619 and made sure no further changes to the Dutch Reformed Liturgy were made until revisions were made in the 20th century. This is confirmed by Meeter (1990:53) when he maintains that:

"The 1619 National Synod of Dordrecht ("Dort") established the final and Standard form of the Netherlands Liturgy which, apart from textual corruptions, would remain unchanged for another three centuries. It came to be used wherever Dutch colonies were established throughout the world, in Ceylon, Indonesia, South Africa, and South and North America".

2.6. An Early 17th Century service

The researcher chose this date following (Toivo, 2017) who wrote on: Protestantism, Modernity, and the Power of Penetration: Saints and Sacrifice in 17th Century Lutheran Finland.

According to Hageman (2004:23-29), the 17th century saw changes starting to develop in the Dutch Reformed church about the practices that were done in the Sunday morning services. It was mandatory that people start bringing their Bibles to church services, and people in the church were also expected to sing together the church psalms from the Datheen Psalter. The confession of sins then followed, and it was also followed by the minister reading and preaching scriptures from the Bible. After the sermon came a lengthy prayer that was led by the dominees, and this prayer involved both thanksgiving and intercession for the needs of Christendom. A

look at the morning services in the 17th century at the Dutch Reformed church showed that the two long prayers were derived from the Datheen's Dutch Reformed Liturgy, and the singing of the psalms by the church members can also be viewed as forms of prayers (Klaassens 1996:264-267). Naturally, the prayers of this era were common prayers that refer to prayers of the people that can either be spoken or sung.

Further, it can also be noted that the music that was sung in the morning services was for all the people, as there was no choir, and everyone was expected to sing in church at the same time. Additionally, the order of the morning service was not fixed, as the preliminary singing of psalms and the initial scripture reading were not included in the service proper. The Lord's Supper was now observed once every 3 months, appended to the morning service, and baptism was administered as needed (Nichols 2014:11-16).

2.7. The 18th Century Witnessed a Transition from a State of Passivity to one of Turmoil

The researcher chose this date following (Smith 1990) who wrote the review on Classifying protestant denominations. Review of Religious Research.

In the early 18th century, extemporaneous prayers replaced the formal prayers in Dutch Liturgy, and this was influenced by the Pietist teachings of Jean de Labadie²³ and his disciples (Maponya 2013). Therefore, by the mid-18th century, free prayers had become common in the church and had increasingly become the standard by which the piety of the minister was judged. This means that the spoken prayers became entirely the domain of the clergy, and there were no longer the corporate prayers of the congregation. Besides singing psalms, people in the church during this period had a passive role in worshipping God, and the pattern in the Dutch Reformed became preacher centered as the preacher worshiped on behalf of the people (Thayer & Whitford 2012:157).

²³ French Pietist Jean de Labadie lived in the 17th century. Initially a Jesuit priest, he joined the Reformed Church in 1650 before founding the group that would later come to be known as the Labadists.

The late 18th century also saw slight changes in the morning services at the Dutch Reformed Church; a prelude was now being played, and during this time people would be allowed to meditate or pray in silence (Karant-Nunn 2012:101). The dominee and elders would enter the church, which allowed the service to begin properly with the votum and the greeting, all done solely by the minister, and all people would stand up to sing the psalm. A prayer was then made, followed by another psalm during which the offerings of the people were collected by the deacons, and this was followed by the reading of the scripture by the domineer on which the sermon was based, and he then delivered the sermon. The dominee would ask the congregation to sing another psalm midway and a shorter prayer of thanksgiving, as well as another psalm that concludes the service (Manala 2012:215).

The minister then read the formulary of the Lord's Supper from the pulpit, adding meaningfully to the fencing table as he named the most popular sins that prevailed among the church members (Guder 2003). The minister also spoke the Lord's Prayer and the Apostle's Creed while all church members kept silent. Most adults in the church fearful the Lord's Supper and were deeply aware of their sins; therefore, only a handful came forward to sit on the communion table to receive the element. The service therefore ended with the reading of Psalm 103, prayer, and benediction, all spoken by the minister, and the people left the church silently during an organ postlude (Powell 1994:74-76).

2.8. The Reformed Order of Worship in Dutch Reformed Worship in the Netherlands, 1618–1619, Dordrecht

The researcher chose this date following (Van Doodewaard 2007) who wrote the: Remonstrants, Contra-remonstrants and the Synod of Dort (1618-1619): the religious history of the early Dutch Republic.

After Napoleon took over the Netherlands, the church was in disarray, so the Dutch Reformed Church moved there. In 1816, Dutch King William I turned the Reformed Church into a national church according to Bos (2011:115-116). Historical records in

the Netherlands revealed that the National Synod, which was held in the city of Dordrecht in the country's 1618–1619, was the catalyst for the adoption of the Dutch Reformed Church Order and Liturgy of Dordt 1619 on May 28, 1619. Beginning on November 13, 1618, the Synod lasted for about six months. To resolve a dispute in the Dutch churches brought on by the emergence of Arminianism, the Synod of Dordt was held (Spaans 2011:335 & Wood 2018).

Nonetheless, it was also noted that during the years 1618–1619 in Dordrecht, the Netherlands, there was heavy government involvement in the churches in the country, which also influenced the order of worship in DRC (Barclay 2017). Between 1586 and 1619, the Dutch society in the Netherlands was split between the more tolerant "rekkelijken"²⁴ who feared confessional coercion by the church and desired the protection of the authorities against such a possibility, and the strict Calvinists, who supported a strict interpretation of the confession and were opposed to state interference in matters of the church (van den Brink & Dankbaar 1967).

Through the so-called "Scherpe Resolutie"²⁵ in 1617, the states of Holland declared their opposition to a national synod. Van den Brink & Dankbaar sent out city troops to maintain order in the city. In July 1618, Prince Maurits overthrew the government with the help of the States-General after realizing the threat this event posed to the union. On May 13, 1619, Van Oldenbarneveldt was executed, and Grotius was given a life sentence in Loevestein before he escaped in 1621. The States-General was now free to convene the National Synod of Dort in 1618–1619. The Synod victory for the Contra-Remonstrants was guaranteed. However, it implied that subsequent national Synod gatherings would also require government approval, which would not come for nearly 200 years and significantly impede the growth of the Reformed

²⁴ Is a Dutch word referring to those who were opposed to the subjugation of the Ned. Creed, though they finally helped to make such a decision, but their opposition did not arise from liberal considerations, but from a true Reformed fear that a human writing would take the place of Holy Scripture for the purpose of claiming such an examination.

²⁵ The term "Sharp Resolution" pertains to a decision made by the States of Holland and West Friesland on August 4, 1617. This resolution was proposed by Johan van Oldenbarneveldt, the Land's Advocate of Holland, amidst the Arminian-Gomarist, or Remonstrant/Counter-Remonstrant conflict that was causing political turmoil within the Dutch Republic during the Twelve Years' Truce.

Church in the Netherlands. Evidence suggests that the States-General approved the Canons of Dordt in 1619, around July (Coertzen 2018:2-3).

Diener and Walston (2018:6-7) assert that the Synod of Dordt's ruling on the five main theological issues up for debate in the Netherlands is known as the "Canons of Dort." (TULIP). In that Synod, they decided that those who worship the Lord in the Reformed faith also had to accept the Liturgy as decided on by the mentioned Synod for corporate worship, which was published and taught in the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, the Canons of Dort, and church order.

In the Netherlands between 1618 and 1619, the order of worship was influenced by Datheen as well as the Palatine Liturgy, as it was about the same time the order of worship was being hugely adopted by the Dutch in Germany (Wielema 2004 & Lekalakala 2012). The Synod of Dordrecht, which mandated that the Lord's Supper be observed once every three months, thus had an impact on the order of worship. This was also encompassed by the replacement of the lengthy confession of sins after the sermon with the prayers of thanksgiving, and the 10 commandments were moved from the second service to the moving service.

2.9. The Dutch Reformed Order of Worship in South Africa from 1652–1858

The researcher chose this date following (Elbourne 1994 & Hodgson 1975) who wrote about: The Thousand Generation Covenant: Dutch Reformed Covenant Theology and Group Identity in Colonial South Africa, 1652-1814 and A History of Zonnebloem College, 1858-1870: a study of church and society.

From the Synod of Dordrecht, it took 33 years for the Dutch to move to colonize our country South Africa starting with Cape Town. When the Dutch first moved to South Africa, they brought their Dutch Reformed theology with them. In 1652, Jan van Riebeeck founded the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) of South Africa (Mahokoto 2017:97). However, the first permanent Dutch Reformed minister arrived in Cape Town in 1665. One hundred and fifty years after the small beginnings of Roman Catholicism, the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) slowly monopolized the Christian presence at the Cape of Good Hope. This was done through a constant flow of ministers from and under the supervision of the Classis of Amsterdam, which was

the church governing body, and in the process, it absorbed the French Huguenots, who immigrated in large numbers to the Cape from 1688 to 1691.

Beets (1909:22-25) maintains that most of the Dutch, Huguenot, and German immigrants who settled in the region near the Cape of Good Hope in the second half of the 17th century made up the Reformed Church of South Africa. Reverend John Van Arckel, who settled among the Cape Dutch in 1662, was the first DRC preacher to travel to South Africa. First, it was the responsibility of the Classis of Amsterdam, acting as a tool of the Dutch East India Company, to appoint pastors for the church. These pastors were paid by the company and, in some ways, served as its servants. Churches and clergy gradually grew, allowing for the holding of a general assembly in 1745. The Church was governed in accordance with the Church Order of Dordrecht and closely followed the practices of the Reformed Church in the Netherlands in terms of doctrine and discipline.

Like the Puritans landing in New England in 1620, the Dutch Reformed who first settled at the Cape came along with a Christian piety mixed with religious, social, and philosophical ideas that came from post-Reformation Europe (De Beer 1994). They shared with their North American counterparts two features that would profoundly shape the future of Protestantism in their respective contexts.

A Provisional Church Order was established by the Dutch authorities in South Africa in 1803 to give the government complete control over the church and its clergy. This Church Order remained roughly the same when the Cape became wholly English in 1806 and caused a great deal of dissatisfaction among those who loved the rules of the Dordrecht Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa's founding fathers (Ross & Elbourne 1997:3).

The Evangelical Hymns of the Dutch Church have been sung in the Cape Church in South Africa since January 1814. Conservative churchgoers were angered even more by this action (Mathieson & Flipse 2021). In the meantime, a liberal tendency had begun to emerge among different church pastors. Conservative members had little opportunity to attend church preaching services because they mostly lived in Cape Colony's outlying areas (Le Feuvre 1980). They made sure to uphold their fathers' religion, though. Brakel, the Heidelberg Catechism, the States Bible with its marginal notes, and other sources were used exactly as directed. The term

"Doppers"²⁶ which was a corruption of the Dutch word "Domper," was used to refer to the conservative residents of these northern districts. It also implied a person who was intellectually behind the times.

Additionally, the "Doppers" began to consider breaking their ties with the Cape Church, especially after 1842, when the "Ring" or Classis of Graaf-Reinet formally endorsed and defended the use of the hymns. Some pastors were reluctant to baptize children whose parents declined to name them, as it would contravene the Church Order of Dordrecht and the customary practice of the fathers (Du Toit 1983 & Turner 2011).

The great trek, meanwhile, had begun to move in the direction of Natal, the Orange Free State, and the Transvaal in 1834. Most "Doppers" eventually relocated to the Transvaal, primarily in the Rustenburg district (Robinson 1976 and Norman 2003). Except for the sporadic itinerant work of Dr. Daniel Lindley of the American Board, who worked among the Zulus of Natal and whose labour of love is still remembered with great affection, they and the other Boers in the Transvaal received no spiritual care during these years and after (Darr 2005 & Avis 2003). Since 1849 in Bloemfontein, Orange Free State, the well-known Dr. Andrew Murray has done what he could for his countrymen across the Vaal River, but because of his The Reformed Church of South Africa. His services were not as well received by the independence loving Transvaalers as they might and would have been because of his affiliation with the Dutch Reformed Church of the Cape, which was essentially under the control of the English Government. In addition, there was a time when the Dutch Reformed ministers operating within the Cape Colony were forbidden by the English authorities to perform sacraments for the Boers who had fled British territory because they were viewed as rebels who had abandoned the legitimate government (Ross 1999).

First, the Puritans in America and the Dutch Reformed in South Africa emerged from Protestant and Reformation Europe, a creedal tradition characterized by church-centered piety based on writings like John Calvin's Ecclesiastical Ordinances and The Three Forms of Unity (Villa-Vicencio 2000). Like the early Puritans in New

²⁶ Dopers refers to the Protestantism in South Africa. A member of the most conservative Afrikaner church which practices a strict Calvinism.

England, the Dutch Reformed brought substantive elements of Reformed orthodoxy to South Africa. This means that the early piety of the Dutch settlers at the Cape would mirror to a significant degree the faith and practice of the Reformed churches in the Netherlands, dictated in substance by the Three Forms of Unity and the 1619 Church Order of Dort. Beyond ministers being ordained and sent from the Dutch Reformed Church in the Netherlands, worship services included for example, the reading of the Decalogue and the Apostles' Creed, the singing of metrical Psalms only, and the preaching of sermons from the Heidelberg Catechism (De Beer 2010).

The Dutch government established a Provisional Church Order in 1803, which was somewhat in keeping with the deistic ethos of the time and wholly under the control of the government (Freund 1971). The Church Order was pretty much the same when the Cape officially became English in 1806, which greatly dissatisfied those who cherished the laws the Dordrecht fathers had established (De Beer 2010). The introduction of the Evangelical Hymns of the Dutch Church in the Cape Church at the beginning of 1814 was a move that increased discontent among the conservative church members, Kritzinger, Meiring, and Saayman (1994).

The Evangelical Hymns of the Dutch Church were introduced in the Cape's churches in January 1814 with the intention of stirring up discontent among the conservative churchgoers (Duff 2018: 325). The long journey toward Natal, the Orange Free State, and the Transvaal had started in the meantime in 1834. The majority of "Doppers" eventually relocated to the Transvaal, primarily to the Rustenburg region. They and the other Boers in the Transvaal did not receive spiritual care during this time, but Dr. Daniel Lindley of the American Board, who worked among the Zulus of Natal and whose labour of love is still remembered with great affection, would occasionally assist them (Roy 2017 and De Beer 2010). The well-known Dr. Andrew Murray served his countrymen across the Yaal River since 1849 in Bloemfontein, Orange Free State, but only because of his 24 years of service to the Reformed Church of South Africa (Beets 1909).

His services were not as well received by the Transvaalers, who valued independence, because of his affiliation with the Dutch Reformed Church of the Cape, which was essentially under the control of the English Government. Additionally, there was a time when the Dutch Reformed ministers in the Cape

Colony were forbidden by the English authorities to perform sacraments for the Boers who had fled British territory because they were viewed as rebels who had abandoned the legitimate government (Ferro 2005).

The Reverend D. van der Hof arrived in South Africa in 1852 with the task of guiding the Transvaal Boers, and in 1853, a few of the conservative Boer leaders in the Transvaal and Orange Free State learned about the existence of the Christian Reformed Church of the Netherlands. In response to their request, the church and its synodical committee sent the Reverend D. Postma of Zwolle, Netherlands, to South Africa to investigate the religious conditions there (Noble 1877).

The hymns, which had been the main source of contention, were then found to be stubbornly clung to by Reverend Mr. Van der Hof and his followers, despite the liberal leanings of some of that pastor's followers. It did not take long for the "Doppers" to realize that Reverend D. van der's preaching was not up to par with the standards of the Synod of Dordrecht, and they turned away from him. The Christian Reformed Church of the Netherlands was made aware of by some conservative Boer leaders in the Transvaal and Orange Free State around the year 1850. In response to their request, the church and its synodical committee sent the Reverend D. Postma of Zwolle, Netherlands, to South Africa to investigate the religious climate there and to make whatever arrangements he should make for their kin and fellow believers (Stoeffler 1965 & Agten 2020).

According to Spoelstra (1989:64) Reverend D. Postma arrived in Rustenburg on November 10th, 1858, and Cape Town in June 1858. After he arrived, he learned that Reverend Mr. Van der Hof and his adherents were completely unwilling to get rid of the hymns that were the main source of contention, though it should not be overlooked that this pastor and some of his adherents had a liberal spirit. The Dutch Reformed Church of the South African Republic officially bid farewell to its members on January 11th, 1859. Among them was the Commandant, later President S. J. P. Kruger, who said he wanted the church to continue as a Free Reformed one instead (Henkes 2020 & Norman 2003). The Church Order was altered by the doctrine, rules, and services of the Synod of Dordrecht to reflect the circumstances that existed in South Africa at the time.

The Church Order was altered by the Reformed Church of South Africa by the times, following the doctrine, rules, and services of the Synod of Dordrecht. Although the Rustenburg Dutch Reformed Church had previously allowed the conservative brethren to call a pastor who would not use hymns in church services, they had been denied membership (Kritzinger 2013:10). Reverend Mr. Postma called a meeting, stated the agenda, and read his interpretation of the Church Order, which would serve as their bylaws.

The Church Order of Dordrecht was accepted more closely at the first Synod in Reddersburg in 1862 than it had been when Mr. Postma had modified and offered it to his people at the time of the organization in 1859 (Spoelstra 1989:61-63). It was clear that the Reformed Church had two tendencies: one was very strictly conservative and clung to the past because it was the past, while the other, led by Mr. Postma, had a broader perspective. Nevertheless, both sincerely bowed before the Word of God, and over time, these disparate elements were brought together in the Reformed Church of South Africa.

2.10. The Reformed Order of Worship in South Africa from 1859–Present

The researcher chose this date following (Duff 2018.) who wrote: The Dutch Reformed Church and the Protestant Atlantic: Revivalism and Evangelicalism in the Nineteenth-Century Cape Colony.

A total of fifteen men, including Commandant, later President, S. J. P. Kruger, formally left the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa at the beginning of 1859 after declaring their desire to continue as a Free Reformed group (De Beer 2005). Their doctrine said that the discipline and service of the Synod of Dordrecht, the Church Order, should be based on how the country and its people are right now (De Beer 2005). In 1866, two new pastors were ordained. They had learned a lot from Mr. Postma, who was also training other promising men. Amazingly, he has been able to do so much in this field, given how much he has travelled. In those days, churches were very simple, people were poor, and pastors didn't get paid much. However, there was a lot of sharing between people, which made the first time the Church met in Jerusalem so glorious (Young 2007).

In 1869, there was an increase in the count of preachers to seven, leading to the decision by the Synod of that same year to institute a Theological School. In November of 1869, an educational establishment with similar characteristics was established in Burgersdorp, located in the Cape Colony region. The institution was led by Reverend Mr. Postma and Reverend J. Lion Cachet, who served as professors (Strauss 2019). Following the incident, there emerged disagreements regarding the issue of governmental assistance and proselytization efforts directed toward the indigenous population. Despite a secession that occurred primarily in Reddersburg, the movement failed to gain momentum (Strauss 2019). In 1882, an endeavour was undertaken to consolidate the three churches that were present in the Transvaal at the time, namely the Dutch Reformed, Dutch "Hervormd," and Reformed Church.

The Synod of the Reformed Church emphasized four specific aspects, namely:

It is recommended that the Dutch Churches adopt the Formulas of Unity. The Church Order of Dordrecht is a document that outlines the regulations and procedures for the governance of Reformed churches in the Netherlands. It was adopted by the Synod of Dordrecht in 1618-1619 and has since served as a foundational text for Reformed church polity.

The proposition posits that solely the book of Psalms should be employed in communal religious ceremonies. According to the Dutch Reformed of South Africa (2010), The initial Synod convened in April 1904, following a conflict in South Africa that resulted in the loss of numerous church members. Despite the sorrow experienced by the congregants, both pastors and laypeople remained resolute and steadfast, refraining from discouragement or despair. The clergymen relocated the theological institution from Burgersdorp to Potchefstroom in the Transvaal region, with the conviction that the Dutch community's aspirations and prospects were primarily concentrated in the former South African Republic (De Beer 2010). The Transvaal region is governed by a total of eleven ministers, while the Orange River Colony is governed by seven ministers. The Cape Colony, on the other hand, has a total of thirteen ministers. Typically, churches that are led by a pastor offer two Sunday services, wherein one of these services entails an exposition of the Lord's Day section of the Heidelberg Catechism. The unoccupied positions are typically

convened every month, with quarterly religious ceremonies presided over by ordained clergy.

As per reports, individuals residing at a distance from the church convene gatherings in their respective households every week, except communion Sundays, under the guidance of the district elder (Du Plooy 2014). During this time frame, the catechism classes primarily convene on Sundays, in between the customary public worship services (Coertzen 2004). The ruling elders in the peripheral regions conduct catechesis sessions on a monthly or bi-monthly basis. The financial sustenance of the congregations is reliant upon the discretionary donations provided by its constituents. The primary publication of the religious denomination is *Met Kerkblad*, a monthly periodical consisting of 12 pages. It is recommended that the publication be expanded to better align with the values and beliefs of the church. There is a lack of consensus among the songs of the Reformed Church of South Africa regarding the issue of whether to support public schools. The Reformed Church exhibits a doctrinal inclination towards the strict Reformed category, as represented by Drs. A. Kuyper and H. Bavinck in the Netherlands. Their principles and influence hold significant sway over this denomination, particularly in comparison to the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa (Mutavhatsindi 2008).

According to Ramantswana (2015:2) In 1910, Reverend Pieter Bos initiated his mission work among the black population of the GKSA in Pietersburg, which is presently known as Limpopo Province. His efforts were primarily focused on the Northern Transvaal region, following which he proceeded towards Uniondale. For Caucasian missionaries to reach mission territory, it was crucial for them to actively cooperate with the indigenous population they intended to convert. Supplementary to their contributions, missionaries were required to enlist the aid of assistants or evangelists to facilitate the execution of their duties. The initial black evangelists, identified as Jojakim Matlakala, hailed from Uniondale. Matlakala's evangelistic education commenced with basic literacy instruction in Afrikaans, followed by cohabitation with his mentor and guidance in scriptural interpretation (Ndou 2007:94-95 & Ramantswana 2015:2).

Mashau (2004:18) states that the year 1928 marked the commencement of Reverend Hugo du Plessis' involvement in the initiative previously initiated by Bos.

Subsequently, he proceeded towards the northern region accompanied by evangelist Matlakala and established a mission station at Siloam. The establishment of the Soutpansberg Reformed church in Siloam occurred in 1942. They spent many years working in Siloam, and this led to the establishment of De Hoop as the second station for the mission, which bore fruits in 1957 when the Reformed church De Hoop was established. During this time the Venda culture, Venda rulers, and native education were bypassed, and native influx laws were supported and propagated (Muswubi 2007:93-96). This led Venda people to have the order of worship that does not communicate, and which is not meaningful due to the bypass of African insights and intellectual.

According to Khorommbe (2001:10-11), the agreement between the Reformed White South African churches and some Reformed Dutch churches from Holland to collaborate on mission work in Venda was an important development in 1961. This resulted in the establishment of the Reformed churches Mutale and Tshitandani, both of which were established in 1961, and many churches from 1962 onwards (Baloyi 2011:6). During these times, Dutch customs influenced the order of worship, particularly the worship service, the clothes people wore, and the initiation schools that instil morals in African people. Africans changed their clothing and way of life because of the Dutch customs they adopted from missionaries. Initiation schools still serve a unique purpose for African people, and no alternative has taken their place. Consequently, Africans adopted various changes in their practices, including their religious rituals.

In 1963, the GKSA, under the influence of Apartheid policies, established four Synods in the Black Reformed Churches of South Africa (RCSA): the Southland Synod, designed for coloured people, the Synod of the Midlands, designed for Sotho, Pedi, IsiXhosa, and Zulu people, the Synod of Soutpansberg, specifically designed for Venda and Tsonga people, and the fourth one, the Potchefstroom Synod, designed for the white people (Zgambo 2018:77-78). These Synods, when they meet, are known as the General Synod. According to Ramantswana (2015:1), "The General Synod of the four national synods was functional only during the

apartheid era, meeting six times (1965, 1975, 1980, 1984, 1988 and 1992), and has since been non-functional.”

According to Kim (2019:307-311), the white Synod provided financial support for the black Synods, and the white churches funded the salaries of the black ministers. During this time (1963–1979) none of the ministers were financially dependent on their local churches. The stipends for the black ministers were paid by the white Synod. During this time, none of the ministers were financially supported by their local churches. This led the black Reformed churches not to challenge the apartheid regime because it was highly impossible for the black church to challenge people who were responsible with their stipends. In addition to that, the black churches inherited everything from the white churches due to a lack of financial independence. Baloyi (2016:1) confirmed this when he maintained: “The lack of financial independence implies that the black church cannot determine their destiny by revising, transforming and even Africanising their theology to fit into their context and challenges, since that would mean they are biting the hand that feeds them.” That is why the black Reformed churches (Soutpansberg) did not accept the Belhar confession, which was created to fight the injustices of apartheid, but accepted foreign confession from outside South Africa. That is the main reason why black Reformed churches did not have a Liturgy that was meaningful and communicated to African people. Immediately after Soutpansberg started the Black Reformed Church, they were supposed to look at the Liturgy, church order, and confessions and reform them to fit African culture. That is why the researcher is of the view that the Liturgy in the Black Reformed churches need to be decolonised to be meaningful, relevant, and appropriate to Africans.

In 1989 Reformed church Niani and De Hoop brought an overture about starting the theological seminary RCSASNS (1989:4). As a result of the overture in 1990 Synod Soutpansberg started preparations for the beginning of the theological seminary RCSASNS (1990:11). In 1991 the theological was established RCSASNS (1991:31-36). One of the aims when it was established was to produce pastors who could answer the problems of people read the situation and bring change. This theological seminary was supposed to reform the Liturgy and other elements that needed to be decolonised. The researcher hopes it produces ministers of the word who can read, interpret the situation and problems, and bring solutions.

Regarding the establishment of the Soutpansberg Synod specifically for the black community, including the Tsonga people. From 1980 on, the black Reformed churches under Synod Soutpansberg were financially independent in terms of their stipend for ministers of the word. This led to the growth of Synod Soutpansberg because the churches that constituted it did have a vision regarding mission work in different places.

In 1998 because of a leadership conference, the Reformed churches under Synod Soutpansberg started to have a church in Gauteng. That mission work was led by professor TC Rabali, who was stationed in the Reformed church Tshiawelo, whereby the year 2008 as the result of his work, Clasisis Gauteng was established, which was constituted by Reformed Pretoria, Midrand, Johannesburg, Tshiawelo, and Protea Glen (Rabali 1998 & Mutavhatsindi 2014:2). As a result of that, it challenged the setting of the Synod, as it was now joined by Classis Gauteng. This crashed the white people's notion of a Synod consisting of only Venda and Tsonga; Gauteng consisted of different people who almost spoke all the languages that are found in our country, South Africa.

In 2011 Classis Tshwane joined the Synod of Soutpansberg. As a result of that, the Synod of Soutpansberg is made up of four classis RCSASNS (2011). The order of worship is the same in all these classis, but when it comes to singing, Classis Tshwane and some congregations under Clasisis Gauteng makes use of African instruments and sing Psalms, which enhance the quality of their worship services. That is another element that the other Classis are lacking as they stick to using the Hymn Book as it is.

The researcher will conclude by delineating the constituent elements comprising the liturgy of Reformed churches in South Africa. The Liturgy of the Reformed churches in South Africa comprises four primary components that individuals seek to engage in when attending a religious gathering to commune with the divine. The following entities will be delineated by the researcher:

1. Our God we have come to praise you.

The Liturgy of Reformed churches in South Africa begins by praising the Lord.

Singing: Regarding singing in Reformed church services, the songs that are allowed to be sung in the middle of services are specified. According to the Reformed church polity of Dort Article 86 “In the Churches only the 150 Psalms of David, the Ten Commandments, the Lord’s Prayer, the Twelve Articles of Faith, the Song of Mary, that of Zacharias, and that of Simon shall be sung. It is left to the individual Churches to decide whether to use the hymn ‘Oh God! Who art our father.’ All other hymns are to be excluded from the Churches, and in those places where some have already been introduced, they are to be removed by the most suitable means.” Currently, we are using the Lutheran Hymn book in our worship services when it comes to singing.

Asking blessing: (Votum) Here the Preacher will use the words that are found in the following passages: Psalm 121:1-2 and 1 Timothy 1:2. This section has two things; the preacher is representing the Lord, and the congregation comes to meet with God. The first words from this section are the words of the people and the second words are coming from God.

Greetings: Romans 1:7; Here the minister of the Word will greet the congregation. And then the congregation will respond.

Singing:

Confession of Faith: Here the congregation can use the Apostolic Creed, Athanasius Creed, or Nicene Creed to express what they believe about God.

Singing:

2. Our God forgives us for our transgressions.

Reading of ten commandments: Here the Preacher will use the words that are found in the following passages: Exodus 20:1-17 and Deuteronomy 5:6-21. The congregation will respond by singing the appropriate songs to humble ourselves.

Singing:

3. Our God we have come to hear your word.

Reading of scripture:

Brief Prayer for the Opening of Scripture:

Singing:

Message:

Singing:

4. Our God, we thank you

Prayer for thanking God for the message:

Singing:

Offering: 1 Corinthians 16:2 by Deacons.

Prayer for thanking God for the money collected.

Announcement: This can be announced at the beginning of the service or the end.

Renditions by a congregation's choral group(s): This can be done at the beginning of the service or the end.

Blessing: (Benediction) Here the Preacher will use the words that are found in the following passage: Numbers 6: 22-26. This is the last item in the order of worship of Reformed churches in South Africa.

2.11. Conclusion

This chapter of the study presented the literature review, which showed various secondary data sources about the order of prayer at the Dutch Reformed Church from its inception in the 16th century up until the 21st century. The literature presented

in this chapter emanates from the 16th century, when the DRC was formed in Germany, and shows how it moved to the Netherlands as well as how it was taken to South Africa, thereby showing the order of prayers accompanied by church history. The next chapter of this study focused on the research methodology, which showed how the researcher sought to collect and analyse data.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter seeks to discuss the methodologies used to gather and analyse data as part of the research process referred to as research methodologies. The purpose of developing a research methodology is to specify the criteria that will be used to conduct research systematically. Therefore, this chapter provides an account of how the research methodology was accomplished. Furthermore, the research design is defined and its importance in studying Liturgy in RCSA as well as the application of phenomenology research design in a study of Liturgy in RCSA is well articulated. The chapter defines, describes, and explains the EDNA Model research design in a study of Liturgy in RCSA as well as its importance. In developing the methodologies, consideration is also given to the study approach, population, sampling, and its importance in a decolonial study of liturgical practices in RCSA, data collection instruments and processes, and data analysis. Additionally, ethical considerations are practiced, and the trustworthiness of the study is explained in this chapter.

3.1.1. Research Methodology

According to Campbell & Vitullo (2016:73-74), research methodology is a technique used in theology research that aims to analyse theological issues while paying close attention to specific characteristics and the needs of this field of study. Holmes & Lindsay (2018:1) further expand that theology research aims to gain and develop a deeper understanding of religious customs, practices, and beliefs as well as a clear comprehension of God's nature and the nature of other spiritual creatures, as well as their role in human affairs.

In this research, the researcher will explore and define research methodology in theology research. The researcher will discuss the importance of theology research, the research process, the research design, data collection, and analysis methods employed, and the ethical issues involved in conducting theology research.

3.1.2. Importance of theology research

Theology research is critical to the formation and evolution of religious traditions, as well as providing essential insights into the human experience of faith and spirituality. Scholars can obtain greater insights into the historical and cultural circumstances in which religious traditions arise and grow, as well as their social, psychological, and philosophical components, through theology research. Furthermore, Huawei et al. (2019:426) argue that theology research fosters greater understanding and tolerance by providing a platform for engagement among practitioners, theologians, and researchers from a variety of faiths, cultures, and traditions.

3.1.3. Research Design

Research design refers to the comprehensive strategy employed in the research process, which describes the specific procedures and strategies utilised to accomplish the research objectives. An appropriately structured study is crucial for assuring the validity and reliability of the collected data, as well as the accuracy and strength of the study's findings (Silva 2017:10).

According to Leedy & Ormrod (2015:73), research design is a blueprint or plan that describes the whole research process, starting from the first research questions through the final report. They clarify that research design describes the strategies for collecting, analysing, and interpreting data. A research design should also consider ethical concerns, measurement validity, and sample procedures.

Research design refers to the systematic selection and arrangement of the different elements included in a research investigation. They prioritise the refinement of the research design to align with the research questions, study objectives, and expected research population. Moreover, it is essential for research designs to undergo rigorous testing and be adaptable to unforeseen circumstances (Creswell & Poth 2018).

A research design is a strategic blueprint for carrying out research, which delineates the specific procedures and methodologies that will be employed to achieve the study objectives. Additionally, they emphasise the need to have defined research questions and employ thorough sample methodologies, data collection methods, and

data analysis procedures. In addition, it is emphasised that study designs should be extensive, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methodologies (Babbie & Mouton 2020:88).

Gliner, Morgan, & Leech (2017:3) describe research design as the process of making decisions about how to answer research questions. They explain that research design involves identifying the research problem, specifying the research questions, determining the data collection methods, and analysing the data. Gliner, Morgan, and Leech also suggest that research design should be flexible to accommodate changes during the research process.

Research design refers to the comprehensive plan or framework used to address research inquiries. He underscores that study design is a methodical strategy for collecting, evaluating, and interpreting data. Yin emphasises that an effective research design should possess the qualities of appropriateness, feasibility, and validity. The research design should also consider ethical considerations, as well as the reliability and validity of the data (Yin 2018). Research design encompasses a comprehensive and strategic blueprint that is established before the implementation of a research project.

According to Ridzuan, *et al.* (2021:3) the research design is the blueprint that outlines how the research will be carried out and provides a framework for collecting and analysing data. A well-constructed research design is supposed to address the research questions, test the hypotheses developed, and establish the validity and reliability of the findings. Thus, the research design serves as the mainstay of the entire study, which offers guidance to the researcher throughout the whole process.

Research design is very important in a research study. To begin with, it lays the foundation upon which a fruitful study is built (Leavy 2022:32). If the study is designed poorly, there is a high chance that inaccurate findings will be produced because of a lack of a solid framework for data collection and analysis. According to Rashid, *et al.* (2019:2) research design plays an important role in ensuring that the research is conducted ethically and efficiently, with the conservation of resources.

According to (Stangor & Walinga 2019:1-2) there are many types of research design, including experimental, descriptive, correlational, and case study designs. It is worth noting that for each design there are unique strengths and weaknesses, and the

selection of the research design depends on the research objectives. Therefore, the study of Liturgy in RCSA could use either of these research designs. For example, experimental research design is employed when the researcher wants to test causality between variables. On the other hand, the descriptive research design is employed when describing a phenomenon whereas correlational research is used when two or more characters are being compared (Nelson, *et al.* 2017:244). Furthermore, if a researcher is interested in describing and understanding a certain situation or event, then a case study design will be useful. The descriptive research design is recommended for a study of Liturgy in RCSA.

In RCSA, the Liturgy is a fundamental aspect of worship. It consists of rites gestures and phrases that are specifically designed to express the church's beliefs and practices. In RCSA, the study of Liturgy tries to establish the organization of the Liturgy, the theological importance of the rituals, and how the Liturgy is relevant to the congregation (Carvalhaes 2017:466-467). The research could also investigate how the Liturgy changes through time and how it is influenced by cultural and social factors.

3.1.4. The Importance of Research Design in Studying Liturgy in the black RCSA

The liturgy plays a crucial role in the worship experience at RCSA. An examination of liturgy in RCSA is essential as it seeks to comprehend and express the significance of liturgy in the worship encounter. Engaging in a well-structured and effective research study enhances the significance of the research findings and enhances comprehension of the liturgy in RCSA (C.F. Gibson & Earngey 2018).

The study design initially establishes the scope and focus of the investigation. Establishing the research questions, objectives, and methodologies will assist in directing the research process and guaranteeing that the study concentrates on the most crucial and pertinent aspects of liturgy. The study design serves as a structure for gathering and analysing data, while also ensuring the accuracy and consistency of the findings (Castleberry & Nolen 2018). This ensures that the study is thoroughly studied and precise, while also ensuring that the findings are strong and reliable.

Secondly, the research design makes it possible for the researcher to carry out a thorough analysis of the Liturgy in RCSA. Liturgical studies are quite complicated, and they involve a lot of different elements, such as ritual actions, symbolism, theology, and history (Reul 2017). To develop a complete understanding of the meaning and relevance of the Liturgy, a research design should manage to identify and analyse these different elements. Otherwise, the study of Liturgy in RCSA can easily become erroneous and produce inconclusive results if there is no clear research design.

Thirdly, the research design permits the researcher to acquire high-quality data. Coleman (2022:2) claims that gathering quality data is essential for the study's accuracy and reliability. The research design influences the type of data that is to be collected, the sampling strategy to be used, and the techniques for data collection. The research design also helps to ensure that ethical considerations are considered when collecting data.

Fourthly, the research design makes sure that the study is carried out efficiently and effectively. A well-planned research study saves resources, time, and effort. It allows the researcher to concentrate on gathering the most crucial data and analysing it systematically. It also guarantees that the research process is thoroughly planned and that potential setbacks are identified and addressed as soon as possible.

3.1.5. Define, Describe, Discuss, and Explain the phenomenology research design showing its importance, especially in a study of Liturgy in RCSA.

Phenomenology is an investigative approach that seeks to accurately depict and elucidate the lived experiences of persons as they unfold. Bleakley (2019) maintains that phenomenology is the examination of individuals' perception of objects and the significance they attribute to those experiences. Phenomenology research is grounded on the assumption that individuals have distinct perceptions and interpretations of the world, and its objective is to investigate these variations (Giorgi 2012) systematically and rigorously.

The researcher defines, describes, discusses, and explains the phenomenological research design and its significance in the study of Liturgy in RCSA in this research.

Edmund Husserl was the one who first developed phenomenology, which is a qualitative research approach. According to Gill (2020:4-5) the approach is founded on the idea that individuals experience and interpret the world around them depending on their perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs. Phenomenology research aims to capture the essence of these experiences and interpretations through in-depth interviews, observations, and other qualitative methods (Husserl 2014). The research approach is particularly of benefit when carrying out a study that deals with subjective experiences like emotions, perceptions, and beliefs.

Phenomenology research design involves a comprehensive and methodical examination of individuals' subjective experiences. The study design encompasses multiple sequential steps, which encompass identifying the research question, selecting the participants, collecting data, interpreting the data, and presenting the conclusions. A phenomenology study design is distinguished by its focus on human experiences and viewpoints, as well as its use of many techniques for gathering data (Van Manen 2016:22–23).

One of the key characteristics of phenomenology research design is that it stresses the role of the researcher in understanding the experiences of the participants (Creswell & Poth 2018). The main difference between phenomenology and other research approaches that endeavour for objectivity is that there is an engagement between the researcher and the participants to comprehend individuals' experiences, in phenomenology. This subjective engagement with participants is a very important element in the phenomenology research design as it makes it easy for the researcher to obtain a deep understanding of the participant's perceptions and experiences.

3.1.6. Importance of Phenomenology Research Design in a Study of Liturgy in the black RCSA.

Conducting liturgy research in RCSA is important as it seeks to gain insight into the functions of liturgy in worship and ascertain how different elements of liturgy contribute to an individual's overall religious encounter. The utilisation of the phenomenology research design is highly advantageous in this study as it enables researchers to explore the subjective interpretations individuals assign to different

aspects of liturgy and the subsequent influence of these interpretations on their overall religious encounters. This section will explore the importance of employing a phenomenological research design while studying the liturgy in the Roman Catholic Church of South America (RCSA).

3.1.7. Understanding the subjective experiences of individuals

Phenomenology research design is especially beneficial in understanding an individual's subjective experiences. Researchers can utilise phenomenological research design to investigate the meaning that individuals ascribe to various components of Liturgy in a study of Liturgy in RCSA. Researchers can gain a better grasp of how Liturgy affects people's religious experiences by investigating their subjective experiences (Moufahim & Lichrou 2019:323).

3.1.8. Capturing the essence of the religious experience

The goal of phenomenology study design is to capture the essence of experiences. Researchers can utilise phenomenology research design to capture the core of the religious experience in a study of Liturgy in RCSA. Furthermore, Becker and Schad (2022:309) claim that by employing a variety of data collection methods, such as in-depth interviews, observations, and open-ended surveys, researchers can capture the rich and complicated individual experiences as they engage in Liturgy.

3.1.9. Understanding the relationship between Liturgy and religious experience

According to Gschwandtner (2022:1) phenomenology research design is very useful in comprehending the relationship that exists between various aspects of Liturgy as well as the complete religious experience of individuals. Phenomenology research design was employed in this study of Liturgy in the black RCSA, as it allows the researchers to explore how diverse aspects of Liturgy like; symbolism, ritual activities, and theology contribute to the whole religious experience and understanding of individuals. A complete understanding of this relationship will enable the researchers to develop recommendations that will bring about an improvement in Liturgy and this will enhance the overall religious experience of individuals.

3.1.10. Developing a deep understanding of theological perspectives

Phenomenology research design is centred on comprehending the perceptions of individuals. Therefore, for the researcher to be able to explore the theological perspectives and beliefs of individuals when conducting a study of Liturgy in RCSA, a phenomenology research design can be utilised. Thus, comprehending this relationship enabled the researchers to develop recommendations that will bring about an improvement in Liturgy and enhance the overall religious experience of individuals.

3.2. Define, describe, discuss, and explain the EDNA model research design showing its importance, especially in a liturgical study in the black RCSA

To structure the research process that guided the gathering, analysis, and interpretation of data, the EDNA model research design was used as a framework. This model has four distinct stages - Explore, Describe, Network, and Analyse. Each stage of the EDNA model research design is intended to address specific research questions. This study seeks to define, describe, discuss, and explain the EDNA model research design and its importance in a study of Liturgy in RCSA.

3.2.1. Definition

The EDNA model study design structures the research process into a framework consisting of four distinct phases. The model aims to offer a systematic framework for the research process, as well as a coherent sequence of activities. The model consists of four phases: explore, describe, network, and analyse. The exploration phase involves the formulation of research questions. The description phase involves the collection of data. The network phase involves the evaluation and interpretation of the data. The analysis phase involves summarising the results (Joshi & Yadav 2019).

3.2.3. The EDNA model research design is a comprehensive framework that structures and guides the research Process.

The four phases of the model are as follows:

Explore: According to Asenahabi (2019:78) this stage involves determining a research plan and formulating research questions. The data gathering and analysis are directed by research questions. By understanding the population of the study, the readily available resources, and prospective stakeholders, researchers can better understand the context of the research problem (Hennink *et al.* 2019). Defining the project's scope and creating a detailed research strategy are the main goals of this stage.

Describe: Data collection is an aspect of the EDNA model research design step. Surveys, interviews, and observations are some of the methods that researchers employ to collect data. The methods of collecting data rely on research objectives and questions (Opoku *et al.* 2016:38). Both qualitative and quantitative data are possible. The main objective of this stage is to describe the population of the study so that the collected data is relevant to the research questions.

Network: In this stage, the researcher examines and interprets collected data. By finding patterns, drawing comparisons, and exploring correlations, this stage tries to turn the data into relevant information (Nowell *et al.* 2017:3). Data coding, categorization, and summarizing are all part of this phase. By looking at the data from a variety of angles, themes, and patterns are to be determined. Collaborating with stakeholders during this stage to create networks and validate findings is also possible.

Analyse: In this last stage of the EDNA model research design, the research results are presented. In this step, stakeholders are informed of the research findings through research, presentations, and articles, among other formats (Asenahabi 2019). The dissemination of the research findings and recommendations is the aim of this phase.

3.2.4. Importance of the EDNA Model Research Design in a Study of Liturgy in the black RCSA.

Comprehending the importance of Liturgy in worship and how various components of Liturgy affect individuals' entire religious experiences calls for a study of Liturgy in RCSA. In this study, the EDNA model research design is very helpful since it enables researchers to methodically analyse the religious experience and collect

information pertinent to the research questions. The significance of the EDNA model research design in a study of Liturgy in RCSA was covered in this section.

3.2.5. Comprehensive Framework

The research design using the EDNA model gives a thorough framework for carrying out the research. This model helps researchers to organize and direct the study process, assuring comprehensive and methodical data gathering and analysis (Creswell 2014). The stages of the EDNA model research are designated interconnected, ensuring that researchers focus on the most crucial and pertinent components of the study Neuman (2013). As a result, its thorough nature assures a high level of rigor and lowers the possibility of research errors.

3.2.6. Clarity of Research Question

The EDNA model research design's Explore stage aids in clarifying the study questions. Because the various parts of Liturgy can be varied and complex, it is crucial to establish specific research questions while studying it in RCSA (Van Manen 2016:19). Saldana (2015:60-61) continues by stating that having clear research questions assists in directing collecting and interpreting of data, ensuring that the study concentrates on the most crucial and relevant facets of Liturgy.

3.2.7. Varied Data Collection Techniques

The EDNA model research design's stage involves collecting data from numerous sources. A variety of data collection methods, including surveys, interviews, and observations are supported by the model. Therefore, studying the Liturgy in RCSA requires a thorough comprehension of the religious experience, which can only be attained by collecting varied data using a variety of approaches (Van Manen 2016:20).

3.3. Robust Data Analysis and Interpretation

The network phase of the EDNA model allows for thorough analysis and interpretation of the gathered data. This strategy provides a methodical and rigorous procedure for data coding, categorization, and pattern identification. During this

phase, a wider array of interpretations and validations of the study findings can be explored, fostering collaboration between the researcher and the stakeholders. Thorough analysis and interpretation of data are essential to ensure the reliability and accuracy of the study's conclusions (Gibson & Earnngery 2018).

3.3.1. *Effective Communication of Research Findings*

The analysis phase of the EDNA model study design enables researchers to effectively communicate research findings and suggestions to relevant stakeholders. The likelihood of study suggestions and findings being implemented and utilised is enhanced by the efficient communication of research findings (Yin 2014:165). Effectively disseminating research findings is crucial for ensuring that the study has the desired impact on the practice of liturgy in RCSA (Giorgi 2012).

3.3.2. *Research Paradigm*

A research study necessitates the inclusion of a research paradigm, as it guides each stage of the process, encompassing the formulation of research inquiries and the interpretation and analysis of findings. The researcher's perspective on the study topic is shaped by this framework, which guides the selection of research methods, data collection tactics, and data analysis techniques used to examine the issue (Ghr Aithal 2022:457). The objective of this research is to provide a clear definition, description, explanation, and discussion of the research paradigm and its importance, specifically about a study on liturgy in the RCSA.

3.3.3. *Definitions*

A research paradigm refers to a collection of assumptions, ideas, and values that guide the process of conducting research. This framework is comprehensive and clearly defines the underlying assumptions about the nature of reality and knowledge that shape the study topic and research objectives, ultimately leading to a specific outcome. Essentially, it provides the underlying principles of the research study and guides the entire research process (Mphahlele 2019:5).

3.3.4. *Describing Research Paradigm*

Ontology and epistemology are the fundamental constituents of a research paradigm. Epistemology is the examination of the fundamental characteristics of knowledge, while ontology is the investigation of the fundamental characteristics of reality (Al-Ababneh 2020:76). Ontology refers to the researcher's underlying assumptions about the fundamental nature of the world being studied, encompassing entities, events, and phenomena. Researchers benefit from selecting appropriate research methodologies and data collection strategies to accurately define and understand the phenomena being studied (Al-Ababneh 2020:78–79). Conversely, epistemology focuses on the techniques used to acquire knowledge about the phenomena being studied (Hiller 2016). It functions as a manual for selecting data analysis methodologies, comprehending the results, and generating novel insights.

Research literature recognises various research paradigms, including positivism, interpretivism, and critical theory. Positivism is a research paradigm that aims to uncover objective and quantitative facts through closely monitored observation and experimentation (Kankam 2019:87). The premise is based on the notion that social phenomena are governed by laws that can be uncovered through study, and the researcher must carry out this task (Kumar 2016).

In contrast, interpretivism aims to understand the subjective meanings that individuals assign to their social interactions (Chowdhury 2014:433). This statement underscores the importance of context in understanding human action and stresses the intricate nature of a disorderly society. The primary aim of critical theory is to foster an understanding of power dynamics within society and their influence on social structures and institutions. It emphasises the necessity for societal change and confronts existing narratives and events that support social inequity.

3.3.5. Importance of Research Paradigm

It is hard to overestimate the significance of the research paradigm since it establishes the theoretical framework for the research study and directs the entire research process. It facilitates the identification of research problems and challenges. The research paradigm gives the research problem a more general philosophical direction, which aids in defining the study's scope (Kelly & Cordeiro

2020:2). The research paradigm serves as a foundation for formulating research questions, choosing the most relevant research methodologies, and structuring the study in a way that ensures the accomplishment of the objectives of the research, according to (Kumar 2018).

The research paradigm improves the reliability and validity of the study. Assumptions and opinions shared by researchers working within the same paradigm guide their research decisions and data interpretation (Kivunja & Kuyini 2017). This facilitates the examination of each other's study findings and theories by the findings of the research within the same paradigm, completing the research cycle. The research paradigm also aids in anticipating and addressing potential biases and limits that can appear throughout the research process (Ohlsson 2012:120).

The research paradigm improves knowledge about the setting in which the research question is being addressed. An understanding of the background and culture of the event being examined is aided by a theoretical framework that is provided by a research paradigm (Adom et al. 2016). Since it might influence how research findings are interpreted, it is essential to comprehend the background and culture of the topic being studied. A research paradigm is useful to the researchers as it helps them identify the correct sampling frame as well as data collection to alleviate any biases, thereby resulting in an accurately captured cultural context of the research subject.

3.3.6. *Using Research Paradigm in a Study of Liturgy in RCSA*

A research paradigm that clarifies the context of the inquiry and the characteristics of the phenomena under study is essential for the study of Liturgy in RCSA. The interpretive research paradigm is a suitable paradigm for this study since it recognizes the participants' varying interpretations of liturgical events. According to the paradigm of interpretive research:

The research participants are active representatives who form their social world.

The social world is intricate and ambiguous.

The research process is a dialogue between the researchers and participants.

The role of the researcher is to comprehend the meanings that participants attach to their social experiences.

De Klerk (2016:46) postulates that by investigating Liturgy in RCSA using the interpretative research paradigm, the researcher may identify the different types of liturgical practices and rituals present in the churches under investigation and their importance to the members' spiritual lives. This study approach would demonstrate the significance of liturgical performance, especially considering the historical, cultural setting, and theological practices of these churches.

3.4. Interpretive research paradigm

The interpretive research paradigm is an approach to qualitative research that places an emphasis on the participants' individualized meanings and experiences. According to this paradigm, the research aims to comprehend the world from the perspectives of participants and investigate the meanings that individuals assign to their experiences. This write-up aims to define, describe, explain, and discuss the interpretive research paradigm, as well as its significance, benefits, and drawbacks, particularly regarding a study of Liturgy in RCSA.

3.4.1. Definition

Alharahsheh & Pius (2020:41-42) define the interpretive research paradigm as a qualitative research approach that aims to understand the social reality via the viewpoints of the participants. Additionally, it emphasises the importance of environment and culture in shaping social events and seeks to clarify the subjective interpretations that individuals make of their own experiences (Shareia 2016). Sociology, anthropology, and psychology often utilise the interpretive research paradigm in the field of social sciences.

3.4.2. Describing the Interpretive Research Paradigm

The positivist research paradigm is significantly distinct from the interpretive research paradigm in terms of its ontological and epistemological tenets (Ugwu et al. 2021:120). The interpretive research paradigm views the social environment as

complex, diversified, and contextually bound, (Denzin & Lincoln 2011:97). The researcher using this paradigm acknowledges the effect of subjective meanings and interpretations and seeks to understand the study participant's subjective world.

The interpretive research paradigm recognizes that reality is socially produced from an ontological perspective. It emphasizes how social reality is influenced by the interpretations and experiences people give to various situations (Guba & Lincoln 2017:106). In terms of epistemology, the interpretive research paradigm acknowledges that the perspective of the researcher affects both the research process and the data results. The presumptions, values, and views of the researchers thereby determine the validity, reliability, and effectiveness of the research process.

The interpretive research paradigm makes use of qualitative research techniques which include case studies, observations, and interviews, that are suitable for exploring the intricacies and complexities of the experiences of the research participants. Identifying themes, patterns, and other meanings that may appear across many data sources is frequently a necessary step in the data analysis process.

3.4.3. Importance of Interpretive Research Paradigm

The interpretive research paradigm plays a pivotal role in social science because it enables the investigation of intricate and ambiguous social processes. According to Frechette et al. (2020:11), the interpretive research paradigm lays a strong emphasis on understanding social reality from the perspectives and viewpoints of the participants, which strengthens the validity of the research. Studies that attempt to comprehend the cultural, intellectual, and spiritual facets of human life, such as those looking at Liturgy in RCSA, are particularly well suited for the interpretive research paradigm.

Second, according to Alase (2017:10), the interpretative research paradigm employs qualitative research methods, which allows for a more complex and in-depth understanding. According to Mohajan (2018:18) in-depth and extensive interviews, observations, and case studies are typically used in the qualitative approach. These methods enable the researcher to examine the actions, attitudes, and behaviours of

research participants. To explore and elaborate on study participants' experiences, open-ended questions are also permitted by qualitative research methodologies.

Thirdly, the interpretative research paradigm ensures that the researcher is aware of the potential impact that their perspective, attitudes, and values may have on the research study (Karagiois 2018). This encourages self-reflection, improves critical thinking, and guards against leaving out viewpoints and data interpretations.

3.4.4. Advantages of Interpretive Research Paradigm.

The interpretive research paradigm has numerous benefits, such as:

Improved validity: Interpretive research stresses the significance of context and considers participants' subjective experiences, according to Stilwell & Harman (2021:6). As a result, the research frequently offers thorough and accurate information that captures the complexity of the social reality under study.

Personal involvement: Hamilton (2020:197) states that the interpretative research paradigm often involves close and continuous interaction between the researcher and the participants. This direct link enhances the comprehensiveness and quality of the collected data and provides opportunities to cultivate rapport and mutual trust.

Contextual emphasis: According to Thouki (2019:8) the interpretative research paradigm places a strong emphasis on context and aims to delve deeply into the cultural, intellectual, and spiritual facets of human life. This context-specific focus permits the findings of the research to be applicable in real-life situations.

Understanding various perspectives: According to Tong & Dew (2016:710) the interpretative research paradigm encourages researchers to investigate various points of view and attitudes of participants. This facilitates a deeper comprehension of the research setting.

3.4.6. Limitations of Interpretive Research Paradigm.

The limitations of the interpretive research paradigm include:

Expensive and time-consuming: The interpretive research paradigm frequently uses qualitative research techniques that require close interaction with research

participants (Amin *et al.* 2020:1472). This usually results in more expensive and time-consuming research.

Researcher Bias: According to Kelly *et al.* (2018:5) the interpretive research paradigm recognizes the impact of the researcher's values, attitudes, and views on the findings of the research process. Therefore, the researcher must make sure that potential bias is identified and controlled.

The interpretive research paradigm makes use of in-depth and qualitative research techniques. One may be able to make important deductions from this rich, real-world data, but discoveries cannot be applied to a broader population.

3.4.7. Interpretive Research Paradigm and the Study of Liturgy in RCSA.

The interpretive research paradigm is suitable for such research studies because studies of Liturgy in RCSA frequently explore the spiritual, cultural, and intellectual components of liturgical activities (De Klerk 2016:48). Understanding the various viewpoints of research participants about their liturgical practices would be the main objective of interpretive research in studies of Liturgy in RCSA.

An interpretive research study of the Liturgy in RCSA, for instance, might include in-depth discussions with church officials, attendance at church services, and a study of church literature and other materials. The data collected from this study would be accurate and insightful, reflecting the deeper complexity and nuances of the social and religious significance of liturgical rituals. The impact of liturgical practices in worship within RCSA and their significance to their members could be determined by researchers using this method.

3.4.8. Research Approach

According to Opoku *et al.* (2016:33), research approaches refer to the techniques employed by researchers to carry out studies and acquire the required data. Samuel Taylor Coleridge famously stated, "Sentiments that originate from one's innermost emotions have a profound impact on others." To attain the desired study outcomes, researchers must employ an appropriate technique. In this study, the researcher examines, delineates, discusses, and elucidates the importance of research

methodology in investigating the liturgy in the Roman Catholic Church of South America (RCSA).

Research technique refers to the systematic approach that researchers employ to carry out a study. The systematic approach referred to is an organised process consisting of specific procedures and methods for the collection, examination, and evaluation of data (Moser & Korstjens 2018:9). Researchers have the option to utilise several research procedures, including action research, mixed methods, qualitative, and quantitative approaches. The selection of methodology will be contingent upon the research subject, the objective of the investigation, and the requisite data type. Every approach possesses distinct benefits and constraints.

3.4.9. Qualitative Approach

To investigate the individuals' unique experiences, a study method known as the qualitative approach is used (Neuman 2013). It is useful for exploring social and cultural concerns as well as better understanding human conduct. Typically, data for qualitative research is acquired through focus groups, observations, and interviews. The data is then analysed using a thematic approach.

3.4.10. Quantitative Approach

The quantitative approach is a research method used to analyse numerical data (Ahmad 2019:2829). It can be used to test hypotheses and look at how different variables relate to one another. Data is gathered for quantitative research through surveys, questionnaires, and experiments. After that, statistical techniques are used to analyse the data.

3.4.11. Mixed Methods Approach.

A mixed-methods strategy combines qualitative and quantitative research methodologies (Brannen 2017 & Pluye 2018:4). It facilitates the development of a more profound understanding of a research problem. Data is collected by a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches in mixed-methods research and then analysed using both techniques.

3.4.12. Action Research Approach.

The action research methodology is a method used in research to tackle practical problems in the real world. It is crucial for enhancing processes and procedures in organisations. Action research involves the collaboration between researchers and practitioners to identify issues, create strategies, implement solutions, and assess the results (Cohen et al. 2017).

3.4.13. Importance of Research Approach in Studying Liturgy in the black RCSA.

A holistic approach is needed when studying Liturgy in RCSA. Thus, this approach entails data collection from a variety of perspectives using various research methods. The following are the different ways in which the research approaches can be useful when conducting a study on Liturgy in RCSA:

Gaining an Understanding of the Research Topic:

Gaining more understanding of the Liturgy in RCSA requires a thorough comprehension of the research methodology used. The researcher might investigate the participants' individualised opinions and experiences of the Liturgy by using a qualitative research approach. The quantitative approach, on the other hand, can be used to investigate the prevalence of certain liturgical activities. To get a thorough grasp of the liturgical practices in RCSA, a mixed methods approach can be applied.

Establishing Community Needs:

In RCSA, the action research methodology helps determine the needs of the liturgical community. The researcher can find areas that require improvement and create treatments to address them by interacting with practitioners.

Evaluation of Interventions:

The success of interventions created to enhance the liturgical practices in RCSA can also be assessed using the action research technique (Kater & de Muynck 2019:3). The researcher can ascertain whether the intervention had the desired effect by using quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

Recognising Patterns and Trends:

The quantitative technique can be used to recognize patterns and trends in the reformed church's liturgical practices (Shilubane 2019:48). The researcher can provide statistical support to show how liturgical practices have changed over time by gathering numerical data.

Providing Historical Context:

Qualitative research approaches can provide the liturgical practices of RCSA with a historical viewpoint (Schaeffer 2022). To discern changes in liturgical practices over time, the researcher can consult with seasoned church attendees.

3.5. Qualitative Research Approach

Qualitative research is a scientific method that investigates social issues from an individual's point of view (Taylor 2014:117). It is a research methodology employed to investigate the experiences and perspectives of individuals in many circumstances. Open-ended questions, observations, and the examination of artifacts are frequently used in qualitative research to gather data. The use of the qualitative research approach in a decolonial analysis of liturgical practices in RCSA was defined, discussed, and explained in this research.

3.5.1. Definitions of Qualitative Research Approach.

Qualitative research can be defined as an exploratory research method that is employed when one seeks to gain an in-depth understanding of a social phenomenon. Unlike quantitative research, the qualitative research approach places much emphasis on subjective experiences, senses, feelings, and perspectives instead of statistical data. Interviews, observations, and document analysis are some of the typical tools used by qualitative researchers to collect data. The data gathered through these tools is coded and examined for new themes, ideas, and connections.

Qualitative research refers to a systematic approach to comprehending a social or human issue, based on diverse methodological traditions of inquiry (Mohajan 2018:5). The primary objective of qualitative research is to offer an initial comprehension of social or human issues, with a specific emphasis on complex

phenomena that are difficult to measure directly, such as values, attitudes, and beliefs. The methodologies employed in qualitative research encompass observation, interviews, and document analysis.

According to Denzin & Lincoln (2011:1), qualitative research is a technique to conduct research that focuses on the individualized meanings, experiences, and viewpoints of people and groups. They claim that qualitative research generates meaning from participant experiences through an interpretive and inductive process. The data is gathered by qualitative researchers using tools like focus groups, interviews, and observation before being thematically evaluated. Their objective is to create a comprehensive understanding of the topic under study.

A set of approaches that aim to describe, interpret, and explain social phenomena in a naturalistic setting is what Miles & Huberman (1994:69) characterize as qualitative research. They contend that the idea of taking a "pragmatic and contextual" view of phenomena serves as the foundation for qualitative research. When conducting a qualitative study, the researcher strives to gain deep knowledge that is based on the experiences of the participants. The techniques used in qualitative research include observations, interviews, and document analysis.

Qualitative research encompasses a variety of approaches and strategies that prioritise the meanings, experiences, and interpretations of the event being studied. Silverman emphasises that exploratory qualitative research seeks to comprehend complex occurrences from multiple perspectives (Silverman 2010). This research approach allows the investigator to acquire a comprehensive comprehension of social phenomena and how individuals involved perceive and encounter them (Neuman 2013).

Qualitative research employs many methodologies such as ethnography, focus groups, and interviews. Qualitative research is an investigative approach that seeks to understand the world through the perspective of the individuals involved in the study (Merriam 2015). She underscores the necessity of employing qualitative research to investigate intricate, ever-changing, and context-specific phenomena since it is a method of comprehension rather than elucidation. Corbin & Strauss (2014:1) highlight that the qualitative research approach is flexible and enables the

researcher to tackle emerging challenges during the investigation. Qualitative research methodologies encompass case studies, observations, and interviews.

3.5.3. Description of Qualitative Research Approach.

Qualitative research uses adaptable research methodologies that permit an inductive approach to data gathering and analysis since it seeks to comprehend subjective experiences (Liu 2016). Unlike quantitative research, which focuses on analysing statistical data to evaluate hypotheses, qualitative research does not. Instead, it takes an investigative method to discover and comprehend how complicated social processes are. Purposive sampling is frequently used in qualitative research to identify people with information, experiences, and viewpoints that are pertinent to the topic. The researcher collected data by conducting interviews, focus groups, or observations. Following transcription, coding, and analysis of the data, patterns or themes are discovered.

3.5.4. Importance of Qualitative Research Approach.

For several reasons, a decolonial analysis of liturgical practices in RCSA used the qualitative research approach. It enables the researcher to investigate the study's background from the viewpoint of the participants. Understanding the cultural and social background that shapes liturgical practices is crucial in a decolonial examination of those in RCSA. The researcher interacted with the participants and gain a greater knowledge of their experiences, attitudes, and beliefs through qualitative research techniques including interviews and observations. This method sheds light on the many contexts in which liturgical practices take place and how they are viewed.

Using a qualitative research approach is crucial to comprehend the significance associated with liturgical acts. RCSA has a rich liturgical legacy, and the connotations associated with the practices have changed over time (Gibson & Earngey 2021; Van der Walt & Vorster 2017:19). Qualitative research techniques can therefore assist in revealing the meanings, customs, and histories that underlie liturgical practices. The researcher can interact with participants and gain an

understanding of the significance of the many liturgical acts, hymns, and rituals carried out within the church using interviews and observations.

Using a qualitative research approach is essential for spotting power dynamics in liturgical practices. The colonial past of RCSA has impacted power dynamics inside the church (Ruel 2017). The manifestation of power relations in church liturgical activities can be identified with the use of qualitative research techniques. The power relationships among various social actors, such as the clergy, the congregation, and the musicians, can be discerned through interviews and observations.

Discovering the decolonial potential of liturgical activities requires a qualitative research approach. RCSA has a long history, but this past shouldn't be static (Carvalhaes 2017). Thus, qualitative research techniques can aid in identifying the potential for changing church liturgical practices. The researcher can find potential for change within the liturgical practices by interacting with participants and getting to know their experiences, attitudes, and beliefs better. This transformation might be supported by the creation of new liturgical activities or by adjusting the existing practices.

The qualitative research methodology can be beneficial in finding the voices that are silenced in liturgical practices, which brings us to our fifth point. Voices that do not adhere to specific liturgical practices may be marginalized because of the colonial past of RCSA (Ruel 2017). Finding these underrepresented voices and comprehending their perspectives can be done with the use of qualitative research techniques. Researchers can find chances to amplify these voices inside the liturgical practices by gaining a greater understanding of these experiences.

3.6. Study Population

The effectiveness of any research study depends critically on the study population. The group of individuals or entities that serve as the foundation for data collecting and analysis is known as the study population. A decolonial study of liturgical practices in RCSA considered the research population because their ethnicity, culture, and religious background influence their experiences and viewpoints. The

significance of the study population in a decolonial investigation of liturgical practices in RCSA is defined, discussed, and explained in this research.

3.6.1. Definitions of Study Population

A group of individuals or things that researchers concentrate on when conducting research studies is known as the study population. The population can consist of individuals, animals, groups, or occasions that have certain traits or qualities pertinent to the study's goal (Babbie 2016). Researchers select the research population by designing data sampling frameworks and gathering information from the designated relevant objects or people. A research study's systematic and strategic structure, which includes the planning, collecting, analysis, and interpretation of data, is known as its research design (Bhattacharjee 2021). The research's objectives and methods for achieving them are laid out in the design. It considers the procedures used for gathering data, the size of the sample, the techniques used for data processing, and the research's ethical implications.

A research design is a blueprint or framework for an investigation that directs data gathering, evaluation, and interpretation (Boeschoten et al. 2020). To ensure that the study is methodologically sound, the researcher uses an overall approach to address the research issues. The research design lays the groundwork for the investigation and is crucial to the accuracy and dependability of the findings.

A research design is a detailed strategy or structure that specifies how a research study will be put together (Thakwalakwa & Muwalo 2020). The study's design outlines the methodology used for data gathering, analysis, and interpretation. Additionally, it offers a framework for the study's theoretical underpinnings, research questions, and objectives as well as a theoretical and conceptual framework.

3.6.3. Description of Study Population.

In a decolonial research study on RCSA's liturgical practices, participants who are who are members of RCSA make up the study population. The population studied can vary depending on the objective of the study, such as examining the historical effects of colonialism on Reformed liturgical traditions, tracing the decolonization of

Reformed liturgical traditions, or assessing the effectiveness of current post-colonial Reformed liturgical traditions (Brubaker Rogers 2016).

Participants who identify with the indigenous cultures where RCSA is active may also be included in the study population. The diversity of the studied population must be considered when researching Reformed liturgical practices. The participants may belong to different socioeconomic groups, age groups, educational levels, ethnicities, and religious affiliations (Vischer 2015). The participants' cultural, social, and religious dynamics can have an impact on how they understand, practice, and perceive Reformed liturgical practices, depending on the research purpose.

3.7. Sampling

Sampling is the act of selecting a subset of persons or groups from a larger population for examination (Robinson 2014:2). It is an essential element of the research methodology for a decolonial inquiry into the liturgical traditions of the RCSA. To ensure that the findings accurately represent the experiences of the entire community, researchers might select a representative sample from the population. This research delves into the importance of sampling in a decolonial examination of liturgical practices in RCSA, providing a clear definition, thorough discussion, and comprehensive explanation.

3.7.1. Definitions of Sampling

Sampling refers to the act of selecting a smaller number of individuals, groups, or objects from a larger population to conduct research (Gall et al. 2019). The sampling technique is grounded on the notion of statistical inference, wherein researchers select a smaller subset of individuals to serve as representatives of the full population.

Sampling is the selection of a subset of individuals or objects to serve as a representative sample of a broader population in a research investigation (Acharya 2013:330). In research inquiries, sampling is crucial to guarantee that the data collected accurately represents the community under examination. Several sampling strategies exist, such as cluster sampling, stratified sampling, and random sampling.

Sampling, as defined by Singh and Masuku (2014:3) refer to the act of selecting a smaller portion from a larger population to make inferences about the entire population. The selected subset should possess features that are representative of the entire population in terms of importance for the study.

Fricker (2016:5) defines sampling as a research technique that involves selecting a selection of individuals or objects from a larger group. To have a better understanding of the characteristics of the larger population, it is important that a sample accurately reflects the relevant traits being studied.

Suri (2011:68) defines sampling as the act of selecting a subset of individuals or objects from a larger population to conduct a research study. The sample should possess attributes that accurately represent the overall population, and the sampling approach should be methodical and transparent. Sampling is the process of selecting a subset of individuals or objects from a larger population to conduct research (Neuman 2018). The selected sample should possess features that accurately reflect the larger population, and the selection technique should be suitable for the research inquiries being posed. Sampling is an essential aspect of research investigations as it ensures the accuracy and reliability of the collected data.

3.7.2. Description of Sampling.

To ensure an appropriate representation of the population, it is necessary to develop a sample plan that adopts a decolonial approach in studying liturgical activities in RCSA. When selecting a sample approach, it is important to consider the population's diversity in terms of culture, religion, and ethnicity. Researchers must establish strategies and procedures for selecting study participants as they significantly influence the research outcomes.

Probability sampling and non-probability sampling are the two categories of sampling techniques. Every member of the population has an equal and known chance of being chosen for the study using the probability sampling technique (Gall et al. 2019). The likelihood of each member of the population being chosen is equal in non-probability sampling, in contrast.

3.7.3. Importance of Sampling in a Decolonial Study of Liturgical Practices in the black RCSA.

The significance of sampling in a decolonial investigation of liturgical practices in RCSA is explained by the following points:

Representation: Sampling makes sure that the study subjects are a representative sample of the population (Emerson 2015). Sampling can help boost the representation of diverse voices and viewpoints in a decolonial study, where non-Western voices are frequently underrepresented.

Generalisation: Sedgwick (2013) asserts that sampling is crucial to enabling researchers to extrapolate study results to a larger population. Researchers can make sure that the findings apply to the broader community by carefully selecting the study participants. The participation of underrepresented groups and sampling can aid in the decolonization of research in RCSA. Researchers can mitigate the consequences of colonialism and its repercussions on the study population by encouraging the inclusive participation of diverse groups in research.

Inclusion: By ensuring that the study includes a wide set of participants from a range of cultural, religious, and ethnic backgrounds, sampling can foster inclusion in a decolonial study of liturgical practices in RCSA. This may result in a deeper comprehension of liturgical customs in RCSA.

Empirically Soundness: Sampling plays a critical role in ensuring the accuracy and reliability of research results, as stated by Bloomfield (2019:28). To ensure the trustworthiness and accurate representation of the full population's experiences, researchers might select a representative sample. Implementing a rigorous sampling method can lead to enhanced precision as well.

3.7.5. Purposive Sampling.

Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique in which the researcher chooses the participants according to predetermined standards. Finding individuals or groups with expertise, experience, or viewpoints relevant to the study issue is the goal of purposive sampling. This strategy is frequently utilized in qualitative research,

where the traits and perspectives of the participants are more significant than their demographic representation. Purposive sampling is crucial in a decolonial study of liturgical practices in RCSA because it enables the researcher to find participants with first-hand knowledge and experience of the topics under investigation and who can shed light on how colonialism and post-colonialism have impacted these churches' liturgical practices.

First off, purposive sampling procedures come in a variety of forms and are frequently employed in qualitative research. Criteria sampling is one form when participants are chosen based on specified standards like age, gender, socioeconomic status, or degree of education (Charlick et al. 2016). Snowball sampling is a different method in which participants are chosen by referrals from previous participants who satisfy the requirements (Gerrish & Lacey 2011). According to Casteel & Bridier (2021:350), the benefit of utilizing purposive sampling approaches is that they enable researchers to target communities or people who have the specialized expertise or experience required to answer the research question. Purposive sampling is crucial in decolonial studies of liturgical practices in RCSA because it enables researchers to find individuals who have firsthand knowledge of the historical and cultural settings that influenced these churches' liturgical practices. Because of this, the participants can offer in-depth explanations of how colonialism and post-colonialism have impacted church Liturgy.

In addition, Palinkas (2015:534) states that purposive sampling allows for the selection of participants who meet specific eligibility criteria, resulting in the collection of data that is highly relevant to the study's focus. This ensures that the collected data is precise and directly aligned with the specific goals of the research.

Purposive sampling also helps decolonize research, which is another advantage. This is crucial in decolonial studies of RCSA's liturgical practices because they aim to question prevailing narratives and discourses that were supported by colonialism. With the help of purposeful sampling, it is possible to choose participants who may not have previously been considered, such as members of marginalized groups or people with different viewpoints (Yuksel & Yildirim 2015). If the researcher wants to give a more accurate and inclusive portrayal of the population being examined, this is important.

Lastly, purposive sampling is both time and money efficient. The recruiting procedure is streamlined and uses less work and resources than other sampling approaches because the participants are chosen based on criteria. As a result, researchers are free to concentrate their efforts on other parts of the study process, like data collecting and analysis.

3.8. Data Collection Tools

Data collection tools refer to the specific instruments or techniques employed to acquire data for a research study (Moyo 2017). They specify that questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, observational guides, and surveys are but a handful of data collection instruments. When choosing data collection methods, it is important to examine the research topics, study design, and research population.

Tools for gathering data that may be evaluated to provide answers to research questions are what Charmaz (2019:22) refers to as data collection tools. Among other things, surveys, observations, and interviews are among the data collection tools, according to Charmaz. Based on the objectives, scope, and target audience of the study, the researcher should choose the best data-gathering method.

Tools for collecting data are methods for acquiring empirical data in research, according to Neuman (2018). Tools for collecting data can include surveys, interviews, focus groups, and case studies, according to Neuman. According to Neuman, the selection of data collection methods should be dependent on the study's population, research questions, and desired analysis.

According to Babbie & Mouton (2018:390), data collection tools are the methods used by researchers to collect data to respond to their research questions. They go on to say that surveys, interviews, observation, and document analysis are some examples of data collection tools. According to Babbie and Mouton, the selection of data collection methods should be based on the study's objectives, research population, and research questions.

Data collection tools, as defined by Sutton & Austin (2015:227), refer to methodologies employed to gather data to address research inquiries. They specify that surveys, interviews, focus groups, observations, and document analysis are a limited selection of data collection methods. Leedy and Ormrod suggest that when

selecting a data collection strategy, one should examine the research question, the required amount of data, and the attributes of the study population. It is advised that the methods used to obtain data should be valid, reliable, and relevant to the objectives of the study. Semi-structured interviews, as a research methodology, integrate the adaptability of open-ended research with the structure of closed-ended research. Engaging in informal conversations with study participants is a technique used to collect qualitative data (Bryman 2016). Semi-structured interviews offer several benefits in a decolonial investigation of liturgical practices in RCSA. These interviews allow for the exploration of participants' perspectives on their experiences while avoiding the imposition of the researcher's own beliefs. This study examines the concept of semi-structured interviews, their use in a decolonial investigation of liturgical practices in RCSA, and their advantages.

3.9. Definition and Description of Semi-Structured Interviews

A semi-structured interview is an interview method that falls between an unstructured interview and a structured interview (Low, Saks & Allsop 2019). An unstructured interview is characterised by the absence of predetermined questions, allowing the researcher to rely on spontaneous conversation for information gathering. In contrast, a structured interview consists of predetermined questions that the researcher poses to each participant sequentially and in a specific sequence.

3.9.1. *Semi-structured interviews*

Conversely, semi-structured interviews allow for greater free-form discussion but contain a few preset questions (Guest et al. 2012). Although the interviewer has a list of questions and subjects to discuss, the conversation is open-ended and can alter if the participant suggests a topic. Depending on the researcher's option, semi-structured interviews can be performed in person, over the phone, or online.

Semi-structured interviews, according to Bryman (2016) & Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik (2021) are research methods in which the interviewer has a list of planned questions to ask respondents. The interviewee may respond any way they like to the open-ended questions. The interviewer wants to get rich, detailed information from

the subject and may ask follow-up questions to get more details. In addition, the reply can come up with themes for discussion.

Semi-structured interviews are instruction-oriented interviews with a group of questions centred on a particular topic. The interview includes prearranged open-ended questions that are flexible in the sense that the interviewer can ask for clarity, details, or examples. Semi-structured interviews give the interviewees freedom of speech, which allows them to share their perspectives and understanding of the research topic freely.

According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2015) a semi-structured interview is an interview technique where the interviewer has a set of prearranged questions that permits flexibility in their approach to explore the responses of interviewees. The questions are general to allow participants to convey their experiences and ideas, although the interviewer may ask more specific ones afterward. Semi-structured interviews enable the researcher to grasp the complexity of the topic under investigation.

3.9.2. Benefits of Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews offer several distinct benefits in research studies, as highlighted by Cachia & Millward (2011: 269) especially when examining liturgical practices in the context of a decolonial study of RCSA. To begin with, they are a highly effective method for gathering comprehensive and detailed data about the participants' experiences and perspectives. Semi-structured interviews enable the researcher to explore the meaning and importance that participants attribute to their experiences, thereby uncovering profound insights regarding liturgical practices in RCSA.

Second, semi-structured interviews enable individuals to express themselves freely and without restriction. This enhances inclusivity in the study process by providing a forum for participants to communicate their thoughts and experiences related to liturgical practices (Bryman 2016). As a result, the researcher is better positioned to capture the actual voices of the participants.

Third, semi-structured interviews are a good method for identifying and exploring complicated topics related to the research topic (Guest et al. 2012). This technique is especially useful in a decolonial study of liturgical activities in RCSA since it can

shed more light on indigenous perspectives on liturgical practices and their appropriation by colonial traditions.

Finally, semi-structured interviews facilitate rapport-building with research participants. Because the dialogue is more casual and easy-going, it can assist in building trust and mutual understanding between the interviewer and the participant (Bryman 2016). This can improve the quality of data collected and the researcher's ability to accurately examine the data.

3.9.3. The Importance of Semi-Structured Interviews in a Decolonial Study of Liturgical Practices in black RCSA

Decolonial studies of liturgical practices in RCSA rely heavily on semi-structured interviews. Decolonial research strives to prioritize indigenous voices and viewpoints over Eurocentric perspectives, ideas, and practices (Moyo & Moyo 2020). Semi-structured interviews provide numerous advantages over other research approaches in this area.

For starters, semi-structured interviews enable a truly decolonial relationship with research participants. It is intended to foster shared power connections, which is a fundamental tenet of decolonial research (Moyo & Moyo 2020). It acknowledges that the researcher is not the only source of knowledge and that the viewpoints and experiences of the participants are equally valuable.

Second, semi-structured interviews can combine traditional liturgical knowledge and understanding of RCSA (Schmidt 2004:253). Indigenous viewpoints and voices from various locations are valued in decolonial research. Semi-structured interviews can accommodate local opinions, attitudes, and values that are frequently overlooked or ignored in other research approaches. This method can help to decolonize the research process, which has traditionally required the imposition of Eurocentric standards in knowledge generation.

Third, semi-structured interviews contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of liturgical practices in RCSA. Outsiders have always comprehended and appraised liturgical activities, rather than insiders or those who practice them (Sullivan 2016:141). Semi-structured interviews provide a unique opportunity to interact with research participants who routinely engage in liturgical practices in RCSA. This can

shed light on the purpose and relevance of liturgical rituals within the church and the larger community.

Fourth, based on the data acquired, semi-structured interviews might be utilized to generate new study questions and hypotheses. New questions and hypotheses can emerge from semi-structured interviews in decolonial research of liturgical practices in RCSA, leading to larger and more inclusive knowledge production (Lather 2014). This method allows the researcher to assess liturgical practices in RCSA from the inside.

However, there are several drawbacks to using semi-structured interviews in research. One example is the risk of researcher bias. Since the researcher has a concept of what they are searching for, a chance exists that they will ask leading questions, favour some participants over others, and subconsciously steer the conversation in a certain direction. Furthermore, the data gathered can only come from participants who consent to participate. This could result in sample bias, jeopardising the data collection process's integrity. As a result, while using semi-structured interviews, researchers should aim to take the appropriate steps to lessen the impact of these limitations.

3.10. Thematic Data Analysis

Thematic data analysis (TDA) is a technique for qualitative research that involves detecting, evaluating, and reporting patterns (themes) within data, according to Yanto (2023:3128). It is a popular method in the social sciences that entails a systematic process of categorizing data to produce themes, categories, and subcategories related to the research questions. TDA is useful in decolonial studies of liturgical practices in RCSA because it allows researchers to identify patterns that might not be apparent using other methods and to investigate how those patterns are shaped by the colonial and post-colonial contexts in which they emerge.

TDA is a process of arranging and categorizing data into categories or themes (Kiger & Varpio 2020). This entails going over the data several times to discover essential concepts and ideas. The data is subsequently coded by the researcher, who groups it based on similarities or variances in meaning. The codes are then classified, which

are further classified into themes. Finally, the themes are examined and reported in a meaningful and relevant manner to the research questions.

TDA can find new themes that researchers may not have considered previously (Braun & Clarke 2019). This is particularly relevant in decolonial studies of liturgical practices in RCSA, where scholars frequently seek to challenge prevailing narratives perpetuated by colonial practices. TDA allows academics to uncover and bring to the forefront analysis issues that are concealed or silenced in mainstream discourse.

The advantage of TDA it allows researchers to investigate the circumstances in which the themes originate (Flick 2022). This is especially essential in decolonial studies, where the colonial and post-colonial contexts can have a significant impact on Reformed Church liturgical practices. TDA allows academics to understand how colonialism and post-colonialism impact liturgical practices and how they continue to maintain or challenge colonial power structures.

Finally, TDA provides a versatile and adaptive method of data analysis (Joffe 2011:209). This is critical in decolonial studies of liturgical practices in RCSA, where research topics and data can be complex and unpredictable. TDA enables researchers to respond to new themes and ideas as they develop, as well as to adapt their analysis to the changing nature of the data.

3.11. Issues of Trustworthiness

In qualitative research, trustworthiness describes the quality of the research method and outcomes. According to Amankwaa (2016:123), the extent to which the research process can be trusted to yield accurate and reliable data that is representative of the research population is a problem of trust. Trustworthiness is especially important in a decolonial study of liturgical practices in RCSA because it ensures that the data collected and analysed reflects the participants' lived experiences and perspectives and is not influenced by the researcher's personal biases or prejudices.

To begin, qualitative research has identified four components of trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The extent to which the research findings truly reflect the reality of the individuals being investigated is referred to as credibility. Transferability, according to Kyngas et al. (2020) refers to the extent to which the research findings can be applied to different locations or

groups. The consistency of the research method and findings through time is referred to as dependability (Mohajan 2017:2). The amount to which the researcher's prejudices and views did not impact the research process is referred to as confirmability (King & Mackey 2016).

Establishing researcher reflexivity is one method for increasing trustworthiness in a decolonial examination of liturgical practices in RCSA. The researcher's reflexivity entails being conscious of one's prejudices and values and how they may influence the research (Palagana *et al.* 2017). Furthermore, Holmes (2020) believes that this entails being open about the researcher's positionality, identifying any biases and assumptions, and taking steps to reduce the impact of the researcher's personal beliefs on the data collecting and analysis process. By doing so, the researcher may ensure that potential biases and assumptions are detected and accounted for, boosting the research's credibility and confirmability.

Another strategy for increasing trustworthiness is to employ triangulation to compare or contrast different data collection methods or data sources. By giving numerous views or sources of information, this strategy helps to strengthen the transferability and confirmability of the research (Ghafouri & Ofoghi 2016). For example, in a decolonial study of liturgical practices in RCSA, the researcher may choose to collect data through participant observation and interviews, or materials such as historical records or liturgical texts. Using several methods of data collecting or data sources allows the researcher to verify that the findings are representative and verifiable, boosting the research's credibility and reliability.

A third method for increasing trustworthiness is to conduct member checks. Member check entails sharing the research findings with the participants and soliciting feedback on the accuracy and validity of the study findings Thomas (2017). This method contributes to the research's credibility by ensuring that the findings appropriately reflect the viewpoints and experiences of the participants being researched (Coleman 2022). Furthermore, this provides a chance for the researcher to participate in discourse with the participants and get additional insights, contributing to the research's transferability and reliability.

3.12. Ethical Considerations

Considering ethical implications is crucial when doing any research, particularly when examining liturgical activities in the context of a decolonial approach to RCSA. Ethics encompasses the ethical principles and standards that guide research (Roth & Von Unger 2018:4). The ethical considerations in qualitative research are of utmost importance due to the involvement of vulnerable human subjects who may be susceptible to damage.

The ethical considerations in qualitative research primarily encompass obtaining informed consent, ensuring confidentiality, safeguarding privacy, and preventing harm. As per Nusbaum et al. (2017:9) informed consent refers to the requirement that participants should receive comprehensive information about the research objectives, methods, and possible hazards. This includes providing participants with a written informed consent form that clearly outlines the research aims and procedures, as well as the potential risks. Confidentiality is the protection of participant data, in that participants should feel confident that their data will be kept confidential and not shared with third parties without their consent (Petrova et al. 2016:446). Privacy refers to the safety of participants' personal information, in that participants should be confident that their data will not be linked to personal information that could jeopardize their privacy (Froomkin & Colangelo 2020:147). Protection from harm relates to participants' physical, psychological, and emotional safety, in that they should not be put in danger of injury because they participate in the research, either directly or indirectly (Hernández, *et al.* 2013:50).

Because of the sensitive nature of the research issue, ethical questions are especially essential in a decolonial study of liturgical practices in RCSA. Power relations, secrecy, privacy, and protection from violence, as well as the impact of colonialism and post-colonialism on the research process, should all be given special consideration. Considering the dynamics of power is one part of the ethical considerations in decolonial studies. Imbalances of power between researchers and participants must be eliminated to the greatest extent possible. Through study, colonial power structures must be eliminated. This can be accomplished by explicitly identifying the researcher's positionality and attempting to create a secure atmosphere that empowers participants.

Another facet of ethical issues in a decolonial analysis of liturgical practices in RCSA is the significance of cultural and traditional sensitivity. This includes paying close attention to the research questions and the language used to communicate with participants. It also necessitates that the researcher approaches the research with humility, acknowledging that different cultures may have different methods of comprehending the world around them. Wherever possible, the researcher should collaborate closely with participants to build a common understanding that is beneficial to all parties involved.

The necessity to protect participant anonymity and privacy is a third facet of ethical considerations in a decolonial analysis of liturgical practices in RCSA. This includes ensuring that no personally identifying information is collected that could jeopardize the participants' privacy. This involves not withholding study information from participants and ensuring that their consent to participate is properly informed. In addition, the researcher should create explicit standards for data storage and processing that protect participant privacy and confidentiality.

The duty to safeguard participants from harm is a fourth ethical consideration in a decolonial analysis of liturgical practices in RCSA. This includes limiting the risk of harm connected with research involvement, such as mental discomfort or exploitation. The researcher should make certain that participants are not pressured or motivated in ways that would jeopardize their participation, and that they have the right to withdraw at any moment without fear of retaliation.

3.13. Conclusion

In summary, this chapter provided a conversation of the research methodologies and approaches used to explore the key research concerns of this study thereby producing valuable insights into the quality of effort that the researcher invested to ensure the reliability and validity of the study. The study employed the phenomenology research design to explore the experiences, meanings, and perceptions of different individuals on the role of Liturgy in RCSA. Furthermore, the EDNA model research design and its importance in a study of Liturgy in RCSA was highlighted, including its influence. The study implemented the interpretive research paradigm and a qualitative research approach. The study population and the sample

were identified and described together with the importance of sampling in a decolonial study of liturgical practices in RCSA. Purposive sampling was employed in the study. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews as well as the importance of semi-structured Interviews in a decolonial study of liturgical practices in RCSA. Moreover, thematic data analysis was used. Matters of confidentiality and informed consent were also highlighted as these are core in research so that research participants are unharmed and participate at their own will.

CHAPTER 4

THE INFLUENCE OF CHURCH LITURGY ON THE COLONIALISM OF THE AFRICAN MINDSET

4.1. Introduction

This chapter analyses the use of church liturgy by missionaries to establish colonial control over the African mindset, to demonstrate the harmful impact of liturgy in the colonisation of African churches and the African psyche. An examination of how church Liturgy was employed to colonise the African psyche would assist black Reformed churches in South Africa (RCSA) in crafting liturgies that have the potential to profoundly impact lives by facilitating a wholehearted surrender to Christ within their environment, culture, and era. The researcher further investigated the various methods in which church ritual was employed to colonise the African mentality. This analysis examined various assumptions employed to influence the African mindset during the dissemination of the gospel by missionaries in African communities.

4.2. The influence of Church Liturgy on the African cultural landscape

The influence of church liturgy on the African cultural landscape is seen in several everyday endeavours. According to Shabangu (2006:163), the church's rituals and customs have been closely intertwined with African culture, encompassing many events such as traditional weddings and burials. The lively vocal and physical expressions observed during religious ceremonies illustrate the vibrant essence of African culture, while the use of vibrant attire and embellishments imparts a unique African flair to the church's aesthetic. Moreover, the church's focus on community and communal gatherings aligns with the deeply ingrained communal values of African communities (Cazarin 2019:2).

Francis (2014:2) maintains that church liturgy has been a prominent cultural influence in Africa, in addition to its religious significance. For illustration, the incorporation of traditional African music and dance into church liturgy in numerous African countries has effectively preserved cultural traditions while simultaneously establishing a unique amalgamation of spirituality and cultural expression. This is

apparent in the vibrant and energetic worship services, where the integration of traditional drumming, singing, and dancing with Christian rites creates a compelling and significant experience for everyone in attendance. The missionaries did not include black people's traditions in the RCSA liturgy, opting to include their own instead of embracing the heritage of the black community.

Angrosino (2021:499) states that the assimilation of church liturgy during the colonial era exerted a substantial influence on indigenous African beliefs, rituals, and traditions. A significant number of Africans were compelled to abandon their native ceremonies and embrace Christian customs. The colonisers repressed indigenous rituals and beliefs, considering them inferior, leading to the erosion of cultural identity, according to Samson and Gigoux (2016). Moreover, the incorporation of church liturgy led to the integration of certain African traditions into Christian practices, resulting in a unique amalgamation of African and Western influences in religious manifestations (Komolafe 2013:34).

For instance, in some African tribes, the practice of venerating ancestors and seeking guidance from traditional healers is integral to spiritual ceremonies. Nevertheless, with the emergence of church liturgy, these beliefs and rituals were often categorised as pagan and repressed by religious authorities during colonial times, according to Gardell (2003:6). Consequently, numerous Africans encountered a clash between their age-old customs and the recently imposed Christian beliefs, leading to the gradual erosion of traditional African spirituality. This is because for the places that the European missionaries and subsequent colonizers were able to reach, they introduced a new religion that considered and, in most cases, intended to transform the African communities into Christians. This is how the Africa spirituality and Christianity worked very closely and at the same time as rivals. Since the African spirituality that was earlier discredited as anti-biblical practices and beliefs now works together with several elements of the Christian symbols and practice. They are not similar in the most common way as the traditional African religion but a mix that some of their followers use to switch gears from one world to another most of the time when they require it.

4.3. Church Liturgy and the Colonisation of African Mind

The connection between church rituals and the colonisation of the African mind has been complex and intertwined throughout history. Aderibigbe (2015:8) asserts that the introduction of Christianity and its associated liturgical rituals to Africa has been perceived as a manifestation of cultural imperialism, to impose Western ideals on African civilizations. The lack of incorporation of African culture into church rites by missionaries resulted in damage to the black church, hindering the expression of African spirituality and the maintenance of traditional customs within Christianity.

The ongoing debate and research persist in analysing the impact of church liturgy on the problem of African colonialism. During colonial times, church liturgy was a means of imposing European cultural ideas and values on Africans (Falola 2003:4-5). According to Ibhawoh (2008:29), the missionaries saw the local African beliefs and behaviours as pagan and sought to replace them with European Christianity. However, Gore (2009:244) maintains that the church operated as a colonial apparatus, with the dual purpose of disseminating Christianity and exerting dominion and regulation over the African population.

Ogbonnaya (2017:7) states that the imposition of European cultural norms and convictions through church liturgy had a significant and long-lasting impact on African civilizations, frequently resulting in the collapse of native cultural customs and the destruction of traditional wisdom. In addition to that, the importance of language in church liturgy as a tool for cultural hegemony and manipulation cannot be overstated. The use of Latin, particularly in Western Christianity, contributed to the separation between the clergy and the laity, hence strengthening power dynamics within the church, according to Tanner & Watson (2006:397). Those who knew Latin had a higher social status in the religious community, whereas most others in the audience were passive spectators who could not actively participate in the rites and prayers done in an alien language. Regarding the black RCSA, the situation is distinct. To participate in worship services, the missionaries made every effort to learn the language of the black church. When writing to support the black church, they blend our history with other African traditions and European culture. Therefore, the Bible currently used by the black church closely resembles that version (Ramantswana 2024). The presence of this linguistic barrier also reinforced

a sense of control, leading the general population to rely on the clergy for spiritual direction and enhancing the church's authority (Branson & Martinez, 2023; Puls 2011:57).

The vibrant and melodic expressions that have arisen demonstrate the influence of church liturgy on African art, music, and dance forms (Klomp 2011:103). The synthesis of Christian symbols and rituals with indigenous African customs has resulted in a distinctive blend of spirituality and cultural heritage. According to Okigbo (2010:3), the church liturgy has served as a medium for African artists, musicians, and dancers to exhibit their skills and ingenuity, all the while preserving a profound link to their cultural legacy. The result is a dynamic and complex assemblage of artistic expressions that honour both religious convictions and African cultural legacy.

4.4. Church Liturgy and the colonisation of African king

Church ceremonialism and African royal colonialism are two seemingly unrelated historical events. However, in the context of the black RCSA, these two events were intricately connected during Africa's colonial period. According to Korieh & Njoku (2007:13) the arrival of European missionaries introduced not only their religious ideologies and rituals but also a determination to establish authority and sway over the African populace and their rulers. Consequently, colonial powers employed church liturgy to establish their dominance and coerce African kings into compliance because of the acceptance of Good News by African kings. During African royal colonisation, the implementation of church liturgy often led to conflicts between indigenous religious practices and the imposition of Christian rituals (Ela 2009). The clash of beliefs and practices often led to cultural conflicts and resistance from indigenous tribes striving to preserve their spiritual customs.

According to Viera (2007:250) missionaries invaded African countries, resulting in dramatic cultural and spiritual shifts. Several African monarchs perceived the arrival of missionaries as an opportunity to expand their understanding and enhance the prosperity of their realms because kings were colonised. Nevertheless, Ter Haar (2009:2) maintains that with the advent of missionaries, the propagation of their religious doctrines, the imposition of Western values, the traditional African rituals

and behaviours gradually diminished, leading to a decline in the African people's cultural identity. The colonisation of African kings by missionaries ultimately influenced Africa's fate, leaving a lasting impact on its social, political, and theological environment.

The influence of colonialism, facilitated by church liturgy and European presence, has profoundly affected the role of traditional African kings in society, according to Boahen (2020) European missionaries sought to propagate their religious beliefs and rituals across the continent of Africa, often endeavouring to enforce their liturgical practices and traditions on the African populace, which the researcher terms liturgical baggage for African people. This colonial approach aimed to alter and regulate the cultural identity of Africans while also seeking to convert them to Christianity, which we regard as the abuse of the propagation of the Good News. Rael (2000) asserts that the incorporation of church liturgy within the African king's realm engendered a complex interplay between native African traditions and European religious rituals, leading to both cultural assimilation and resistance.

African communities faced complex identity dilemmas within the framework of both church liturgy and colonial rule enforced by the monarchy, according to Spear (2017:443). The convergence of religious rituals and state authority resulted in a fragile balance, compelling African individuals, and communities to adjust and mediate their beliefs and customs. The collision between church liturgy, derived from Europe, and the cultural and spiritual ideas deeply rooted in African civilizations was a frequent occurrence (Oden 2007:11-12).

4.5. Church Liturgy and the colonisation of African mind towards the use of traditional medicine

According to Manala (2013:2) church liturgy exerted a substantial influence on the African population's perspectives about the utilisation of traditional remedies throughout the colonial era. The advent of Christianity introduced a novel belief system that often-denounced prior practices as pagan or malevolent because they failed to understand traditional medicine. By promoting Western religious traditions, they discredited traditional medicine as archaic and linked it to superstition, undermining its credibility and promoting a preference for Western medical methods,

according to Izuchukwu (2022:81). Consequently, a significant number of Africans started forsaking their customary healing practices in favour of religious teachings, leading to a decline in the utilisation and acceptance of traditional medicine within African communities. Due to our forefathers' expertise, they passed away without sharing it with us since we believed that learning medicine was associated with paganism and ancestor worship. We were disregarding the traditional healing gift that God had given to us as Africans.

The influence of church liturgy on the perception and acceptance of traditional medicine in African communities is a complex and subtle subject (Gehman 2005:6). Church liturgy often emphasises the efficacy of prayer and divine healing, which can result in scepticism or outright rejection of conventional medicine. Conversely, several African tribes have devised techniques to integrate church rituals and traditional healing practices, recognising their spiritual and cultural importance. African-initiated churches are good examples when it comes to that. The connection between church liturgy and traditional medicine in African cultures exhibits significant variation, contingent upon individual beliefs, cultural customs, and external factors (Obinna 2016).

The introduction of Western religious practices and ideals through colonialism had a profound influence on the acceptability of church liturgy in Africa concerning the use of traditional medicine (Ter Haar 2009:2-3). European missionaries arrived on the continent to convert the native population to Christianity. One of their main strategies was to embrace and advocate for their liturgical customs. The introduction of Western religious rites sometimes led to the marginalisation and stigmatisation of indigenous healing techniques in Africa, significantly impacting their perception and acceptance (Waldron 2010:4).

An essential task fulfilled by missionaries in Africa was the assimilation of Western religious customs. They thought they were assisting us while destroying us. Christianity was disseminated over the continent by missionaries, who also introduced their own beliefs and practices (Dunch 2002:302). This had a profound influence on African perspectives towards traditional medicine, which had been a crucial aspect of their society for thousands of years.

The introduction of church liturgy has significantly influenced societal views towards traditional healers, herbs, rituals, and spiritual beliefs in African communities following colonisation (Asamoah-Gyadu 2014:70). Upon the arrival of Christian missionaries, numerous Africans were introduced to a novel religious paradigm that saw traditional practices as antiquated and superstitious. As a result, church liturgy eventually made indigenous healing practices seem less valuable and legitimate, which made them less acceptable and easier to incorporate into African societies (Adu-Gyamfi & Anderson 2019:73). Moreover, the prioritisation of monotheism and the refusal of polytheistic beliefs stifled indigenous spiritual practices, ultimately transforming the cultural fabric of African tribes.

4.6. Church liturgy and the Colonisation of Africa's mind towards African initiation schools

The church liturgy exerted a significant impact on the colonisation of Africa's perspectives regarding African-initiated schools (Masuku 2019 & Mepaiyeda 2022:11). European missionaries brought a Westernised form of Christianity to Africa, enforcing their religious customs and rituals. This not only undermined traditional African spiritual beliefs but also shaped the establishment of schools that prioritised European ideas and traditions while disregarding Africa's abundant heritage. Consequently, schools managed by African initiation schools were unsuccessful in reestablishing their cultural identity and traditional knowledge systems. The initiation schools held great importance for African individuals, particularly for young men and women. The schools provide chances for cultural education, spiritual growth, and community building. Participants acquire traditional beliefs, expertise, and rituals that have been transmitted across generations. Participating in an African initiation school is considered crucial for fostering one's sense of self and cultural roots.

What was required when black individuals embraced the Good News and were instructed to discontinue participation in our initiation schools? Black individuals should consider how they were compensated for the resources they once received from these colleges. The black church failed to take this into account and is now

experiencing the consequences of colonisation. The eradication of indigenous languages and cultural traditions in African initiation schools is an example of colonialism of African minds (Wolfe 2006:388). Missionaries often imposed the use of European languages such as English, resulting in the erosion of indigenous African languages and customs, according to Migge & Légise (2008:1-2). Another instance involves the incorporation of Western religious customs and concepts into initiation schools established by Africans. The church liturgy exerted a significant influence on the curriculum and daily activities, instilling European religious perspectives in African children and widening the divide.

According to Duncan (2014:1), the introduction of church liturgy during the colonial era significantly influenced the transformation of African traditions. With the acceptance of Christianity in African nations, traditional initiation schools gradually declined in popularity due to their association with pagan rituals. The perception of these schools transformed as numerous Africans began to view them as primitive and uncultured, thereby reinforcing the notion of Western superiority. This action had a significant impact on the moral education of African youth because it interfered with the traditional initiation schools' function of imparting important life lessons and cultural knowledge.

Foster (2019:12) maintains that European colonisers employed church liturgy to exert influence on African communities and advance their educational institutions instead of African initiation schools. The colonisers perceived African initiation schools as a threat to their authority and attempted to diminish their influence. Their objective was to introduce European ideas and beliefs into African societies by using church liturgy, to subvert indigenous African ceremonies and behaviours. This technique facilitated the colonisers in acquiring dominion over the school system and advancing their goal of cultural assimilation.

These African-led institutions played a crucial role in challenging the dominance of colonial education and reclaiming cultural identity (Knaus 2022). These schools facilitated the practice of indigenous African practices and rituals, independent from the control of colonial authority, by offering alternative religious options. By doing so, they were able to safeguard and transmit their cultural legacy to forthcoming

generations, guaranteeing its ongoing existence and importance in an ever-evolving world. Moreover, these schools bestowed upon Africans the authority to oversee their education, enabling them to design the curriculum and teaching approaches by their own beliefs and requirements (Ball 1983). As a result, schools established by Africans served as focal points for opposing and empowering actions, fostering a sense of dignity and the capacity for making independent decisions within African communities.

An instance of church liturgy being employed as a means of colonialism in African-initiated schools is the incorporation of Western hymns and prayers that highlight European values and religious customs. The hymns and prayers were sometimes instructed in conjunction with customary African songs and rituals, cultivating a perception of European culture as superior and dominant over indigenous African customs, according to Chikowero (2015:19). This contributed to the spread of the idea that the African population should adopt the superior European way of life.

4.7. Church Liturgy and colonisation of African minds towards land

Church rituals have been closely linked to the colonialism of African perspectives on land and resources throughout history. Bennett (2021) stated that throughout the colonial era, European religious customs and rituals were imposed on African communities, influencing their views on land ownership and resource utilisation. The Church's influence on African views on land may be seen as a type of cultural colonialism, as it continuously supported the European concept of private property and individual ownership. Daneel (2011:131) states that the Christian belief in dominion over the world resulted in the displacement and marginalisation of indigenous African communities from their traditional territories.

The church influenced African views on land colonialism by imposing European concepts of property ownership. According to Haig-Brown (2012:4), missionaries frequently taught African communities about private land ownership and its sale, which was a new idea to traditional African societies that valued community ownership and stewardship. This shift in perspective resulted in disputes over land titles, contributing to the exclusion and compulsory relocation of indigenous groups.

Church liturgy throughout colonial times had a notable impact on African communities' traditions and practices, particularly with land ownership and use (Young 2004). European missionaries expanded their influence by imposing their religious rituals and views on African tribes, which resulted in a change in how African people interacted with the land. Ben and Gounder (2019) stated that African civilizations transitioned from community land ownership to individual ownership and rights. This advancement caused a disturbance in traditional methods of land management and communal decision-making, resulting in conflicts and tensions among African communities.

Missionaries were instrumental in bringing the concept of private land ownership to African tribes that previously practiced communal ownership (Vernal 2012:246). This shift in perspective has far-reaching effects on land management and resource allocation in Africa, resulting in the monetization of land and the removal of indigenous communities from their traditional lands. Missionaries frequently misused their power to expand their missions and colonies, leading to further land deprivation issues.

Engerman and Sokoloff (2005:2) argue that European countries showed considerable diversity in their colonial property ownership regulations and the consequent results. The Spanish established the *encomienda* system, allowing specific individuals to use indigenous labourers in exchange for protecting and converting them to Christianity. This setup consolidated land ownership and control among a small group of wealthy individuals, further the marginalisation of indigenous peoples. On the other hand, the French and British embraced a more individualised approach to land ownership, encouraging the creation of new farms and plantations by immigrants, (Knowles 2016). This had varied outcomes as it enabled the growth of European colonies while also leading to the removal and deprivation of indigenous populations. The land ownership restrictions during colonial times had significant and long-lasting impacts on both indigenous communities and colonial growth.

The colonial practices of European powers greatly influenced African property rights, inheritance, and communal land systems, leading to long-term effects on social structures in local communities (Ibhawoh 2008:8). Colonial activities significantly

impacted African civilizations, resulting in changes to customary systems related to property rights, inheritance, and land ownership. European countries attempted to exploit Africa's plentiful resources, often ignoring the local customs and traditions. As a result, the unity of local communities was greatly damaged, resulting in lasting effects that still influence African societies today.

African individuals or groups frequently challenge colonial perspectives on land through cultural revival efforts, grassroots campaigning for indigenous rights, or legal disputes over ancestral areas. An example is the Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya during the 1950s and 1960s, which served as a significant display of African resistance against British colonial rule (Durrani 2018:18). The Mau Mau used armed resistance and cultural revival to regain their territory and challenge the strict policies of the colonisers. The African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa strongly opposed apartheid and supported the rights of indigenous people (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2007). They utilised grassroots mobilisation and legal action to regain ancestral lands and confront the repressive colonial mentality that affected the African population. These actions, along with others, demonstrate the resolute drive and ambition of African individuals and groups to reject and overcome colonial viewpoints about their homeland.

4.8. Church Liturgy and the colonisation of the African mind towards marriage

During the colonial era, African views on marriage were notably shaped by the impact of church liturgy (Boahen 2020). European missionaries imposed their religious beliefs and practices on the indigenous people. Traditional African marriage rituals and beliefs were frequently ignored or seen as inferior, resulting in a shift towards embracing the Christian concept of marriage. Segueda (2015:4) argues that the impact of colonialism on the African perception of marriage, influenced by church ceremonies, had lasting effects on how Africans understood and practiced marital relationships.

Church liturgy has significantly shaped African marriage practices and influenced the way weddings are carried out in many African countries (Nweke 2023:41). Christianity's presence resulted in the fusion of traditional African traditions with

Christian ceremonies, creating a distinct set of cultural practices. Marriage is considered a sacred institution in African societies. Integrating church liturgy into the wedding ceremony has enhanced its spiritual essence, increasing its importance and symbolic meaning (Chupungco 2006).

The colonial process greatly influenced indigenous cultures, particularly in their wedding customs, marital responsibilities, and traditional beliefs (Narayan 2013:3). Colonisers' entrance altered the wedding customs of indigenous civilizations, who frequently had to embrace the traditions and rites brought by the colonisers. Patriarchal regimes significantly changed marital duties, therefore affecting power relations in marriages. Furthermore, the colonisers suppressed or replaced indigenous beliefs with their own religious and cultural ideas, resulting in the decline of native spirituality and cultural traditions.

African communities began to reassess their old behaviours as the liturgy highlighted the significance of monogamy and the sanctity of marriage (Ofosuware 2021:23). The emphasis on fidelity, commitment, and the concept of a lifetime partnership began to supplant the previous tolerance of polygamy. This change in perspective resulted in a stricter and standardised approach to building relationships inside these communities.

The impact of church liturgy on gender roles in African marriages became a complicated and diverse phenomenon in the post-colonial era. Gerloff (2010:308) stated that the arrival of Christianity, together with its rites and practices, led to substantial alterations in the societal organisation of African communities. After the period of colonialism, African civilizations struggled with the repercussions. Integrating church rituals had a significant influence on existing gender dynamics, leading to a re-evaluation of traditional standards and redefining the responsibilities and expectations of men and women inside marriages (Woodhead 2007:579).

4.9. Church liturgy and the colonisation of the African mind concerning white people.

According to Finney (2014:17) throughout the colonial era, the church liturgy had a substantial impact on how Africans viewed white people. The church frequently

portrayed European colonisers as superior and divinely chosen to deliver civilization to Africa in sermons, hymns, and religious teachings. This story emphasised the hierarchical dynamic between the colonisers and the colonised, supporting the idea that white individuals had inherent superiority and the right to rule over African societies (Low 2003). As a result, colonial Africans' attitude was shaped to view white persons as inferior and reliant.

Enforcing religious practices reflects colonialism in the African mindset towards white people. In Africa, European missionaries spread their religious beliefs, significantly influencing the local population (Gladwin 2017:2). As a result, many Africans adopted and accepted Western religious beliefs and practices, such as venerating white figures depicted in religious art and symbols. This perpetuated an inherent preference for whiteness and fostered the power imbalance between European colonisers and African residents.

Christianity had a profound impact on African communities during colonial times, influencing both religious beliefs and cultural practices. African societies adopted Christianity and integrated its liturgical ceremonies and customs. According to Ungureanu (2021:220), the adoption of new traditions not only changed their spiritual beliefs but also shaped their views of white people, who were seen as the carriers of this emerging religion and its teachings. Encounters with Christianity significantly impacted African perceptions of white people, resulting in complex relationships and power structures in the colonial era.

Bunting (2019:141) African views of white individuals were influenced by the imposition of Eurocentric ideology and habits, resulting in feelings of inferiority and the adoption of racist beliefs. African nations were forced to adopt European habits, languages, and religious practices, reinforcing the belief in white supremacy. This significantly influenced how Africans viewed themselves and their relationships with white people, occasionally resulting in sentiments of inferiority and a diminished sense of cultural identity.

4.10. Social Impact of Church Liturgy and colonisation of African mind

Church liturgy has a significant role in promoting a feeling of communal belonging among Africans. In many African civilizations, the church is a central location where people gather for religious activities, as well as to come together for ceremonies, mourning, and to offer support to one other (Allen & Lawton 2012). The meticulously planned rituals and symbols of the liturgy create a sense of acknowledgment and belonging, resulting in a shared experience that brings together people from all cultures and languages.

According to Kurgat (2009:090), the church liturgy strengthens African communities by promoting communal involvement in songs, prayers, and sacraments, creating a feeling of connection and solidarity that goes beyond the church's physical limits. Church services provide a forum for folks to gather and create ties with one another. Higgins & Willingham (2017:12) argue that the African community can enhance their connections and relationships by participating in the communal activity of sharing prayers, songs, and readings. The structured framework of the programmes promotes inclusivity and active involvement, fostering a sense of belonging and unity within the community.

Taylor (2000:76) argues that numerous religious group's view solving societal issues through church rituals as crucial. Churches that incorporate social justice, empathy, and inclusivity into their religious services can inspire their members to participate in their communities and bring about positive change. The church liturgy offers a space for reflection, education, and discussion on important issues including poverty, racism, and climate change (Jenkins 2013:111). It motivates people to live out their values by actively engaging in the establishment of a just and unbiased society. Churches may play a crucial role in inspiring societal change and promoting a collective responsibility among their members by addressing these issues through prayers, readings, and sermons.

Prayers for social justice and addressing current problems in sermons are crucial in helping Africans understand and participate in addressing societal issues. These elements serve to instil a sense of duty and compassion among African worshippers, while also acting as a moral compass and motivating individuals to take proactive actions.

Theuri (2015:44) contends that African churches utilise prayer and preaching to encourage their members to engage actively in addressing issues like poverty, inequality, and injustice, fostering a more proactive and socially conscious community. Preserving culture through church liturgy is essential for maintaining a community's identity and tradition. The church liturgy effectively preserves cultural traditions such as hymns, prayers, and rites that have been passed down through generations (Kavanagh 2017). Religious communities can preserve and pass along their cultural heritage to future generations by following these well-established customs. Furthermore, religious ceremonies create a sense of continuous advancement and stability in a society that is always changing, offering individuals comfort and a connection to their roots.

The incorporation of indigenous African components into church liturgical rituals aims to preserve cultural history while adopting Christianity, resulting in a distinctive blend of spirituality that resonates strongly with local cultures (Mokhoathi 2019). By integrating indigenous African music, dance, and rituals into religious practices, communities can pay tribute to their cultural heritage while also maintaining a deep connection to their ancestral traditions. This integration promotes the growth of individual's religious and spiritual development while honouring their cultural background, resulting in a peaceful blend of African customs and Christian beliefs.

Participating in church liturgical rites can greatly strengthen individuals' feeling of connection and significance within their religious group (Krause & Hayward 2013:3). Participating in rituals like choir singing or working as altar servers can strengthen individuals' religious connection and boost their sense of empowerment in their spiritual journey. Furthermore, the collaborative character of these efforts promotes a sense of solidarity and shared responsibility among church members, empowering them to engage actively in the progress and well-being of their community.

According to Chitando (2004:123), engaging in various roles during worship allows Africans to actively contribute to their religious communities and strengthen their sense of belonging. People boost their confidence and cultivate leadership abilities by taking on various tasks, such as joining the chorus, leading prayers, or working as

ushers. This empowerment encourages personal development and motivates Africans to take on leadership roles in their religious groups, resulting in beneficial transformations and a sense of solidarity.

Church liturgy has a significant role in promoting a feeling of communal belonging among Africans. In many African communities, the church functions as a focal location where people gather for religious activities, and ceremonies, and to support each other. The meticulously planned rituals and symbols of the liturgy promote a sense of acknowledgment and belonging, resulting in a shared experience that brings together people from diverse backgrounds and language origins.

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This is of utmost importance as it is imperative for African individuals to develop efficient tactics to counteract the mental subjugation caused by colonisation. This will empower them to openly articulate their viewpoints and actively engage in the establishment of a just and unbiased society. In addition, this will provide church members with the chance to exert influence on the progress of society and foster a collective feeling of accountability within their community by addressing these matters during their worship sessions. Taylor (2000:76) argues that numerous religious communities view tackling societal issues through church rituals as a crucial element. Churches that incorporate social justice, empathy, and inclusivity into their religious services can inspire their members to participate actively in their communities and bring about positive change. The church liturgy serves as a forum for reflection, education, and discussion on important issues including poverty, racism, and climate change (Jenkins 2013). It motivates people to express their opinions by actively engaging in the establishment of a just and unbiased society.

Churches may greatly influence society's development and promote a sense of shared responsibility among their members by addressing these issues through prayers, readings, and sermons.

Prayers for social justice and discussing current problems in sermons during church services are crucial in helping Africans understand and actively address societal issues (Shilubane 2019). These components foster obligation and empathy among African worshippers, serve as a moral compass and motivate individuals to take constructive actions.

Theuri (2015:44) contends that African churches utilise prayer and preaching to inspire their members to engage actively in addressing issues like poverty, inequality, and injustice, fostering a more proactive and socially conscious community. Maintaining culture through religious rituals is essential for sustaining a feeling of identity and heritage within communities. The church liturgy effectively preserves cultural traditions such as hymns, prayers, and rites that have been passed down through generations (Kavanagh 2017). Religious communities can preserve and pass on their cultural heritage to future generations by following these well-established customs. Religious ceremonies promote a sense of continuous advancement and stability in a society that is always changing, offering people comfort and a connection to their roots.

Integrating indigenous African aspects into church liturgical rituals aims to preserve cultural history while incorporating Christianity, resulting in a distinct blend of spirituality that resonates with local cultures (Mokhoathi 2019). By integrating indigenous African music, dance, and rituals into religious practices, communities can pay tribute to their cultural heritage while maintaining a deep connection to their ancestral traditions. This integration promotes the growth of individual's religious and spiritual development while honouring their cultural background, resulting in a harmonious blend of African customs and Christian ideas.

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According to Chitando (2004:123), engaging in various roles during worship helps Africans actively contribute to their religious communities and strengthen their sense of belonging. People boost their self-assurance and cultivate their leadership abilities by taking on various tasks, such as joining the chorus, leading prayers, or working as ushers. This empowerment promotes personal development and encourages Africans to take on leadership roles in their religious communities, resulting in beneficial changes and a sense of solidarity.

4.11. Psychological Impact of Church Liturgy and the colonisation of African mind

The church liturgy exerts a multifaceted and diverse psychological impact on Africans (Mouzon 2017:64). Participating in religious rituals and observances can cultivate a feeling of belonging and mutual trust, resulting in positive impacts on one's mental well-being. Furthermore, Groover (2020) states that the repetitive nature of liturgical acts may have a calming effect, alleviating stress, and anxiety. However, some individuals may experience negative psychological effects when they are compelled to follow religious norms or when they face discrimination within the religious community. Various factors and individual differences can affect how the church's liturgy impacts the psychological well-being of Africans.

The influence of church liturgy on African identity and self-perception is intricate and deeply rooted in the brain, according to Oden (2007:45–46). The church liturgy serves as a powerful tool that actively engages African communities in rituals and traditions, enhancing their collective identity and sense of belonging. These ceremonies often prioritise cultural values, customs, and spirituality, strengthening African self-perception and validating their unique experiences. Furthermore, Pfefferbaum et al. (2017:102) argue that church liturgy can function as a platform for the restoration of well-being and the enhancement of personal agency, enabling individuals to manage the complexities of their African heritage with a sense of

honour and resilience. Church liturgy has a significant influence on shaping and protecting African identity and self-perception in a global context.

The historical presence of racial inferiority and white supremacy inside the church liturgy is a disconcerting aspect that requires addressing (Coble 2019:563). Throughout history, religious authorities have utilised ceremonial practices and beliefs to justify and uphold systems of racial hierarchies and bias. The church's support for the belief in racial supremacy has prolonged the exclusion and domination of individuals who do not belong to the white ethnic group, hence sustaining harmful stereotypes and prejudices. The church should acknowledge and address its problematic history, making a deliberate effort to create inclusive and equitable religious practices that challenge and dismantle discriminatory beliefs.

The impact of church liturgy on maintaining racial subordination and white dominance is evident in the historical practice of segregated places of worship (Branson & Martinez 2023). Churches often enforced racial segregation by constructing separate sections or services for white worshippers and people of colour, thereby perpetuating the notion of racial superiority. Additionally, church liturgy included prayers or hymns that emphasised white people as the favoured race that God had chosen, reinforcing racial supremacy convictions.

4.12. Political Impact of Church Liturgy and the colonisation of African mind

As stated by Sanneh & Carpenter (2005:4), African society has been significantly impacted by the political power of the church liturgy. Churches have played a major role in motivating the African population for political involvement by incorporating political messages and themes into religious rituals. Utilising potent symbols and rituals in church services has helped Africans develop a collective identity and solidarity, empowering them to confront repressive political systems and advocate for their rights (Moore 2014). Furthermore, the church has offered a forum for African leaders to communicate with and rally their supporters, enhancing the political influence of church ceremonies on Africans.

Murrell (2010:37) maintains that the integration of religious rites in Africa's struggle for independence demonstrated the connection between church celebrations and political rebellions. Churches across the continent were used as centres for political mobilisation when religious leaders utilised their power to encourage the populace to resist colonial rule. These leaders frequently incorporated pieces of old African mysticism into Christian rituals, blending traditional and modern elements to foster a deep sense of unity and purpose.

During the colonial era, the adoption of Western church liturgy significantly impacted how Africans viewed politics and administration, as stated by Foster (2019:21). Africans adopted Christianity, including its hierarchical structure and harsh governance. As a result, their perspective on political leadership changed, favouring centralised authority and less individual participation in decision-making processes.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, originating from South Africa, has been instrumental in promoting liberation theology in Africa, as noted by Brittain & Maphumulo (2022:305). Tutu utilised the church liturgy to condemn the injustices of apartheid and promote equality and human rights within the anti-apartheid struggle. Father Fidelis Mukonori, a Catholic priest in Zimbabwe, was instrumental in using church rituals to address issues of social justice, advocate for democratic principles, and condemn government tyranny, as reported by Marevesa & Mavengano (2023:357). These individuals, along with others, demonstrate the importance of church liturgy in Africa to express and address social issues.

The Catholic Church's role in South Africa's anti-apartheid campaign demonstrates how church rituals can encourage political mobilisation in African communities (Duncan & Egan 2019:2). The church, via its liturgical rituals and teachings, played a vital role in uniting the black populace against the cruel apartheid state. In South Africa, the Catholic Church, led by powerful leaders like Archbishop Desmond Tutu, strongly opposed apartheid and used its religious platform to encourage political mobilisation effectively (Ntlhola 2021:35).

4.13. Economic Impact of Church Liturgy and the colonisation of African mind

Church liturgy has a significant influence on the African economy. Isenberg & Onyemah (2016:73) assert that the church has a significant impact on promoting entrepreneurship and enhancing economic growth within the community. Church-run businesses such as bookstores, food services, and artisan shops offer employment and income opportunities to Africans. Missionaries created these opportunities for themselves instead of the black community, who accepted them due to colonisation. Moreover, the church consistently encourages tithing and gifts to support its financial stability and fund community development projects such as educational institutions and medical facilities (Tebitendwa & Sendege 2020: add page number). Church liturgy acts as a stimulus for spiritual and economic advancement in white communities.

The church liturgy is said to facilitate economic prosperity and empowerment for white individuals by utilising resources from the black community (Akanbi & Beyers 2017:1). Church rituals often encourage virtues such as honesty, integrity, and diligence, all of which are essential for economic progress. The missionaries at the black church were deemed disloyal for promoting dependency on their financial assistance instead of encouraging the congregation to donate their funds towards the advancement of the kingdom of God (Stott 2012). Moreover, the church functions as a networking and collaboration centre, enabling individuals to exchange resources and identify opportunities for Caucasian individuals. Kiteme (2009:24) states that churches often endorse microfinance and skill-building initiatives through outreach efforts to help individuals establish their businesses and enhance their financial status. Integrating religious ceremonies into economic development initiatives helps uplift African communities and promote sustainable progress and empowerment, a goal missionaries failed to accomplish.

Donations made by church members during religious services significantly influence the local economy (Akanbi & Beyers 2017: add page number). Black RCSA congregations did not benefit from this advantage throughout the missionary time. They only started contributing during liturgical activities and tithing after the missionaries left and came home. This money is frequently utilised for the upkeep of church buildings, compensation for clergy and staff, and the financing of new community outreach projects. Increased attendance at religious services and events

can boost local businesses like restaurants, hotels, and stores, revitalising the economy that the black church has not benefited from because of colonisation. Sider, Olson, & Unruh (2002:12) discovered that church members' monetary donations for liturgical events have positive effects on both the church and the local community.

The church liturgy significantly influences the values and beliefs of Africans, which in turn plays a crucial role in shaping their consumer behaviour and shopping habits (Anderson 2001:11). Church services often emphasise qualities like gratitude, altruism, and humility, which might promote a focus on societal well-being rather than financial ambitions. Engaging in religious activities that foster a sense of community might lead to social pressure to adhere to spending habits, such as backing local businesses or donating to church projects. The church liturgy greatly impacts the financial decisions and spending habits of Africans.

Akabike, Ngwoke, & Chukwuma (2021:3) argue that religious practices like tithing or offering can worsen socioeconomic disparities in African civilizations. The researcher disagrees, stating that tithe is a divine commandment that must be followed regardless of its impact on inequality. Individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds may feel compelled to allocate a significant percentage of their income toward fulfilling their religious obligations, thus worsening their financial challenges if they remain deeply religious. Religious institutions can accumulate substantial wealth through these activities, exacerbating the economic gap between the wealthy and the impoverished. Religious groups sometimes use funds collected through tithing or offerings to help humanitarian causes, aid the less fortunate, and reduce poverty in African communities (Freeman 2019).

According to Saayman, Saayman, & Gyekye (2014:408), significant economic consequences are often associated with large-scale religious gatherings or pilgrimages in Africa. These events attract many visitors from around the continent, leading to a rise in tourism, hotel bookings, and transportation services. Moreover, the intricate liturgical rituals linked to these occasions need the participation of native artisans, musicians, and caterers, thus fostering local economic development.

Overall, these religious meetings have a profound spiritual influence and stimulate the area economic growth and development.

4.14. Cultural Impact of Church Liturgy and the colonisation of African mind

The influence of church liturgy on African culture is evident. Turaki (2007:131) argues that the church's rituals, traditions, and behaviours have significantly influenced African societies following the spread of Christianity over the continent. By integrating passionate vocal expression and rhythmic motion in religious rituals, and combining traditional African musical instruments with Christian hymns, a unique and lively form of worship has emerged that reflects the vast cultural legacy of the continent. Church liturgy has significantly aided in the conservation and revitalization of African languages by translating and singing numerous hymns and prayers in local dialects, albeit with European melodies. The black RCSA's worship sessions lack African cultural elements, with singing and structure resembling missionary practices. Missionaries undermine African culture, leading Africans to be oblivious to their colonisation. Adogame (2013: add page number) states that church liturgy plays a significant role in African culture by fostering unity, shaping personal and communal identities, and promoting strength and spiritual growth throughout the continent. The researcher fully concurs with Adogame that church liturgy can only be effective if it mirrors African customs.

African communities have historically integrated and adjusted liturgical elements from missionaries. Ackah et al. (2017:97) state that this originated during the early phases of colonialism when European missionaries brought Christianity to Africa. African communities incorporated their cultural rites and traditions into the liturgy as they embraced the faith, creating a unique and vibrant worship style that showcased their diverse heritage. The fusion of practices in African Christianity is thriving and evolving, showcasing its enduring influence and ingenuity.

Lebaka (2015:1) states that incorporating drumming and dance into church services demonstrates the merging of traditional African beliefs with Christian liturgy. Drumming and dance hold significant spiritual importance in many African cultures. However, due to the influence of black RCSA's mental colonialism, they have

developed a disdain for the usage of instruments during worship, labelling it as disorderly. Some churches, like African traditional churches, charismatic churches, and Pentecostals, have integrated these traditions into their religious rituals, creating a unique fusion of African spirituality and Christian worship. Many Christian groups have integrated indigenous customs, such as ancestral worship, into their activities to enable Christians to respect their ancestors alongside their Christian faith.

Azumah (2014) stated that the fusion of traditional African beliefs with Christianity and Islam has greatly influenced religious practices and cultural identity in Africa. The amalgamation of multiple belief systems has led to the development of unique religious practices and rituals that integrate elements from other traditions. Syncretism has promoted cultural pride and unity among Africans by enabling them to maintain their cultural heritage while incorporating new religious practices. Syncretism has played a crucial role in shaping Africa's theological and cultural structure.

The church liturgy greatly influences various aspects of African communal life (Martey 2009:8-9). Religious holidays often emphasise the importance of strong family connections and foster a feeling of social unity within family relationships. Moreover, educational institutions in these societies often integrate religious ideas and ideals into their curriculum to encourage moral and ethical growth. Religious views may impact healthcare methods since individuals may pursue recovery through faith-based ceremonies. Church services can promote political engagement as religious leaders often play key roles in advocating for social justice and addressing community concerns (Schiess 2020:22).

Studying the significance of liturgical events in religious communities reveals their capacity to influence socio-cultural norms. Participating in rituals and ceremonies that endorse tolerance and equality might inspire individuals to implement these concepts in their everyday lives beyond religious contexts. Kolnai (2017: 211) maintains that incorporating liturgical rites that highlight compassion, forgiveness, and moral integrity can effectively influence individual attitudes and guide individuals toward making ethical decisions. To comprehend the influence of liturgical practices

on sociocultural norms and personal values, it is essential to carefully analyse specific rituals and their implementation in different religious settings.

4.15. The church Liturgy and the concept of Africanism, considering the impact of the colonisation on the African mindset

The researcher begins by offering a brief explanation of the concept of Africanism to create the framework for the inclusion of numerous African themes into the black RCSA's order of worship. Africanism highlights the idea that individuals are more powerful when they are together than when they are apart, as well as the interdependence of all community members (Adler and Heckscher 2006:13). In contrast, Euro-Western cultures highlighted the importance of individualism in their approach to life. This conviction highlights the need of communal support, solidarity, and togetherness, fostering a sense of belonging and shared accountability. Lippman (2013:2) contends that Africanism teaches that communities may thrive and overcome challenges more effectively through joint efforts aimed at common goals. This is critical when analysing the concept of Africanism, given colonialism's tremendous impact on the African mind.

Despite the long-term impacts of colonialism on the African psyche, church liturgy and the concept of Africanism have recently arisen as major themes of discussion and debate. Many African experts such as Théophile Obenga 1936²⁷; Mittelman (2014) & Motlhabi (2012) believe that the colonial-introduced church liturgy has had a long-lasting impact on African identity and culture. Africanism seeks to restore and remember suppressed traditional African beliefs and traditions from the colonial era (Slater 2019:3). In essence, the convergence of these two notions emphasises the complex and diverse aspects of African identity in the postcolonial period.

The ongoing discussion about the impact of colonialism and the resurrection of African cultural heritage has prompted a revaluation of Africans' self-perception and

²⁷ Théophile Obenga 1936, in the Republic of the Congo) is professor emeritus in the Africana Studies Centre at San Francisco State University. He is a politically active proponent of Pan-Africanism. Obenga is an Egyptologist, linguist, and historian.

global standing. The clash between Western ideology and traditional African beliefs has created an intricate weave of diversity and fortitude across the African continent. The concept of Africanism serves as a powerful tool for regaining agency and constructing a future that is profoundly ingrained in Africans' specific history and experiences, as they address the complexities of their past and present (Mawere 2014:55). Although colonialism had an unquestionable impact on African cultural heritage, it is vital to recognise that African identity extends beyond this historical context. African culture has many intricate and diverse components that have existed since colonial domination (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2015:487). For example, many African societies have a lengthy history of oral storytelling that precedes invasion. This technique continues to be an effective means of preserving cultural history and passing down information across generations. Furthermore, historical African artistic representations, such as traditional masks and sculptures, are vibrant and diverse, demonstrating their intelligence and innovation.

This sense of social responsibility and solidarity is deeply ingrained in many African cultures such as Venda; people of the community commonly gather to memorialise, weep, and help one another at difficult times. This communal mentality is evident not just in shared meals and collaborative work initiatives, but also in traditional ceremonies and rituals that bring people together in a spirit of support and collaboration. African communities establish strong social networks and alliances that enable people to face the complexities of life with grace and fortitude by prioritising communal welfare over individual interests.

4.16. Resistance, Adaptation to Church Liturgy and the colonisation of African mind

Resistance and adaptation to church rituals have been significant topics throughout Christian history, as noted by Hall & Jefferson in 2006. Throughout church history, there have been groups and people that opposed traditional liturgical rituals, choosing a worship style focused on spontaneity and closeness. The aspiration to develop a worship experience that is more inclusive, and captivating often motivates resistance to the perceived strictness and formality of traditional liturgy. On the other

hand, many people have eagerly embraced and altered the liturgy, viewing it to connect with the faith's ancient roots and promote a sense of unity among followers from many periods and places. These people appreciate the artistic and detailed aspects of the liturgy and aim to increase its importance and meaning in today's world. The debate between resistance and adaptation to church rituals in Christianity revolves around finding a balance between tradition and innovation in worship.

The Maji Maji Rebellion in German East Africa showcased African resistance to church rituals and colonisation, with native populations strongly resisting the imposition of German rule and Christianity (Natermann 2018). The rebellion, led by ethnic groups including the Hehe and Zaramo, sought to regain control of their lands and establish their cultural autonomy (Meroka 2009). The Cattle Killing Movement in South Africa, led by prophetess Nongqawuse, arose in reaction to the spread of Christianity and the intrusion of European settlers on native territories, as stated by Yani (2019:34). In South Africa, members of the Ethiopian Church, such as Mangena Mokone, opposed the control and enforcement of Western religious customs by European missionaries (Chéry 2023). The instances highlight the unwavering resolve of African communities to oppose the elimination of their traditions and the imposition of alien beliefs.

Syncretic religious activities are becoming more prevalent as a kind of cultural adaptation in the current globalised milieu (Gavrilova et al. 2017: add page number). Syncretism is the blending of components from multiple religious traditions to form a distinct and personalised belief system. Syncretism enables a flexible and all-encompassing approach to spirituality by combining many rituals and beliefs, emphasising the dynamic character of religious expression in the modern age. Syncretic religious rituals serve as a kind of cultural resistance in certain circumstances, allowing marginalised populations to recover and reinterpret their historic customs within the framework of a dominant religion (Clack 2011).

Church liturgy has a profound influence on African spirituality and religious beliefs. New rituals, songs, and prayers introduced into church liturgy have significantly influenced African spirituality by blending with traditional African customs (Ackah et al. 2017). Over time, the combination of these factors has created a distinct and

recognisable system of religious beliefs, where the traditions of honouring ancestors, worshipping spirits, and adopting Christian teachings exist together. The church's liturgical traditions have strengthened social bonds, togetherness, and hope among Africans, helping them overcome life's hardships while preserving their customs and beliefs.

4.17. The contemporary implications and decolonisation efforts related to Church Liturgy and the colonisation of African mind.

Various complex repercussions and actions are being taken to eliminate colonial influence from church liturgy in modern times (Jagessar & Burns 2014: add page number). An emerging trend aims to decolonize church liturgy by eliminating components that reinforce Eurocentrism and colonial power structures. Recently, there has been a growing interest in and backing for these endeavours as African communities work to restore their cultural and spiritual legacy. Revitalization programmes have effectively revived outdated rites and festivals that were formerly banned or ostracised (Upadhyay 2021: add page number). Africans reclaim their cultural legacy by reviving habits and practices, challenging the colonial narrative, and proclaiming their self-governance and freedom. This involves reassessing the songs, prayers, and rituals created during the colonial period and adopting a broader spectrum of worship activities that are more inclusive. However, some people resist these efforts, arguing that they weaken tradition and reduce the core principles of the church's doctrines. Churches face the important task of finding a balance between maintaining tradition and supporting the process of decolonisation. The researcher will extensively address this matter in the upcoming chapter on decolonising and redesigning the liturgy.

4.18. Church liturgy and the colonisation of African minds with respect to church buildings, pulpits, seating arrangements, and the donning of gowns and suits

African church buildings include magnificent stained-glass windows, towering spires, and elaborate facades, illustrating the influence of European design on church ceremonies (Swanepoel 2023). A growing number of African churches have adopted elements from European architectural traditions, including flying buttresses, pointed

arches, and vaulted ceilings. Therefore, as per a researcher in Africa, numerous mainline church structures exhibit striking similarities in terms of their quality and size. Moreover, the church liturgy detrimentally affects the architectural design of pulpits in Africa, manifesting in various ways. European liturgical practices often imposed a strict and hierarchical structure on African places of worship, conflicting with indigenous traditions that emphasised community and active participation in prayer (Mokhoathi 2020:225). As a consequence, pulpit designs were chosen that symbolised authority and separation instead of being inclusive and encouraging participation (Spicer 2016:34).

As a consequence, there emerged a tangible and symbolic divide between the priest and the congregation, leading to a transformation in the dynamics of African worship traditions and a decline in the church's cultural significance. Hence, as per the findings of the researcher in the Black RCSA, the shift from an antiquated pulpit to a contemporary one made of glass is not observed, but rather substituted with a pulpit from the missionary era. Moreover, the utilisation of pews and permanent seating arrangements exemplifies the detrimental impact of European liturgy on the development of seating arrangements in church structures. European church practices prioritised a methodical and hierarchical approach to worship, where the clergy was prominently positioned at the front, often elevated, and worshippers sat in organised rows facing the front (Kilde 2005:10). This configuration reflected a change in the responsibilities of worshippers, prioritising the act of listening to sermons and receiving sacraments over active involvement and social interaction.

Conversely, traditional African worship often incorporated expressive dance, collective singing, and enthusiastic involvement from followers. The implementation of European seating arrangements disrupted ancient conventions, creating a physical and metaphorical divide between the clergy and the crowd that was not in line with indigenous prayer practices (McGuckin 2010:131). The presence of pews and set seating restricted the freedom and spontaneity of worship, enforcing a Eurocentric framework that marginalised African cultural expressions and spiritual practices. It is necessary to reassess the positioning of the Black RCSA during worship sessions. This is crucial because young individuals generate disruptive sounds throughout the worship service, requiring leaders to be positioned near them

in order to maintain order. However, this is unfeasible as leaders are required to occupy the front rows.

4.19. Conclusion

The African church liturgy's future seems bright as the region experiences change and adopts modern principles. The impact of church liturgy on African culture is firmly rooted and is not expected to fade soon. The church liturgy, which combines traditional African practices with Christian ceremonies, will continue to play a crucial role in creating the cultural identity of African communities and promoting a sense of solidarity and spirituality among its members. The incorporation of indigenous African music and dance into Catholic rituals demonstrates the substantial influence of church ceremonies on African cultural practices. Indigenous musical instruments like drums and xylophones are frequently utilised in many African churches to accompany hymns sung in native languages. Blending traditional and Christian components in worship strengthens cultural identity and promotes unity among African worshippers.

CHAPTER 5

THE NECESSITY OF REFORMING AND DECOLONISING THE REFORMED LITURGY

5.1. Introduction

This chapter explores the need for reformation and decolonisation of the Reformed Liturgy in order to identify African practices that should be integrated into worship services in the black Reformed Churches in South Africa. The researcher has already defined the concept of reforming and decolonising in chapter one. In summary, while reforming aims to enhance and improve the existing system, decolonizing seeks to dismantle and transform systems that perpetuate colonial legacies. It advocates for radical change and the revitalization of indigenous knowledge and practices, which are crucial for cultural representation and inclusivity. This matter has been the subject of much contemplation by intellectuals and theologians in recent years. The Reformed Liturgy, which is based on the customs and rituals of the Protestant Reformation, has frequently faced criticism for its Eurocentric and colonialist inclinations. Advocates such as: Letsosa R²⁸ 2005, Ramantswana H²⁹ 2016, Wepener C³⁰ 2014 and other academics and theologians propose reforming and decolonising the liturgy to enhance inclusivity and better represent a wide range of cultures and experiences. This would require re-investigative language, symbols, and rituals employed in worship and actively integrating viewpoints and contributions from marginalised people. By implementing this approach, the Reformed Liturgy has the potential to truly become a profound and impactful encounter for every worshipper, irrespective of their background.

²⁸ Rev. Prof. Letsosa R. is currently the reformed minister of words and Dean of the faculty of theology at the University of Pretoria. He has authored and supervised many articles concerning reform liturgy.

²⁹ Rev. Prof. Ramantswana H is currently a minister of word in the Reformed churches and serves as an HOD of the Old Testament at the University of South Africa. He has authored many articles concerning decolonization and reformation towards reformed faith.

³⁰ Rev. Prof. Wepener C is currently holding the position of senior lecturer at the University of Stellenbosch. He has written 111 scholarly publications on the topic of liturgical reform.

The necessity to reform and decolonise the Reformed Liturgy stems from a goal to foster inclusivity and confront the historical injustices propagated by colonialism. Through reassessing and restructuring the liturgical practices, the researcher can guarantee a more inclusive and fair portrayal of black RCSA worshippers. By eliminating the effects of colonialism and adopting a more comprehensive strategy, the RCSA can establish an environment that allows every member to actively engage and experience a sense of worth within the black RCSA community. The researcher will employ academic papers and books authored by African and Western scholars to have a deeper comprehension of whether Reformed Liturgy should undergo reformation and decolonisation.

5.2. Historical context concerning the need for the Reformed Liturgy to be Reformed and Decolonised?

The historical background surrounding the necessity for the Reformed Liturgy to undergo reform and decolonisation arises from the colonial heritage of European missionaries imposing their cultural customs and convictions on indigenous populations (Burnett-Cole 2023:16). The process of colonising religious practices has led to the obliteration of indigenous languages, traditions, and spiritualities, resulting in the deprivation of cultural identity and self-governance. Through the process of decolonisation, the researcher hopes to recognise and respect the various cultural manifestations of worship within the Reformed Liturgy.

According to Nganyu (2023:330) the worship experience involves a detailed examination of the Eurocentric biases and power dynamics in the liturgy. The goal is to actively incorporate indigenous languages, music, rituals, and beliefs into the worship. By integrating indigenous voices and viewpoints into the Reformed Liturgy, the researcher hopes that the RCSA will establish a worship atmosphere that is more comprehensive and uplifting, honouring the abundance and variety of God's creation. Moreover, Travis (2023:47) maintains that the act of decolonising the liturgy can function as a kind of restorative justice, recognising and aiming to rectify the historical inequities and damages caused to indigenous populations because of colonialism. The ultimate goal of Decolonising Liturgy is to establish a worship

experience that is more fair, impartial, and spiritually satisfying, while also acknowledging and validating the value and worth of every individual as children of God.

Reforming and decolonising the Reformed Liturgy is crucial, as it involves examining its historical origins and seeing how it reinforces Eurocentric viewpoints. To gain a deeper comprehension of the necessity to dismantle these buildings and establish a worship environment that is more encompassing and varied, it is imperative to examine the historical development of religious rituals and the impact of colonial powers on them. Eliminating the influence and control of colonial powers. Decolonising Liturgy entails the inclusion and empowerment of marginalised communities' perspectives and the deliberate effort to undermine and question the prevailing influence of Western ideals in religious rituals (Whitla 2020:127-162). Ultimately, the essentiality of altering the liturgy lies in its ability to create a worship setting that accurately reflects the genuine diversity and richness of God's creation. Ultimately, the reformation of the liturgy is crucial to provide a worship atmosphere that accurately represents the genuine variety and abundance of God's creation and promotes a feeling of harmony and inclusiveness among all individuals within the religious community (Mofokeng 2017:63).

This process necessitates deliberate endeavours to integrate a diverse range of cultural manifestations, languages, and rituals within the worship encounter. By adopting this approach, the black RCSA can progress towards becoming a more inclusive and hospitable environment for individuals, irrespective of their history or identity. It enables a comprehensive comprehension of God's existence and actions in the world, liberating itself from the constraints of a singular cultural viewpoint. According to Grohmann (2023:34) decolonising the Reformed Liturgy is a transformative process that aims to create a worship experience that is fair and impartial, while also acknowledging and respecting the diversity and intricacy of God's creation.

For instance, by integrating prayers and songs from other cultural backgrounds, one can foster a worship experience that is more inclusive and aligns with the worldwide scope of Christianity. Incorporating non-Western rituals and practices can be a means to challenge the dominant Eurocentric attitudes in Reformed worship.

Undoubtedly, this poses a challenge to the prevailing Eurocentric Christianity due to the historical tendency of colonial powers to exploit and marginalise indigenous communities, leading to enduring economic inequality and the obliteration of cultural heritage (Dunbar-Ortiz 2021). Authoritarian systems, such as apartheid or caste systems, have established prejudice, poverty, and violence as part of their institutional framework. Discriminatory practices, regardless of the grounds such as race, gender, religion, or other criteria, have deprived marginalised communities of equal chances to fully engage in society. To establish a fair and impartial world for everyone, it is crucial to thoroughly analyse and question these influences.

This necessitates deconstructing repressive frameworks and institutions that sustain inequality and actively striving to establish a more inclusive and fair society. By prioritising the perspectives and lived realities of marginalised communities, the RCSA may effectively tackle systemic discrimination and strive toward substantial transformation. It is imperative for both individuals and institutions to acknowledge their privilege and make a conscious effort to identify and address systems of oppression to establish a fair and equal environment for everyone.

For instance, the imposition of specific European liturgical practices and aesthetics on Indigenous societies throughout the colonial process can be interpreted as a manifestation of cultural assimilation. The adoption of Latin as the liturgical language in various colonial settings served to strengthen the power of the colonisers while suppressing indigenous languages and cultures (Ramos and Yannakakis 2014). By marginalising the prominence of European music, art, and architectural forms in church services and settings, the notion of white superiority was further reinforced. It played a role in the elimination of non-European cultures and viewpoints. These behaviours served as both a method of control and power, as well as a manifestation of the deeply rooted Eurocentric ideals prevalent during that period.

5.3. Problems with Current Reformed Liturgy which lead to the need to be Reformed and Decolonised

Karant-Nunn (2015.:411-413) maintains that an inherent problem with the present Reformed liturgy is its deficiency in terms of inclusivity and variety. The liturgy

frequently embodies a Eurocentric viewpoint, characterised by its language, imagery, and customs that may only resonate with certain members of the congregation. This might engender a feeling of marginalisation for individuals with diverse ethnic origins or life experiences. In addition, Naidoo (2019:173) argues that the current liturgy has the capacity to perpetuate harmful colonial attitudes and systems of power, reinforcing repressive institutions rather than challenging them. To fully embody the values of justice, equality, and love that Reformed theology promotes, it is necessary to reform and decolonise the liturgy. This means making it more inclusive and representative of the diverse nature of God's creation.

An effective approach to initiate this reformation is actively participating in substantive discussions with members of the congregation who may experience feelings of marginalisation or exclusion due to the existing liturgical practices. Gaining insight from their opinions and experiences can offer significant guidance on how to alter the liturgy to represent the variety of the community more accurately. It is imperative to acquire knowledge about the impact of colonialism and oppressive power dynamics on our religious rituals and make a conscious effort to dismantle these systems (Akena 2012:606). By actively striving to develop a liturgy that is more inclusive and equitable, the black RCSA can get closer to expressing the principles of justice, equality, and love that are fundamental to our religion. For instance, employing language that reinforces colonial power dynamics, such as exclusively speaking to God using masculine terms, can isolate and marginalise worshippers who do not align with conventional gender roles. Furthermore, the exclusion of many cultures and traditions in religious ceremonies might intensify feelings of isolation for individuals from non-Western backgrounds according to Yin (2018:195).

Kastoryano (2018:2) contends that the progressive erosion of the sense of unity and solidarity fostered via shared religious activities might occur due to the exclusion of other cultures and traditions, as well as the lack of respect. It is imperative to tackle this matter to reinstate the sacredness and significance of liturgical festivities within the church community. For instance, certain churches may exhibit a deficiency in adequate preparation and decorum during the administration of Holy communion, characterised by distractions like conversing and utilising cell phones. This can diminish the respect and concentration on the holiness of the Eucharist,

necessitating a reform in the way liturgical ceremonies are carried out.

According to Branson and Martinez (2023:259) the misinterpretation and misuse of liturgical rules might be seen as a problem that negatively affects the spiritual experience of worshipping communities. Noncompliance with worship protocols can disrupt the smooth progression of the service and diminish the intended sense of reverence during sacred ceremonies. In addition, misinterpretation of these principles might result in misunderstandings regarding the importance of specific rituals or symbols, thus weakening the ability of the liturgy to establish a connection between persons and the divine.

In addition, the incorrect understanding of these principles has a detrimental effect, and showing disrespect or altering liturgical regulations can lead to the creation of division and conflict among members of the worshipping community (Long 2001). Conflicting perceptions of proper service conduct can cause stress among members who may perceive their ideas and traditions as being compromised. This can lead to a decline in harmony and solidarity among the members of the congregation, impeding the community's capacity to gather for worship and prayer. To maintain a sense of unity and profound reverence in their worship, it is crucial for all members of a worshipping community to follow and show respect for the established liturgical regulations (Truscott 2011:43).

Crouan (2011:71-73) states that all members of a worshipping community must recognise and fulfil their duty to protect and respect the incorrect interpretation and misuse of liturgical standards. This is because such actions can result in confusion and misunderstanding among the members of a religious community. For instance, an individual can erroneously hold the belief that altering the wording of a prayer during a religious gathering is permissible, leading to disturbance and disharmony among the members of the congregation.

This can ultimately diminish the sense of cohesion and respect that ought to be prevalent in a worship environment. Moreover, straying from established liturgical traditions can also erode the integrity and genuineness of the religious heritage (Duffy 2022:9). It is important for all individuals participating in religious ceremonies

to be aware of the importance and symbolic meaning of the rituals and to approach them with humility and respect (Sulaeman, Malawat, and Sere 2021:389). By following the set standards and criteria, members of a worshipping community can guarantee that their collective worship is carried out in a significant and spiritually fulfilling way.

The lack of alignment between reformed liturgy and traditional liturgical practices can frequently result in perplexity and strain among a religious community (Wagner 2022). While many individuals may welcome the changes as an essential progression of worship, others may strongly adhere to the rituals and traditions that have been handed down for generations. This tension can lead to a feeling of fragmentation and opposition to change, impeding the community's capacity to fully participate in and get advantages from the restructured liturgy. To address this disconnection, religious leaders must foster inclusive and courteous conversations among all community members, recognising the importance of both traditional and innovative approaches to worship according to Marti (2017:317-318).

Through cultivating an environment that encourages sincere dialogues and comprehension, RCSA can assist in mitigating anxieties and apprehensions related to the modifications in liturgical practices. It is crucial for every member to experience being listened to and acknowledged in their viewpoints, even if their ideas may diverge from the majority (Delpit 2018: add page number). By engaging in collaboration and compromise, it is possible to achieve a harmonious equilibrium that respects the extensive heritage of the religious community while also accepting the necessity for progress and adjustment in contemporary society. The ultimate objective is to establish a state of cohesion and concordance within the community, wherein all constituents can congregate to venerate and commemorate their collective convictions in a significant and gratifying manner for all parties involved. For instance, a church may have revised its liturgy to become more inclusive and contemporary, while still adhering to traditional hymns and traditions during worship service. This can engender a feeling of perplexity or discordance among congregation who are accustomed to the traditional modes of service.

5.4. Can Reformed Liturgy be Reformed?

The question has been a source of contention among theologians and church officials for centuries, mainly due to the statement, "*Ekklesia semper reformanda*³¹." Due to this belief, the Reformed churches assert the necessity of continually reforming their practices, a task that the black RCSA has failed to undertake since its inception.

There is a debate among some individuals who claim that the fundamental nature of Reformed liturgy is firmly based on the ideals of the Reformation and should not be altered (Baldovin 2008:36). However, (Bowes (2008:25) hold the belief that worship traditions may always be expanded and adjusted to accommodate growth and change. The feasibility of reforming a liturgy is contingent upon an individual's viewpoint and understanding of the established customs. The topic is intricate and subtle, and it remains a subject of ongoing discussion and exploration among contemporary Christian groups.

There is a contention that the fundamental principles and values of Reformed theology ought to be maintained and conserved in liturgical activities according to (Hart 2014:69). On the other hand, (Kimball 2009:115) prioritise the need to update and modernise specific elements to better connect with worshippers in the present day. The conflict between adherence to established customs and the introduction of new ideas is a prevalent topic in conversations over the future of Reformed liturgy. To be meaningful and captivating in modern society, RCSA must establish a delicate equilibrium between upholding tradition and embracing innovation. Ultimately, the progression of Reformed liturgy may be unavoidable as RCSA strive to address the spiritual requirements of their congregations in an ever-evolving society.

Revamping the Reformed liturgy is feasible, although it may necessitate a

³¹ *Ecclesia semper reformanda* is a Latin term meaning "the church must always be reformed," was popularised by Karl Barth in 1947. It is said to have originated from a remark of St. Augustine. It mostly pertains to the belief held by specific Reformed Protestant theologians that the church must consistently scrutinise itself to uphold its doctrinal and practical integrity.

substantial change in both attitude and practice. Through a critical examination of the theological origins of the liturgy and engaging in intelligent discourse regarding its objectives and efficacy, there exists the possibility for significant transformation. Engaging with other viewpoints and soliciting contributions from a range of individuals may be essential to develop a liturgical experience that is more inclusive and pertinent (Olsen et al. 2011:109). The ultimate success of modernising the Reformed liturgy is on the community's commitment to wholeheartedly welcome innovation and effectively adjust to the evolving demands of worshippers (Larking 2020:148).

This process of reform is expected to provide a challenge to the established norms and structures within the Reformed faith. Nevertheless, it is crucial to adhere steadfastly to the fundamental values of worship and active participation in the society. By adopting a humble, open, and collaborative approach, the Reformed Church may develop a liturgical experience that is deeply founded in tradition and effectively responds to the modern circumstances according to Reid (2005:19). It will necessitate deliberate contemplation, trial and error, and a readiness to abandon methods that may no longer fulfil the community's requirements. Nevertheless, the potential benefits of an invigorated and restructured liturgy are substantial, providing a deeper sense of communion with God and a more important worship encounter for everyone involved.

Certain academics such as Letsosa and De Klerk (2007) within the Reformed tradition advocate for the preservation of traditional customs in liturgy, highlighting the significance of upholding historical continuity. Some academics such as Wepener, Barnard and Cilliers (2014) advocate for a more adaptable strategy, promoting the use of innovation and adaptation to establish stronger connections with worshippers in the present day. In essence, the argument brings attention to the conflict within the Reformed tradition between maintaining the depth of past traditions and adapting to the desires and requirements of contemporary congregations.

This tension is not exclusive to the Reformed tradition, as several denominations struggle with comparable inquiries regarding the significance of tradition and

innovation in worship. There is a viewpoint that suggests that a rigid commitment to tradition might result in a lack of progress and a sense of isolation among younger cohorts (Ratzinger 2010:79). On the other hand, some individuals hold the belief that innovation has the potential to diminish the theological profundity and abundance of liturgical practices. Churches face a perpetual challenge in striking a harmonious equilibrium between upholding tradition and embracing innovation to effectively involve their members in worship experiences that hold significance.

Some opponents contend that conventional liturgy is antiquated and no longer strikes a chord with contemporary believers. Nevertheless, there are some like Cutié (2016:77) who argue that a modified style of worship is crucial to effectively captivate and establish a connection with modern audiences. Through the process of modifying and modernising the liturgy, churches could establish a worship experience that is more comprehensive and significant for all members of the congregation. The significance of reformed liturgy in contemporary times hinges on its ability to adequately address the spiritual needs and values of the current generation.

Advocates of a conventional liturgical approach, such as Noordmans (2018) often stress the importance of preserving the church's vast historical and traditional legacy. They contend that the liturgy establishes a connection to the past, enabling contemporary worshippers to align with the beliefs and actions of their forebears. By upholding a sense of continuity with the past, they hold the belief that the liturgy serves to strengthen the fundamental principles of the religion and offers believers a sense of stability and security according to Mo, Zhao and Tang (2023:672). Nevertheless, proponents of liturgical reform, such as Hitchcock (2014) argue that the church must exhibit a readiness to adapt and evolve to sustain its significance in a constantly evolving world. They hold the belief that the liturgy should be a dynamic manifestation of the religion, with the ability to address the current needs and problems of modern worshippers according to Chupungco (2010:51). They contend that by revising the liturgy to align with the contemporary realities of life, the church may more effectively connect with its existing followers and entice new adherents. In essence, the discussion surrounding liturgical reform brings up crucial inquiries regarding the essence of tradition, authority, and the church's function in

contemporary society.

By incorporating diverse perspectives and cultural customs into the worship service, churches may recognise and honour the distinct experiences and backgrounds of their congregation members. This can facilitate the dismantling of obstacles and foster a feeling of inclusion and cohesion among all individuals who congregate for religious worship. Embracing change and variety in Reformed Liturgy has the potential to enhance the faith community and foster the spiritual development of all participants (Crook 2017). By embracing transparency and inclusiveness, churches can genuinely exemplify the principles of love and acceptance inherent in the Reformed tradition.

Letsosa (2008) provides an explanation of the pertinent liturgy. The liturgy should mirror the community it serves by integrating cultural, social, and historical themes to actively involve people in a meaningful way. Enhancing the relevance of the liturgy for individuals helps strengthen their bond with their religious beliefs and cultivate a shared feeling of community. He highlighted the significance of continuously assessing and adjusting liturgical practices to ensure they connect with the community and enhance their spiritual experience.

This approach to liturgy recognises the ever-changing character of communities and the necessity for adaptability in religious rituals. Additionally, it emphasises the need of tolerance and variety in constructing the liturgical experience, as many cultural origins and viewpoints can contribute to a more comprehensive and profound worship. Through proactive involvement with the community and attentive consideration of their needs and preferences, liturgical practices have the potential to develop and expand in a manner that authentically embodies the values and beliefs of the participants according to Smith (2009:75). In the end, this method promotes a feeling of inclusion and attachment among the community, enhancing their belief and personal growth. For instance, a church could modify its customary liturgy by integrating additional modern music and language, all the while upholding its worship service's existing commitments. This enables the Church to attract a wider range of people while remaining faithful to its values and traditions.

5.5. Can Reformed Liturgy be Decolonised?

The decolonisation of Reformed Liturgy is an intricate and nuanced matter that necessitates meticulous contemplation and introspection (Li 2024). To decolonise Reformed Liturgy, it is imperative to undertake a thorough analysis of the impact and moulding of church practices and traditions by colonialism and imperialism. This process entails recognising and addressing the ways in which Reformed Liturgy has contributed to systems of oppression and marginalisation. It involves striving to establish a worship experience that is inclusive and fair for all members of the community. By prioritising the perspectives and stories of marginalised and underrepresented communities, Reformed Liturgy can progress towards a practice that is more liberated from colonial influences and centred on principles of fairness, equal treatment, and unity (Carvalhaes 2015:95).

This transition necessitates a meticulous analysis of the language, symbols, and rituals commonly employed in Reformed worship services, as well as a reassessment of the theological foundations that have sustained hierarchical power dynamics. Additionally, it entails engaging in active listening and gaining knowledge from the varied viewpoints and lived experiences of individuals who have historically been marginalised within the church. The process of deconstructing and reconstructing Reformed Liturgy has the potential to be a powerful catalyst for social transformation and emancipation within the wider community (Aaboe 2007). An instance of decolonising Reformed Liturgy involves the integration of indigenous languages, music, and traditions into worship services. This has the potential to question and disrupt the prevailing Eurocentric narratives in conventional Liturgy, allowing for the emergence of other cultural expressions of faith.

By deliberately incorporating indigenous languages, music, and rituals into Reformed Liturgy, the RCSA can deconstruct the colonial mentality that has influenced various areas of worship. By prioritising the perspectives and customs of disadvantaged people, RCSA may establish a more inclusive and fairer environment for everyone to engage in worship. Moreover, Mpofu (2022) maintains that the process of decolonisation can also function as a means of reconciliation and restoration for

individuals who have endured past oppression and marginalisation within the church.

In his proposal, Ramantswana (2016:401) suggests the process of decolonising Liturgy by prioritising Indigenous knowledge and practices. This involves including rituals and languages that are meaningful to the community, as well as questioning and dismantling oppressive power dynamics within the church. To create a genuinely inclusive and uplifting environment for all worshippers, Reformed Liturgy must abandon colonial perspectives and embrace the diverse range of cultural expressions (Carvalhaes 2015:1-2). Decolonisation necessitates ongoing discourse and implementation to guarantee the empowerment and inclusion of disadvantaged communities' voices and identities inside the church.

Additionally, it entails engaging in active listening and acquiring knowledge from Indigenous leaders and communities, while also pushing for justice and reconciliation within the wider society. Decolonising Liturgy entails more than just altering the language and gestures of worship; it involves radically reshaping the dynamics of power and privilege inside the church according to (Jagessar 2022:28). This endeavour is now in progress and necessitates a steadfast dedication to deconstructing structures of subjugation and establishing a fair and impartial society that benefits everyone.

Wepener (2014:87) underscores the significance of deceptive liturgy by admitting the impact of colonialism on worship customs. According to him, the process of decolonising Liturgy entails challenging and dismantling Eurocentric viewpoints that have been predominant in Christian liturgy and instead embracing a wide range of cultural expressions and voices. Churches can enhance their worship experiences by doing this, resulting in a more comprehensive and genuine reflection of the diversity and abundance of God's creation. In essence, he perceives the process of decolonising Liturgy as a means of decolonising justice and reconciliation within the church and society.

Wepener (2014:92,2023:179,2022:367,2021:68) further proposes that decolonising Liturgy encompasses not just shifting away from Eurocentric viewpoints but also dismantling the colonial influences present in the language, symbols, and rituals

employed in worship. Marti (2017:318) underscores the need of incorporating indigenous languages, traditions, and music into church services to foster a more inclusive and hospitable environment for all attendees. By accepting a wide range of cultural expressions and voices, churches can adopt a more comprehensive and respectful approach to worship that acknowledges and respects the various experiences and identities of all individuals. Wepener's vision for decolonising Liturgy extends beyond the decolonisation of worship practices. It encompasses a profound transformation of power relations and hierarchies that have traditionally suppressed specific voices. By prioritising the viewpoints and encounters of disadvantaged communities, the church may deconstruct the oppressive mechanisms that have sustained inequality and injustice.

Lumbala (2001:459-460) revised Liturgy, aimed at decolonising the church, should place significant attention on the historical and cultural factors that have produced the Liturgy of the reformed church. He contends that the process of decolonising the reformed Liturgy involves challenging and replacing the Eurocentric ideas and practices that have held sway over it for centuries. Travis (2023:6) maintained that marginalised believes that by prioritising the views and experiences of marginalised populations, the reformed Liturgy may be transformed into a more inclusive and empowering environment for all worshippers. In the end, his ambition is to create a revised liturgy that accurately represents the variety and abundance of God's creation. This liturgy would adopt a worldwide outlook, honouring and appreciating the contributions of all nations and traditions.

To realise this goal, Aguilar (2002:301-302) proposes integrating aspects of African spirituality, indigenous customs, and other non-Western traditions into the revised Liturgy. He underscores the significance of acknowledging and gaining knowledge from individuals who have been historically marginalised within the church, since they possess distinct viewpoints and valuable contributions. He further believes that by prioritising the perspectives of various cultures, the revised Liturgy can authentically embody God's all-encompassing and kind essence. He imagines a religious encounter that embraces the diversity and splendour of God's creation in all its manifestations and goes beyond cultural and geographical limits.

5.6. Advantages of Reforming and decolonising Reformed Liturgy

Bevins (2019:25) states that reforming Reformed Liturgy has several benefits, such as using a contemporary and comprehensible language that can effectively involve younger generations and enhance the understanding of prayers and rites for all worshippers. In addition, by updating the Liturgy, RCSA can address the use of outmoded or restrictive language or practices that no longer align with modern beliefs and values. Through the process of updating and reimagining the Liturgy, churches could establish a more comprehensive and hospitable atmosphere that embraces all members of the community.

This can result in an enhanced sense of cohesion and rapport among worshippers, as well as a more profound comprehension and admiration of religious customs and doctrines. In addition, restructuring the Liturgy can facilitate greater adaptability and ingenuity in the execution of worship services, resulting in a more vibrant and captivating experience for all individuals involved according to White (2003:3). Reforming Liturgy offers several benefits and can greatly boost individuals' spiritual growth and development within the faith community. For instance, a church may modify its liturgical texts to incorporate gender-neutral language, so ensuring that all individuals feel equally included and appreciated during worship services. Incorporating music or multimedia presentations into the Liturgy can enhance community and involvement among parishioners of all ages.

Reforming and decolonising Reformed Liturgy offer the benefits of enhanced inclusivity and diversity. By integrating many viewpoints and cultural customs into the Liturgy, individuals of various origins can experience a sense of representation and inclusion during prayer (McGann 2002). This can foster a heightened sense of camaraderie and solidarity among church members, as well as a more profound comprehension and admiration of the various ways in which individuals establish a bond with their religious beliefs. In addition to that, the process of reforming and decolonising the reformed Liturgy has the potential to establish a more hospitable and all-encompassing atmosphere for every member of the congregation (Whitla, 2019).

Furthermore, adopting a stance of inclusivity towards a variety of liturgical customs can effectively dismantle obstacles and foster enhanced comprehension and reverence across distinct cultural factions within the church. By recognising and integrating the distinct traditions and customs of different communities, the revised Liturgy can be enhanced and made more relevant for all worshippers. By adopting an all-encompassing approach, it is possible to cultivate a feeling of inclusion and embrace, resulting in a worship community that is livelier and more energetic, and that appreciates the diversity of its members' origins and convictions. In the end, the advantages of reforming and decolonising reformed Liturgy go beyond the confines of the church, establishing a more inclusive and inviting environments for all individuals who desire to engage with their religious beliefs (Travis 2023:47).

Labuschagne (2019:5) states that integrating a variety of cultural customs and traditions is a benefit of reforming and decolonising the reformed liturgy. This incorporation enables a more comprehensive and hospitable worship encounter for all members of the community. The Reformed Liturgy encourages unity among its members by including many cultural practices, thereby reflecting the variety within the church. Decolonising the Liturgy not only dismantles systems of oppression but also enables a more genuine manifestation of religion for all adherents (Urbaniak 2019:227).

In addition, the integration of various cultural practices and traditions into the Reformed Liturgy also confronts and undermines prevailing narratives that have traditionally marginalised specific communities within the church according to Resane (2020:3). By prioritising the perspectives and lived realities of marginalised communities, the Liturgy serves as a means for promoting social justice and emancipation. The transition towards a worship experience that is more inclusive and freer from colonial influence enhances the communal ties within the church. It enables individuals to wholeheartedly adopt and articulate their beliefs in a genuine manner that aligns with their cultural heritage. Thus, the Reformed Liturgy serves as a dynamic and tangible representation of the rich and varied fabric of God's creation (Taylor 2017:47).

An advantage of reforming and decolonising Reformed Liturgy is the inclusion of excluded communities in worship. By integrating the perspectives and lived realities of marginalised populations into worship, the process of reforming and decolonising Reformed Liturgy can foster a more inclusive and diverse spiritual practice. This facilitates the dismantling of obstacles to uphold cohesion within the church and enables a more genuine and comprehensive manifestation of faith. Incorporating all individuals within the community into religious worship can result in a deeper feeling of inclusion and attachment, building a more resilient and empathetic religious community (Hutchinson and Dorsett 2012).

Furthermore, the RCSA can rectify the historical injustices and inequities that have been sustained within the church by prioritising the perspectives of disadvantaged communities in Reformed Liturgy. Decolonisation is crucial for destroying oppressive systems and establishing a worship environment that is more just and equal (Táíwò 2022). By deliberately striving to elevate and strengthen marginalised voices, the RCSA may actively contribute to the process of healing and reconciliation within the church. This will create an environment where every individual is esteemed and treated with dignity. To have a worship experience that reflects the diversity and richness of God's creation, it is necessary to reform and decolonise the Reformed Liturgy.

An advantage of reforming and decolonising Reformed Liturgy is the promotion of inclusivity and a sense of belonging among all worshippers (Suna-Koro 2023:227). Integrating a range of viewpoints and views into the Liturgy ensures that all individuals feel acknowledged and valued during the act of worship. This can result in a more profound bond with the religious community and an enhanced feeling of inclusiveness. By implementing reforms and decolonising the Reformed Liturgy, the RCSA may establish a more inclusive and supportive environment where all worshippers can gather and engage in their religious practices.

Furthermore, it facilitates a comprehensive portrayal of the community's experiences and values, guaranteeing that no individual experiences feelings of marginalisation or exclusion. Moreover, through adopting a more comprehensive approach to Liturgy, the church may more effectively mirror the variety of its members and offer a

platform for commemorating diverse cultural traditions and customs. This enhances the worship experience for everyone and facilitates the dismantling of obstacles and the promotion of harmony within the religious community. Essentially, it is crucial to modify and decolonise the Reformed Liturgy to promote a feeling of inclusion, acceptance, and harmony among all worshippers (Ngxangane 2015:68). Revitalising and decolonising the Reformed Liturgy has the potential to increase its relevance and foster more involvement among worshippers. By integrating a variety of cultural perspectives and traditions, the Liturgy can more effectively connect with a wider spectrum of individuals. This can facilitate a more comprehensive and hospitable religious observance, nurturing a feeling of acceptance and camaraderie among members of the religious community. Foster (2019:257) maintains that the ultimate benefits of reforming and decolonising Reformed Liturgy lay in its capacity to reflect the diverse and abundant human experience accurately and really, so fostering a more meaningful and authentic connection between individuals and God.

By recognising and accepting the distinct contributions of many cultures, Reformed Liturgy has the potential to serve as a potent instrument for fostering harmony and comprehension among worshippers Jernigan (2023:78). It functions as a conduit connecting people from diverse origins, promoting a feeling of unity and reciprocal admiration within the religious community. By doing this, the Liturgy has the potential to dismantle obstacles and foster a sense of inclusiveness and collaboration that embodies the fundamental nature of Christianity. By implementing reform and decolonisation, Reformed Liturgy can become a powerful and influential catalyst for beneficial change inside the church and in broader society.

5.7. Disadvantages and challenges of Reforming and decolonising Reformed Liturgy

The drawbacks of Reforming and Decolonising Reformed Liturgy encompass the possible relinquishment of customary customs and rites that bear cultural significance for several communities (Travis 2023:118). Furthermore, there could be opposition from members who are content with the existing liturgy and perceive no necessity for alteration. An additional drawback is the arduous and time-consuming task of developing a new liturgy that is inclusive and reflective of a wide range of

beliefs and practices (Price and Weil 2000:8). Revamping and dismantling the Reformed liturgy necessitate meticulous deliberation and cooperation to guarantee that the modifications are significant and considerate to all parties involved.

Recognising the profound historical background and customs inherent in the present liturgy is crucial, along with understanding the potential consequences that any alterations might have on the community (Torevell 2004). Although there might be opposition to change, it is essential to heed the perspectives of individuals who have been marginalised or excluded in the past and strive to establish a worship experience that is more inclusive and hospitable to everyone. Engaging in collaboration with a wide range of groups and persons is crucial to develop a liturgy that accurately represents the values and beliefs of the entire community, while also respecting the cultural heritage of the Reformed tradition (Arnold 2018). By adopting a sensitive and open-minded attitude, we can strive to create a liturgy that is more inclusive and freer from colonial influences, really capturing the diverse and beautiful nature of our spiritual community.

Freudenberg (2017:2) assert that one of the primary obstacles the church may encounter while introducing alterations to the liturgy is the potential resistance and backlash from traditionalists within the church who may perceive the changes as a threat. These folks may perceive modifications as a lack of respect towards well-established customs and oppose attempts to update the religious practice. Church leaders must tactfully address these concerns and effectively express the rationale behind the adjustments to preserve unity among the flock. By directly confronting these possible causes of opposition, the church can strive towards creating a worship environment that is more inclusive and captivating for all its members.

In addition the fiscal expenses linked to the execution of modifications to the liturgy, such as modernising one of the primary issues that the church may encounter while making changes to the liturgy is finding a balance between tolerance and diversity, while also preserving the fundamental beliefs and practices of the denomination (Roozen & Nieman 2005:436). Striking a delicate equilibrium between upholding tradition and accepting advancement will be crucial. The church leaders must attentively to the varied voices within their congregation and carefully contemplate

different viewpoints to craft an inclusive liturgy that accurately reflects the entirety of their people. Through careful and considerate navigation, the church may develop a reformed liturgy that is both inclusive and varied, while remaining firmly rooted in the fundamental values that shape its worship traditions.

One of the primary issues the church may encounter when making changes to the liturgy is the effect it may have on the attendance and involvement of worshippers who have deep emotional connections to the existing liturgical traditions (Canale 2009:97). Church leaders must prioritise open and transparent communication regarding the reasons for the changes, and they should create chances for congregants to inquire and express their concerns. By actively engaging the congregation and soliciting their feedback, the church may cultivate a worship experience that is both inclusive and cohesive, while also paying homage to both tradition and innovation. In order to successfully overcome these difficulties, it is necessary to find a middle ground between respecting the traditions of the past and embracing the opportunities of the future, all while promoting progress and strengthening the spiritual bonds within the community.

Baldovin (2008:36) maintains that one of the primary problems the church may have while adopting adjustments to the liturgy is the necessity for continuous education and dialogue within the faith community to guarantee comprehension and endorsement of the reforms. It will be essential to involve clergy, lay leaders, and congregants in conversations about the rationale for these changes and the theological principles that support them to successfully address this difficulty. Facilitating theological education and promoting open dialogue regarding the liturgy will facilitate comprehension and embrace of the adjustments within the faith community. As church members acquire greater knowledge and involvement, the process of adopting a modified liturgy can be facilitated and embraced by a larger number of individuals.

5.8. Opportunities for Reforming and decolonising Reformed Liturgy

One opportunity for reforming and decolonising Reformed Liturgy is to examine the historical impact of colonial influences and address them through reform according to

Suna-Koro (2023:52). This approach entails analysing the influence of colonial powers on the worship customs and theological viewpoints of Reformed churches, as well as striving to restore indigenous traditions and perspectives that have been marginalised or eradicated. To promote a more inclusive and culturally sensitive worship experience that aligns with the variety of the world church, churches should recognise and confront the colonial impacts on Reformed liturgy. It is crucial to seize this chance for reform to establish a Reformed liturgy that is genuinely decolonised and inclusive, recognising and respecting the contributions of all cultures and traditions (Vorster 2018:5).

The transition towards decolonisation in Reformed worship is an essential measure towards achieving peace and justice, as well as a means to enhance our comprehension of the various creation of God (Moyo 2023). By integrating indigenous traditions and perspectives into our worship practices, RCSA can gain knowledge and appreciate the diversity of cultures and experiences. Masvotore (2021:4) maintains that the process of decolonisation compels RCSA to thoroughly analyse the influence of colonialism on our theology and ecclesiology and to actively strive toward deconstructing oppressive and exclusionary practices within our churches. Incorporating a decolonised and inclusive Reformed liturgy is ultimately a means of manifesting the love and justice of Christ in our worship and demonstration to the world.

Examining existing customs within Reformed churches that uphold colonial ideas and exploring alternative methods for decolonising theology and practice is essential for progressing towards a more inclusive and equitable community (Burnett-Cole 2023:43). Through questioning the impact of colonialism on our ideas and actions, RCSA may initiate the dismantling of detrimental power systems and establish an environment where disadvantaged voices can be acknowledged and valued. Adopting a decolonial approach to theology entails prioritising the experiences of individuals who have endured historical oppression and striving for reconciliation and healing within our communities.

This approach necessitates a readiness to address unsettling realities about our past

and how systems of subjugation have influenced our convictions. Additionally, it entails proactively pursuing a wide range of viewpoints and magnifying the voices of individuals who are marginalised or suppressed. By actively pursuing decolonisation, RCSA can establish a community that is inclusive, fair, and representative of the diverse nature of God's creation.

Exploring the significance of decolonising Reformed liturgy in fostering tolerance and diversity within religious communities presents an avenue for reforming and decolonising Reformed liturgy. By assimilating components from various cultures and traditions, the Reformed liturgy can more effectively embody the diversity of its members and foster a more inclusive atmosphere for everyone. The process of decolonisation facilitates a broader and more comprehensive comprehension of spirituality and faith, dismantling any boundaries that may have been established by colonial forces in the past according to Wane (2019:10). Eliminating the influence and control of colonial powers. Decolonization has the potential to cultivate a collective consciousness and promote equitable esteem among all individuals within the religious community, irrespective of their origins or cultural inheritance (Nafziger 2020).

An opportunity for reforming and decolonising Reformed liturgy is in the examination of certain components that may require decolonisation or revision to better align with a more inclusive and decolonised society (Nyamnjoh 2022:86). An aspect that warrants reconsideration is the linguistic expression employed in the liturgy, guaranteeing that it is inclusive of all genders and demonstrates respect for various identities. Incorporating music, prayers, and rituals from diverse cultural traditions can aid in the process of decolonising Reformed Liturgy and enhancing its inclusivity for all worshippers. Through the implementation of reformation, decolonisation, and sensitivity, the Reformed liturgy has the potential to truly become an inclusive and respectful environment where everyone feels acknowledged and appreciated (Kritzing 2010:212).

This approach necessitates a readiness to attentively hear the perspectives of marginalised communities during challenging discussions regarding power dynamics

and privilege within the church. It also entails recognising the detrimental impact of colonialism and imperialism on the development and interpretation of Reformed liturgy. By prioritising the experiences and viewpoints of individuals who have been historically excluded, we will initiate the development of a worship environment that is more inclusive and equitable (Winters 2020:6). In essence, the goal of reformation and decolonisation is to establish an environment where everyone can come together in worship, feeling acknowledged, listened to, and cherished.

5.9. Missional perspective in light of decolonising and Reforming Reformed Liturgy

Integrating a missional viewpoint into the process of decolonising and reforming reformed liturgy results in a worship experience that is more inclusive and diverse, accurately representing the worldwide body of Christ. Noakes-Duncan (2017:233) argues that including the viewpoints and lived experiences of marginalised communities in the planning and implementation of religious ceremonies enhances a more inclusive and equitable approach. This deliberate shift towards a missional perspective also challenges established power hierarchies within the church, promoting greater humility, empathy, and unity among its constituents. In addition, by adopting a missional perspective, the process of decolonising and reforming Reformed liturgy can lead to a worship experience that is more genuine and vibrant, and that really embodies God's compassion and commitment to justice.

Integrating a missional viewpoint into the process of decolonising and restructuring Reformed liturgy leads to a revitalised focus on justice, fairness, and inclusivity. Tveit (2016:155) argues that a missional approach, which focusses on the needs and experiences of impoverished populations, has the potential to challenge the prevailing narratives and power dynamics within Reformed liturgy. This can lead to a more engrossing and profound worship encounter that mirrors the vastness and profundity of God's realm. Moreover, employing a missional viewpoint to decolonise and reform Reformed liturgy will enable the church to more effectively demonstrate its mandate to love and serve all individuals. An approach rooted in mission, which places importance on connections rather than outcomes and gives priority to

comprehensive well-being above personal achievement, can help communities in negotiating the intricacies of decolonisation and change. Moreover, a missional attitude can inspire individuals to actively contribute towards the eradication of oppressive structures and advocate for systemic transformation, leading to a fairer and more inclusive society for everyone.

5.10. Decolonising and reforming holy communion with a special focus on the use of wine and bread.

The utilisation of wine and bread in religious rituals can be traced back to ancient times. Wine has a religious status in numerous countries, excluding African nations, where it symbolised the divine essence or ancestral lineage. Conversely, bread was considered a fundamental source of nourishment and subsistence. (Corr 2002:4) argue that the combination of wine and bread in religious rituals symbolises the integration of physical and spiritual aspects, as well as the communal act of sharing a meal. Currently, these foods continue to be utilised in many religious rituals and customs worldwide, although they are not a fundamental part of African cuisine. Due to the impact of colonialism on the perception and utilisation of wine and bread in communion.

The influence of colonialism on the perception and consumption of wine and bread during communion was significant, as European colonisers often imposed their religious practices on native populations (Kiarie 2016:2-3). This also prompted the Black RCSA to propose use maize meal as the primary aliment for administering holy communion to the people of South Africa. Consequently, the colonisers repressed customary practices and beliefs related to communal gatherings, and instead imposed their own rites. Moreover, the incorporation of European wine, which had a greater alcoholic strength, and bread into native communities could potentially have had enduring impacts on their cultural customs and spiritual convictions (Estreicher 2006:149). Hence, it is imperative to revamp and decolonise the utilisation of wine with an elevated alcoholic potency during the administration of holy communion. By including low-alcohol local delicacies like Mahafhe, mabundu, and mukumbi into communion rituals, individuals can establish a connection with

their cultural heritage and foster a sense of solidarity among participants, rather of relying on high-alcohol content wine. Individuals might have a feeling of belonging and solidarity within a group by partaking in and enjoying traditional delicacies that have been handed down from one generation to another. Integrating local and traditional cuisine can enhance the communion experience by adding a unique and significant aspect, so making it more personal and relevant for participants.

5.11. Conclusion

Without a doubt, the issue of reforming and decolonizing reformed liturgy is complex and requires genuine deliberation. An essential feature that necessitates meticulous scrutiny is the linguistic composition employed in the liturgy. Several conventional prayers and songs have colonial terminology that may cause marginalised people to feel excluded. Furthermore, it is necessary to reassess the imagery and symbolism employed in the liturgy to guarantee the inclusivity and representation of all individuals within the community. Moreover, it may be necessary to reconsider the arrangement and design of the liturgy to represent the varied cultural backgrounds and experiences of the congregation more accurately. In essence, the process of decolonizing reformed liturgy necessitates a deliberate and considerate approach that places emphasis on inclusivity and fairness. The redesigned liturgy should possess the ability to undergo both reform and decolonization. The researcher has reached this conclusion by relying on the arguments presented in this chapter. However, even if there have been changes and the end of colonial rule, this process should be approached with a combination of happiness and responsibility.

CHAPTER 6

EMPIRICAL DATA: REFORMING REFORMED LITURGY ON A DECOLONIAL PERSPECTIVE

6.1. Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to provide the interpretation and analysis of the data obtained from conducting individual interviews with five individuals and a focus group with ten members of the Black RCSA in Vhembe District, Limpopo, South Africa. In this empirical chapter, it is crucial to consider the following study objectives:

- To identify the significance of the current order of worship in the black RCSA to African culture.
- To determine African practises that need to be incorporated in worship services in the black Reformed Churches in South Africa.
- To illustrate the damaging contribution of Liturgy in the colonisation of the African churches and the African mind.
- To explore how black RCSA can transform their liturgical practices and incorporate Africanism.

In analysing the data within the study of Reforming Reformed Liturgy from a Decolonial perspective, the exploration of the significance of the current order of worship in the Black Reformed Church in South Africa (RCSA) to African culture emerges as a critical focal point. This chapter delves into the complexities surrounding the incorporation of African practices into worship, delving into how these practices reflect and honour African cultural heritage while enriching the spiritual experience. Furthermore, it navigates the damaging impact of colonial-era liturgy on the colonisation of African churches and the African mind, shedding light on the historical repercussions and their implications on the African cultural identity. Moreover, the discussion on the process of integrating Africanism into the liturgical practices of the Black RCSA unveils an ongoing narrative of inclusivity, cultural diversity, and empowerment within a Decolonial framework.

6.2. Thick descriptions of participants

The researcher deemed it essential to indicate the participants' biographical data. This information is necessary to understand their backgrounds and responses. The detailed biographical information of the participants is presented in tables.

Illustration of Individual group

Participants	Age	Gender	Years spent attending worship services	Role
PTRR1	44	Male	24	Reverend
PTRR2	78	Male	55	Elder
PTRR3	35	Male	35	Deacon
PTRR4	80	Female	60	Women's leader
PTRR5	40	Female	10	Youths' leader

Illustration of focus group

Participants	Age	Gender	Years spent attending worship services	Role
PTRR1	66	Male	47	member
PTRR2	50	Male	50	member
PTRR3	58	Male	20	member
PTRR5	45	Male	45	member
PTRR5	40	Male	15	member
PTRR6	35	Female	5	member
PTRR7	30	Female	9	member
PTRR8	25	Female	25	member
PTRR9	18	Female	18	member
PTRR10	20	Female	20	member

6.3. The appropriation of Reformed liturgy by black RCSA members

The study was conducted with utmost diligence to assure its validity and reliability, following the ethical norms given by the Research Ethics and Social Sciences Committee (RESSC) at the University of Venda. The participants' identities were kept confidential, but their names were disguised using just letters (e.g., A, B, C, and D) to represent them. The participants were notified that they had the option to withdraw from the interview process and that their rights and dignity would be respected by the researcher, ensuring no harm would come to them.

Table that reveals the appropriation of Liturgy by members of the Black RCSA

THEMES	INSIGHTS FROM CONGREGATION
The significance of the current order of worship in the black RCSA to African culture.	• Colonial Foundation and structure of the Old. • Hierarchical Leadership Model • Patriarchy. • Indoctrination. • Inherited Style of Worship. • Worship Style and Formality.
Incorporation of African practices in worship.	• Music and Dancing • Reverence, Rituals, Rites and traditions • Prayer • Inclusion and Fellowship
The damaging contribution of liturgy in the colonisation of the African churches and the African mind.	• Control and Dominance. • Sense of Ownership. • Relevance and Accessibility.

	• Sense of belonging.
The process of integrating Africanism into the liturgical practices of the black RCSA.	• A Bottom-Up Approach. • Incorporation of Women. • Incorporation through diversity and inclusion. • Continual Education and Contemplation.

6.3.1. Individual participants

The researcher employed a confidential agreement form to uphold the imperative of maintaining confidentiality and to assure participants that the interview process would be conducted anonymously, thereby fostering an environment where they could freely share their thoughts without apprehension or uncertainty, as they would be safeguarded. Research undertaken within certain cohorts or collectives presents an inherent risk to maintaining confidentiality (Kaiser 2012:458). The researcher employs confidentiality measures to safeguard the participants.

The interview was performed in English and Tshivenda, depending on the proficiency of the individuals chosen, as using a language that is suitable for the participants enhances the likelihood of obtaining more accurate information. The researcher translates the question from English to Tshivenda to cater to individuals who have limited comprehension of English.

The interviewing process persisted until the researcher achieved a state of data saturation. The duration of individual interviews ranged from 30 to 40 minutes, while the duration of focus groups ranged from 1 hour to 30 minutes. Conducting interviews in a non-hurried manner is crucial to ensure that individuals are not subjected to undue pressure.

Data was gathered through a series of face-to-face individual interviews involving five participants, as well as a group focus group of ten individuals. These interviews took place during the period of April to May 2024. The researcher employed semi-structured interview questions derived from the primary objectives of this study as a crucial instrument for data collection. Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik (2021:1363) assert that “semi-structured interviews often entail having an interview guide with questions aimed at addressing the research objective”. Utilising semi-structured interviews to gather data due to the numerous advantages associated with this method. These benefits have been acknowledged by various academic authors, including Mashuri et al. (2022), Adams (2015) & Aung, Razak & Nazry (2021).

Face-to-face interviews were selected due to its advantages in data collection, such as the ability to clarify topics if participants did not understand them, and the option to ask further questions when participants provide brief answers. Schober (2018:291) provides further advantages that the researcher endorses, in addition to those described above:

Face-to-face interviews allow interviewers to locate and persuade sample members to participate, improving contact and cooperation rates while controlling household and respondent selection, and with greater confidence about respondents' identity and location than is available on the phone or web. Friendly FTF interviewers can highlight incentives to participate, build rapport and motivate respondents to answer conscientiously and disclose sensitive information. FTF interviewers can view respondents' nonverbal displays and circumstances, allowing them to adjust as needed if respondents are uncomfortable or distracted and encourage completion, reducing break-offs and allowing longer interviews. Respondents, presumably, can feel comfortable in providing conscientious answers when they experience an interviewer's nonthreatening and supportive demeanor; they can feel a “human touch” as they contribute to research, and those who wish for more human contact than they usually get can engage in an additional (if unusual) social encounter.

6.4. Thematic Analysis of individual interviews

6.4.1. Theme 1: The significance of the current order of worship in the black RCSA to African culture.

6.4.1.1. Colonial Foundation and structure of the Old

The significance of the current order of worship in the Black Reformed Church in South Africa (RCSA) to African culture reveals profound insights into the colonial legacy ingrained within the church's liturgical practices. The participants highlight key points that underline the complex relationship between colonial history, cultural identity, and religious expression within the Black RCSA.

The respondents contend that the foundational structure of the old, reformed liturgy is rooted in coloniality, suggesting that the introduction of Christian liturgy into African societies was inherently tied to colonial efforts. This perspective highlights a critical examination of how the adoption of certain liturgical components within the Reformed Church's tradition, particularly in the RCSA, can inadvertently perpetuate colonial ideologies and power dynamics. PTRR1 expressed that:

The old, reformed liturgy's basic foundation and structure are based on coloniality. In my opinion, the introduction of Christian liturgy into African societies is inherently a colonial effort. Having said that, there are specific liturgical components that I believe reinforce colonialism.

Furthermore, the data highlights a discrepancy between certain liturgical practices in the Reformed Church and the cultural values of respect within African communities. For instance, the requirement for attendees to stand during specific parts of the service, such as the opening and closing benedictions, goes against the cultural norms of African societies where standing up in a grave occasion is considered disrespectful. Soko (2010) accentuates that this conflict between colonial-era practices and indigenous cultural values illustrates how certain aspects of the current order of worship in the Black RCSA may inadvertently perpetuate colonial attitudes and erode traditional African customs. In agreement with PTRR1 and Soko (2010), PTRR3 said that:

Standing up on a grave occasion in royal families is not considered respectful in African cultures; yet there are traditions within the

Reformed Church's liturgy that require attendees to stand, particularly during the opening and closing benedictions.

Another key point highlighted by the interview data is the imitation of missionaries by church leaders during worship services. The participants express concerns that this imitation results in monotonous services that mimic European styles and lack authenticity in representing the cultural richness of the Tshivenda language and traditions. This imitation, stemming from a form of mental colonization, raises questions about the authenticity and cultural relevance of the worship experience for the Black RCSA community. It contributes to a sense of cultural erasure and perpetuates feelings of inferiority among the congregation, reflecting a deep-seated legacy of colonial influences on religious practices. PTRR2 expressly maintained that:

The imitation of missionaries when leading worship services is monotonous since leader's sound like Europeans who do not know Tshivenda well and only know the essentials. However, because of mental colonisation, our leaders perform worship services like those of European and Western people.

Moreover, the interview data underscores the issue of mindless usage of liturgical vestments and symbols associated with colonial-era Christianity within the Black RCSA. The uncritical adoption of these symbols, without contextualizing them within the African cultural framework, further reinforces feelings of cultural inferiority and perpetuates the legacy of colonialism within the community (Jefferess 2008:3). This disconnects between the adopted symbols and the cultural identities of the congregation raises questions about the inclusivity and sensitivity of the worship practices to the diverse backgrounds and histories of the Black RCSA members. PTRR4 elaborated that:

“This is a concern since it exacerbated feelings of inferiority and cultural erasure among the black RCSA community. The mindless usage of liturgical vestments and symbols connected with colonial-era Christianity promotes cultural inferiority and maintains colonialism's legacy among the black RCSA”

6.4.1.2. Hierarchical Leadership Model

The data from the interview sheds light on a critical issue within the Black RCSA, specifically concerning the significance of the current order of worship in relation to African culture. The respondents' perspective highlights some key concerns regarding the hierarchical leadership model and the impact it has on the empowerment of the congregation, particularly in the context of colonial power dynamics.

One significant point raised is the perception that the current leadership structure of the Black RCSA mirrors colonial power dynamics. The hierarchical system, dominated by male figures such as Elders, Deacons, and Reverends, is seen as perpetuating a system of authority and control that may not align with the values of empowerment and participation within the community. This observation suggests a disconnect between the leadership model and the ideals of community engagement and shared decision-making as shown in the words of PTRR5 below:

"The hierarchical leadership model of our church, the Black RCSA, exemplifies colonial power dynamics. It undermines mass empowerment and reinforces reliance on authority officials which is male only (Elders, Deacons and Reverend)."

Furthermore, the interview data points to specific liturgical practices within the Black RCSA that may contribute to perpetuating a colonial mindset. The uncritical use of hymns and confessions that romanticize European conquest and imperialism, while downplaying the violence and oppression experienced by black and indigenous peoples at the hands of missionaries, raises concerns about the cultural insensitivity and historical erasure embedded in these practices (Kivel 2013:12). One of the participants by the name PTRR2 shown that:

"Specific liturgical aspects or practices within black reformed churches that may maintain a colonial mindset include the uncritical use of hymns and confessions indicated in the formular book that romanticize European conquest and imperialism while ignoring the violence and oppression perpetrated against black and indigenous peoples by missionaries. Still, the hierarchical structure of liturgical services in our church, in which clergy have tremendous power and control over parishioners, is reflecting colonial systems of dominance and weaken members participation "

The sentiment above about the hierarchical structure of liturgical services, where clergy hold significant power and control over parishioners, is identified as a reflection of colonial systems of dominance. This power dynamic potentially limits members' active participation and engagement in the worship experience, leading to a sense of disempowerment and alienation within the community (Kivel 2013:16). This raises questions about the inclusivity and equity of the worship practices in the Black RCSA and emphasizes the importance of reevaluating the power dynamics within the church to promote a more participatory and egalitarian environment.

Moreover, the interview data underscores the issue of mindless usage of liturgical vestments and symbols associated with colonial-era Christianity within the Black RCSA. The credulous adoption of these symbols, without contextualizing them within the African cultural framework, further reinforces feelings of cultural inferiority and perpetuates the legacy of colonialism within the community (Kwok 2005:2; Anderson 2021). This disconnect between the adopted symbols and the cultural identities of the congregation raises questions about the inclusivity and sensitivity of the worship practices to the diverse backgrounds and histories of the Black RCSA members.

“This is a concern since it exacerbated feelings of inferiority and cultural erasure among the black RCSA community. The mindless usage of liturgical vestments and symbols connected with colonial-era Christianity promotes cultural inferiority and maintains colonialism's legacy among the black RCSA”.

6.4.1.3. Patriarchy

The respondents' viewpoints underscore the discrepancy between the gender norms embedded in current worship practices and the inclusive, egalitarian approaches found in traditional African religious ceremonies.

Another important perception shared by the interviewees is the observation that the liturgy in the reformed tradition, particularly within the RCSA, is predominantly led by male pastors. This observation is viewed as reflective of colonial legacies that imposed hierarchical gender roles and restricted the participation of women in leadership positions within religious contexts. The respondents emphasize that in African societies, roles within religious ceremonies are not gender-specific, and both men and women traditionally have the right to lead and participate in various aspects of worship. Marley (2009:8) contends that misalignment between the gender-

inclusive practices of African traditions and the male-dominated leadership structure in the Black RCSA highlights a perpetuation of colonial norms within the church. PTRR 4 says that:

“The notion that the liturgy in the reformed tradition, at least in the RCSA, is led solely by male pastors is colonial. In African societies, functions within religious ceremonies are not gender specific. In all spheres, both men and women have the right to lead religious ceremonies.”

Furthermore, the data points to a broader issue of gender equality and representation within the worship services of the Black RCSA. The exclusive leadership roles assigned to male pastors not only contradict the inclusive cultural practices observed in African societies but also reinforce gender-based stereotypes and limitations within the community (Chisale 2020:1). This disparity raises questions about the church's commitment to gender equality, inclusivity, and the recognition of diverse voices and talents within the congregation. It also points to the need for a critical examination of the gender dynamics at play in the current order of worship and the ways in which they intersect with colonial influences.

6.4.1.4. Indoctrination

The data gathered from the interviews regarding the significance of the current order of worship in the Black RCSA to African culture reveals profound insights into the intersection of colonial legacies, doctrinal influences, and theological perspectives within the worship practices of the church. The respondents' perspectives shed light on the challenges faced by the community in reconciling inherited doctrinal tenets with alternative theological viewpoints rooted in black liberation and resistance experiences.

One observation shared by the interviewees is the emphasis on doctrinal tenets within the worship services of the Black RCSA, which are often traced back to colonial missionaries. The respondents express concern that this emphasis on specific doctrinal teachings stifles the exploration of alternative theological perspectives that are grounded in black liberation and resistance experiences. The restrictive approach to theology, inherited from Western European thought and colonial influences, marginalizes diverse theological viewpoints within the

congregation and perpetuates a mindset of cultural subordination and exclusion (Whitla 2019:68). This is evidenced by the emphasis put by PTRR2 who argues that:

“The emphasis on doctrinal tenet, which is frequently passed down from colonial missionaries, stifles alternative theological viewpoints based on black liberation and resistance experiences. The preference for theological perspectives founded in Western European thought over us the black people marginalise other forms of worship while perpetuating a colonial mindset of cultural subordination”

In the same vein, the data highlights a preference for theological perspectives rooted in Western European thought, which overrides the incorporation of theological frameworks that resonate with the lived experiences and struggles of black people. This preference not only limits the diversity of theological discourse within the worship context but also reinforces a hierarchical system that prioritizes Western ideologies over indigenous, liberation-oriented perspectives. The perpetuation of this colonial mindset through the privileging of Western theological frameworks contributes to the marginalization of alternative forms of worship and perpetuates a sense of cultural inferiority among the black RCSA community (Burnett-Cole 2023:16). Below is the expression by one of the participants PTRR4 who says that:

“I think the problem with us, the Black RCSA, is to adopt Eurocentric ways of worship without questioning them. When we accepted good news from missionaries, that is why it kept colonial attitudes alive and favoured Western traditions over those of indigenous cultures. And we are now used to these and treat them as the word of God while it is missionary culture.”

6.4.1.5. Inherited Style of Worship

The respondents' observations shed light on the enduring legacy of 17th-century European worship traditions that continue to shape the worship experience in African churches, highlighting the tension between foreign constructions and indigenous cultural expressions within the context of reformed liturgy.

It has been raised by the interviewees that the acknowledgment that the current order of worship within the Black RCSA is a direct descendant of 17th-century European liturgical practices. Despite centuries of evolution and adaptation, the core elements of the order of worship have remained largely unchanged, reflecting a historical continuity with European religious traditions (Dawson 1991:11). This

continuity raises questions about the cultural authenticity and relevance of the worship experience for African congregations, as the liturgy's origins lie in a foreign context that may not fully resonate with the cultural nuances and experiences of the African community. PTRR3 further highlights that:

"According to its own historical record, the current order of worship is a vestige of 17th-century Europe; our order of worship has never changed. As a result, because the liturgy was formed in Europe and then transported into African churches, it will, by definition, lack components of African culture because it was foreign constructed. The only thing African religious aspects have in common with reform liturgy is that they both involve singing".

Furthermore, the data suggests that the transplantation of European-formed liturgical practices into African churches inevitably results in a divergence from indigenous cultural components. The inheritances of the European framework may inadvertently exclude or overshadow elements of African culture, leading to a sense of cultural dissonance and detachment from the worship experience. This disjunction between the foreign construction of the liturgy and the African cultural context highlights the complexity of reconciling inherited traditions with local identities, thereby underscoring the need for a critical examination of the cultural dimensions embedded in the current order of worship.

Additionally, the respondents note a fundamental similarity shared between African religious practices and reformed liturgy – the act of singing. This shared element of singing underscores the potential for cultural convergence and cultural exchange within the worship space, providing a point of connection between the foreign construction of the liturgy and the African cultural expression. Through communal singing, there is an opportunity to bridge cultural divides, celebrate shared experiences, and infuse the worship experience with elements of African cultural identity and expression.

The respondent's narratives reflect a deep-rooted connection to the Reformed faith, shaped by personal spiritual journeys and a sense of cultural identity that transcends the absence of explicit African cultural elements within the current order of worship.

Another understanding shared by the interviewee is the foundational role of the Reformed faith in their spiritual life, which was instilled from childhood and led to a

personal realization of sinfulness and redemption through Christ. The respondent's testimony highlights the transformative power of faith and the central importance of accepting Jesus as Lord and Savior within their spiritual journey. This emphasis on personal faith experiences highlights the profound impact that religious beliefs and practices can have on individuals, shaping their worldview, values, and sense of identity. PTRR5 is of the view that:

"My main motive for worshipping the Lord at the Black RCSA is that I was raised as a child in the Reformed faith. It was through the Reformed faith that I realized I am a sinful man. I also discovered that if I dedicate my life to Christ Jesus and believe that He is the Lord and Saviour, His blood may wash away my sins. By His grace, I embraced Christ Jesus as my Lord and Saviour as a young man, not because I like the sequence of service".

Moreover, the respondent's acknowledgment of embracing the culture and practices of worshipping the Lord at the Black RCSA, despite the perceived exclusion of African culture, points to a complex negotiation between faith traditions, cultural heritage, and personal commitment to spiritual beliefs. The decision to continue worshipping at the Black RCSA, even in the absence of explicit representation of Venda culture, speaks to the resilience of faith and the ability of individuals to find meaning and connection within a religious community that may not fully reflect their cultural background. This can also indicate the power of indoctrination vested in the European style of spreading the gospel. In support of the view above PTRR1 maintains that:

That is, I accepted the culture and practices of worshipping the Lord. For that reason, I continue to worship the Lord at the Black RCSA. The Black RCSA's present order excludes African culture, including Venda culture.

6.4.1.6. Worship Style and Formality

The data gathered from the interviews regarding the significance of the current order of worship in the Black RCSA to African culture reveals a critical perspective on the cultural authenticity and expression within the worship practices of the church.

One important point shared by the interviewee is the dissatisfaction with the current style of singing songs within the worship services, which is described as mirroring

Western practices rather than embracing African musical traditions. The lack of African flavor in the singing is perceived as a barrier to connecting with the cultural heritage and musical expressions that are integral to the identity of black people. This observation shows the importance of music as a cultural touchstone and a means of expressing and celebrating the richness of African heritage within the worship context. PTRR2 comments as shown below highlight a disconnect between the current order of singing in a Western style and the desire for a more culturally resonant and inclusive approach that reflects African musical traditions, particularly through dancing and drumming.

I dislike the current order in which we perform our songs. We sing our songs like Westerners, not Africans. There is no African flavour in our singing. We, as black people, enjoy dancing and playing drums throughout our services. That is what our culture expects us to do as Africans.

Furthermore, the participant's emphasis on the enjoyment of dancing and playing drums throughout the worship services highlights the significance of these activities in African cultural traditions. Dancing and drumming are not only forms of musical expression but also avenues for communal celebration, spiritual connection, and cultural affirmation within African societies (Mabingo 2020:25). The call for incorporating these elements into the worship experience speaks to a deeper desire to align the church's practices with the cultural expectations and traditions of its African congregation.

The respondent's remarks shed light on the perceived rigidity and exclusivity of the current liturgical practices, highlighting the need for reform to enable broader participation and incorporation of African traditions within the worship setting.

The participant below expresses a desire for reform that goes beyond labels, indicating a need for a more dynamic and inclusive approach to liturgy that accommodates diverse voices and experiences. The rigidity in the current order of worship, particularly in the exclusive participation of a small group of individuals, is seen as a barrier to engagement and connection for certain members, stressing the importance of fostering a more open and participatory worship environment (Mabingo 2020). PTRR3 says that:

I believe we are too caught in our formality; even if we call ourselves reformed, we refuse to reform. The structure of liturgy and the current order of worship allow a small group of individuals to participate more fully in the entire service; for example, all liturgical sections are conducted solely by the minister, making liturgy unsuitable for me. Due to the way we organise worship services, it must involve African traditions.

Furthermore, the respondent points out the limitations in participation within the liturgical sections, where the minister assumes sole responsibility for leading all aspects of the service. This centralized approach to conducting the liturgy not only narrows the range of voices and perspectives represented in the worship experience but also excludes opportunities for congregational involvement and engagement. The lack of inclusivity and diversity in the leadership of the worship services is perceived as inhibiting a sense of belonging and active participation for all members of the congregation.

Participants expressed their dissatisfaction with the sermons delivered by elders and deacons due to a perceived lack of preparation and the excessive length of the sermons. They asserted that the preaching must conclude punctually.

The interviewee critiques the current sequence of sermons within the worship services, highlighting moments where the delivery may come across as dull or lacking in preparation. The respondent points out a tendency among elders and deacons to deliver sermons that resemble more of a Bible study rather than an inspirational message that resonates with the congregants. This observation highlights the importance of thorough preparation, engaging delivery, and a compelling narrative structure in the sermons to captivate and inspire the audience. This becomes apparent when we examine the subsequent statement by PTRR4:

The current sequence of the sermon is that you guys can be boring at times. There appears to be a lack or less preparations in the preaching, particularly among the elders and deacons, resulting in a sermon that resembles a bible study. Do not extend the sermon; when you are finished, say amen and walk on. If you are having difficulty preparing a sermon, seek assistance or consult with your pastor.

PTRR5 in the same vein expresses a desire for sermons to be concise and impactful, with a call to avoid unnecessary extensions and to focus on delivering a clear and meaningful message. The emphasis on brevity and directness in sermon delivery reflects a desire for authenticity and relevance in the content being presented, encouraging speakers to connect with the congregation on a deeper level and inspire action or personal reflection. The acknowledgment of the need for realism in sermons points to a desire for messages that directly resonate with the lived experiences and challenges of the listeners, fostering a sense of connection and empowerment within the worship setting as expressed in the statement below:

In general, there is a lack of realism in sermons, but I can relate directly with what the speaker is saying. It is usually up to me to make the connections, which is not always simple. Preach in a way that inspires me to get up and do something or alter my life right now.

6.4.2. Theme 2: Incorporation of African practices in worship

6.4.2.1. Music and Dancing

The respondent's remarks underscore the central role of music, particularly singing, in African cultural and spiritual life, highlighting the importance of incorporating familiar traditions into the worship experience to create a sense of belonging and cultural continuity.

The observation that singing during worship resonates strongly with many individuals due to the cultural and traditional significance of music in African lives points to a profound connection between music and identity within the African context. Music, and specifically singing, holds a prominent place in African cultures, serving as a means of communication, storytelling, celebration, and spiritual expression (Oikelome 2021:187). The act of singing cuts across various aspects of daily life and community gatherings, weaving a rich tapestry of cultural heritage and communal bonds that are deeply ingrained in the African experience (Ayorinde & Ajose 2022:3). PTRR3 postulates that:

I believe that singing during worship resonates the most with many individuals; this is mostly because Africans have traditionally and culturally sung on many times throughout their lives.

Within the context of worship, the act of singing carries a special significance as a form of communal expression and spiritual connection. The participant's recognition of the importance of singing during worship reflects a desire to draw upon familiar cultural practices and traditions that evoke feelings of comfort, unity, and reverence. By incorporating singing into the worship services, the church can tap into the emotional and cultural resonance of music, creating a space where congregants can engage authentically with their faith and cultural heritage. By recognizing the central role of singing in African cultural expression and spirituality, the church can work towards decolonizing its worship practices by integrating familiar and resonant elements that honour and celebrate the diverse cultural identities within the community.

The data gathered from the interviews regarding the incorporation of African practices in worship provides valuable insights into the importance of embracing indigenous music and symbols within the reformed order of service to cultivate a sense of cultural pride, connection, and meaningful engagement within the worship experience. The respondent's reflections highlight the profound impact of including indigenous musical traditions, such as drumming and ululation, as a means of fostering cultural authenticity, accessibility, and community resonance within the worship context.

The respondent's acknowledgment of the significance of incorporating indigenous musical traditions into the worship services underscores the importance of creating a space that is inclusive, accessible, and resonant with the cultural sensibilities of the attendees. Traditional drumming and ululation, as integral components of African musical heritage, serve as powerful conduits for cultural expression, communication, and spiritual connection. By embracing these indigenous practices within the worship context, the church community can deepen its engagement with the rich tapestry of cultural traditions that underpin the community's collective identity. PTRR4 clearly states that:

The inclusion of indigenous music, and symbols within the reformed order of service fosters a sense of cultural pride and connectedness among Venda attendees. By incorporating indigenous musical traditions into our worship services, such as traditional drumming and

ululation, we make the worship experience more accessible and meaningful to the community, connecting deeply with their cultural history.

The above expressions accentuate the imperative of reevaluating the ways in which indigenous music and symbols are integrated into the worship experience to honour, celebrate, and amplify cultural authenticity within the congregation. It calls for a deliberate effort to incorporate diverse cultural expressions, practices, and symbols that resonate with the community's heritage and values, fostering a deeper sense of connection, pride, and cultural continuity within the worship setting.

The acknowledgment of the transformative power of indigenous music and symbols in enriching the worship experience speaks to the broader imperative of embracing diverse cultural practices and traditions in the reform of reformed liturgy. By centering indigenous expressions that resonate with the community, the church can create a worship environment that is culturally affirming, inclusive, and spiritually enriching for all attendees. This understanding can inform efforts to decolonize worship practices by prioritizing cultural authenticity, heritage, and community resonance, ultimately leading to a more meaningful, accessible, and inclusive worship experience that honours the diverse cultural fabric of the African congregation.

Another perspective shared by the interviewee is the recognition of the current order of worship, specifically within the reformed tradition, as resonating strongly with cultural values and traditions, primarily due to its emphasis on communal participation and oral tradition. The communal nature of the church, where attendees actively engage in singing, dancing, and responsive readings, is perceived as mirroring the values of community, collaboration, and collective expression that are integral to Venda culture. This emphasis on communal participation by PTRR3 illustrates the significance of shared experiences, collective worship, and the oral transmission of stories, beliefs, and traditions within the community. PTRR3 argues that:

The current order of worship in the reformed tradition may resonate most strongly with cultural values and traditions because of its emphasis on communal participation and oral tradition. The communal feature of church, in which attendees actively participate in singing,

dancing, and responsive readings, underscores the value of community and collective expression in Venda culture.

To add on, PTRR4 is of the belief in the power of traditional African music to infuse worship services with vivid energy and a feeling of celebration. By incorporating elements such as drumming, dancing, and call-and-response singing, the church can draw upon the rhythmic and expressive musical traditions of the continent to create a dynamic and engaging worship environment. This integration of traditional African music not only adds a sense of vibrancy and joy to the worship experience but also connects with the cultural heritage and identity of the congregation, providing a space for cultural expression, communal unity, and spiritual connection. PTRR4 on the same note says that:

I believe that using traditional African music, including as drumming, dancing, and call-and-response singing, could add vivid energy and a feeling of celebration to worship services by tapping into the continent's rhythmic and expressive musical traditions.

The participant's recognition of the potential impact of traditional African music on worship services highlights the role of music as a unifying and transformative force within the worship context. Traditional African music, with its rhythmic complexity, expressive melodies, and communal engagement, has the power to uplift spirits, create a sense of togetherness, and evoke deep emotions within congregants. By embracing these musical traditions, the church can cultivate a worship experience that resonates with the cultural richness, authenticity, and vibrancy of African musical heritage, offering a platform for spiritual expression, celebration, and communal bonding.

The participants' sentiments advocate for a reimagining of the ways in which music is integrated into the worship experience to create a more immersive, culturally resonant, and spiritually enriching environment that fosters a deep sense of community, celebration, and connection among congregants. This understanding can inform efforts to decolonize worship practices by embracing the cultural richness, musical diversity, and vibrant energy of African musical traditions within the worship setting, ultimately creating a more inclusive, celebratory, and spiritually uplifting environment that resonates with the diverse tapestry of the African congregation.

6.4.2.2. Reverence, Rituals, Rites and traditions

The participant's reflections on the expression of respect in the order of worship shed light on the complexities of navigating between Western and African cultural values, particularly in the context of demonstrating reverence to God in a manner that aligns with African customs while also acknowledging Western influences.

An observation shared by the interviewee is the recognition of respect as a consistent element within the existing order of worship that resonates with African cultural values and customs. The practice of standing during worship, as a means of demonstrating reverence to God, is highlighted as a reflection of respect that carries over from Western traditions. Nephawe & Lambani (2022:749) purports that, the act of standing is contrasted with the African cultural practice of bending down, which is traditionally associated with showing reverence and deference, particularly towards elders or traditional leaders. This juxtaposition raises questions about the cultural nuances and interpretations of respect within the worship context, as influenced by both Western and African cultural norms. PTRR4 is of the belief that:

I believe that respect is the only part of the existing order of worship that is consistent with African cultural values and customs." We even demonstrate respect by standing in our liturgy rather than bending down, as we used to do with our traditional leaders, and by greeting one another.

The participant's subsequent statement indicates the importance of aligning worship practices with cultural values and sensibilities. The act of standing, while customary in Western worship settings as a sign of respect, may carry different connotations within African cultural contexts where traditions of bending down are associated with reverence and deference. This tension between cultural practices highlights the need for a balanced and culturally sensitive approach to demonstrating respect within the worship space, one that acknowledges and integrates diverse expressions of reverence found within the community. PTRR5 postulates that:

That is the reverence that I believe we should show our God during our church services. In our church service, we respect God by standing up; this is a Western manner of showing respect. In African culture, standing up and chatting to the elderly is considered a severe

curse or a sign of undermining them. This indicates that even for black people, standing up in church is a form of disrespect to God, because in African culture, we show reverence by bending down. This indicates that we need to improve the way we show respect during worship services.

The acknowledgment of the divergence between Western and African cultural expressions of respect within the worship setting highlights the broader imperative of embracing diverse cultural practices and traditions in the process of reforming reformed liturgy. By putting cultural values and customs that resonate with the community, the church can cultivate a worship experience that fosters a deep sense of reverence, connection, and cultural continuity among congregants, ultimately leading to a more inclusive, respectful, and decolonized approach to worship that honours the diverse cultural tapestry of the African congregation.

The respondents' suggestion to integrate unique rituals, rites, and traditions from African culture into worship services reflects a desire to bridge the gap between Western Christian practices and indigenous African spiritual expressions.

The emphasis on incorporating ancient healing traditions such as the laying on of hands and oil anointing into the prayer ministry of black Reformed churches underscores a holistic approach to addressing physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being within the congregational setting. By advocating for the inclusion of these practices, the respondents highlight the value of drawing upon indigenous African healing modalities to provide comprehensive support to the community members (Chioneso et al 2020:99). This suggests a recognition of the richness and relevance of African cultural practices in meeting the diverse needs of congregants and enriching the worship experience. This shown by what PTRR 1 say below:

I believe that several unique rituals, rites, and traditions from African culture could be very important to add into worship services at black Reformed churches. The church should incorporate ancient healing traditions like as laying on of hands or oil anointing into its prayer ministry to provide comprehensive support for physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being. Observing present worship services in black Reformed churches indicates gaps in which we could use African

cultural components to improve the authenticity and inclusivity of the worship experience. One prominent aspect is the dearth of representation of local languages and musical forms, which may alienate congregants of African cultural history.

Furthermore, the observation regarding the lack of representation of local languages and musical forms in present worship services at black Reformed churches brings attention to the potential alienation of congregants with African cultural backgrounds. The absence of linguistic and musical diversity in worship can create barriers to full participation and engagement for individuals whose cultural heritage is not reflected in the church's practices. This raises important questions about the impact of cultural representation on the sense of belonging and connection within the religious community.

From a decolonial perspective, this data highlights the importance of decolonizing worship spaces by integrating African cultural components that resonate with the lived experiences and traditions of congregants. By incorporating indigenous healing practices and promoting linguistic and musical diversity, black Reformed churches can move towards a more inclusive and culturally responsive approach to worship that celebrates and affirms African heritage.

The suggestion to incorporate African practices in worship services at black Reformed churches can be seen as a form of cultural reclamation and resistance against the legacies of colonialism that have historically erased or marginalized indigenous spiritual traditions. It represents a shift towards navigating African voices, traditions, and experiences within religious spaces, challenging the dominance of Western norms and values in the practice of Christianity.

6.4.2.3. Prayer

The respondent's remarks shed light on the significance of prayer as a bridge to African cultural traditions, the differences in prayer styles between cultural contexts, and the impact of lengthy prayers on congregational engagement and participation.

One key observation shared by the interviewee is the recognition of the connection between prayer and African culture, highlighting the role of prayer as a conduit to communicating with ancestors, seeking assistance, and expressing gratitude for blessings. In African customs, prayer often involves interacting with ancestors,

seeking their guidance, and acknowledging their influence in daily life (Mekoa 2020:33). This reflects a deeply rooted spiritual connection and reverence for ancestral ties that are integral to many African cultural practices and beliefs as shown below by PTRR2 who says that:

Prayer connects with African culture because, in African custom, people ask their ancestors for what they need and praise them for their success. However, throughout our church session, we prayed for a long period. I don't understand why the prayer should be so long that one can end up slumbering; to claim it's a must, it should be lengthier than other sorts of prayers in the service.

The respondent's reflection on the duration of prayers within the church setting illuminates a perceived disparity between the prayer practices in the church and traditional African prayer customs. The concern over lengthy prayers that may lead to disengagement or drowsiness among congregants raises questions about the balance between the spiritual depth of prayer and the need for congregational attentiveness and active participation. The discrepancy between the expected duration of prayer in the church context and the cultural norms surrounding prayer practices in African customs underscores the importance of aligning worship practices with the cultural sensitivities and preferences of the congregation.

From a decolonial perspective, the analysis of the interview data underlines the imperative of reconsidering prayer practices to harmonize spiritual engagement with cultural relevance and congregation-centred approaches. It calls for a consideration of the cultural nuances and expectations surrounding prayer within the African context, recognizing the distinct modes and purposes of prayer in traditional customs and integrating these elements into the worship experience to foster a deeper sense of connection, understanding, and engagement for congregants.

The challenges posed by lengthy prayers within the worship context emphasises the broader imperative of adapting and reimagining worship practices to be inclusive, accessible, and responsive to the cultural needs and preferences of the community. By reflecting on the respondent's insights and considering the intersection between prayer, cultural customs, and worship practices, the church can work towards creating a more spiritually enriching, culturally resonant, and community-oriented

approach to prayer within the worship setting. This understanding can inform efforts to decolonize worship practices by prioritizing cultural sensitivity, inclusivity, and congregational engagement in prayer, fostering a worship environment that honours the diversity, spirituality, and cultural heritage of the African congregation.

6.4.2.4. Inclusion and Fellowship

The participants' reflections highlight a call for greater representation, diversity, and participation within the worship context, aligning with the African cultural values of community involvement, inclusivity, and collective engagement within religious rites.

PTRR 3 is of the belief that enriching the liturgy can be achieved through the inclusion of all genders in the worship activities. The emphasis on gender inclusivity speaks to the importance of creating a space that values and celebrates the diverse contributions, perspectives, and leadership capabilities of all individuals within the congregation. Robertson (2018:53) purports that by breaking down gender barriers and fostering a more inclusive environment, the church can tap into the wealth of talent, experience, and insights that exist across gender lines, enhancing the depth and richness of the worship experience. PTRR3 emphasized that:

First, I believe that including all genders in the liturgy can help to enrich it. Second, the liturgy should include persons other than the pastor. African communities' religious rites involve many people. What I mean by this is that in various areas of the liturgy, other individuals should be given the opportunity to lead.

Furthermore, the respondent's call for expanding the roles of individuals beyond the pastor within the liturgy resonates with the African cultural practice of involving many people in religious rites. The collective nature of African religious traditions underscores the value placed on community involvement, shared responsibility, and the active participation of individuals in various aspects of worship. By offering opportunities for different individuals to lead and contribute to different parts of the liturgy, the church can reflect the collective ethos, diverse talents, and communal engagement that are integral to African cultural practices.

This calls for a reimagining of the traditional hierarchical structures to create a more equitable, participatory, and empowering worship environment that honours the diverse talents, voices, and identities of all individuals within the congregation. By

prioritizing gender inclusivity and broadening opportunities for participation and leadership, the church can create a more inclusive, culturally affirming, and community-oriented worship experience that reflects the ethos of African communal traditions and values.

The importance of involving a diverse range of individuals in leading and participating in various aspects of the liturgy underscores the imperative of embracing and amplifying diversity, representation, and inclusivity within the worship space to foster a decolonized, equitable, and empowering approach to worship. By positioning gender inclusivity, diverse leadership opportunities, and collective engagement within the liturgy, the church can create a worship environment that is culturally authentic, spiritually enriching, and community-centred, ultimately fostering a deeper sense of connection, empowerment, and unity within the African congregation.

Furthermore, PTRR1 reflections highlight the universal significance of sharing food as a communal ritual that transcends cultural boundaries and serves as a fundamental expression of unity, fellowship, and shared identity, particularly within the African context.

Another remark shared by the PTRR1 is that communal rituals, such as meal sharing or communal prayers, have the potential to enhance the congregation's sense of connection and belonging. The emphasis on communal practices reflects an understanding of the power of shared experiences, collective engagement, and mutual support in deepening interpersonal relationships, nurturing a sense of unity, and fostering a strong community bond within the worship context. According to Wortmann-Kolundžija (2023:3) this communal ethos aligns with African cultural values that underscore the importance of togetherness, mutual care, and shared rituals in building social cohesion and solidarity. PTRR1 expressly alludes that:

Communal rituals such as meal sharing or communal prayers, in my opinion, could increase a congregation's sense of connection and belonging because the issue of sharing food is universal and fundamental to Africans.

In many African traditions, sharing a meal is not just a physical activity but a symbolic gesture of hospitality, friendship, and unity that signifies belonging, respect, and care

for one another. By incorporating communal practices, such as sharing meals or engaging in communal prayers, the church community can create a space where individuals feel valued, supported, and interconnected, fostering a deep sense of connection, belonging, and shared identity within the congregation.

In one of the interviews regarding the incorporation of African practices in worship illuminates the potential impact of introducing storytelling and oral tradition into sermons or liturgical readings to create a more engaging and immersive worship experience. The participant's insights highlight the power of storytelling as a means of connecting with congregants, conveying spiritual truths, and drawing on the rich narrative traditions of African cultures to deepen the worship experience and foster a strong sense of engagement and connection within the congregation.

A crucial observation shared by the interviewee is the belief that incorporating storytelling and oral tradition into sermons or liturgical readings can enhance the worship experience by engaging congregants in a more captivating and participatory manner. The emphasis on storytelling as a vehicle for expressing spiritual truths reflects an understanding of the importance of narrative, symbolism, and metaphor in conveying complex ideas, ethical principles, and moral teachings within the African cultural context (Fotaki, Altman & Koning 2020:14). By embracing storytelling, the church can draw on the rich heritage of African oral traditions to create a vibrant, dynamic, and emotionally resonant worship environment that speaks directly to the hearts and minds of congregants. PTRR2 says that:

I believe that introducing storytelling and oral tradition into sermons or liturgical readings could engage congregants in a more engaging and engaged worship experience by drawing on the rich narrative traditions of African cultures to express spiritual truths.

The participant's recognition of the potential of storytelling to engage congregants underscores the broader imperative of emphasising experiential, narrative-based approaches to worship that prioritize connection, empathy, and shared understanding. Through storytelling, the church can transcend the limitations of didactic teaching and foster a more inclusive, interactive, and transformative worship experience that resonates with the communal ethos, authenticity, and expressive richness of African cultural traditions. By infusing sermons and liturgical readings

with storytelling elements, the church can create a space where congregants feel inspired, connected, and immersed in a meaningful dialogue that bridges spiritual messages with personal experiences and collective memory. It calls for a reimagining of the ways in which spiritual truths are conveyed, moral lessons are imparted, and communal connections are forged within the worship setting by stressing storytelling as a culturally resonant, engaging, and transformative tool for expressing spiritual insights, fostering connection, and nurturing unity among congregants.

6.4.3. Theme 3: The damaging contribution of liturgy in the colonisation of the African churches and the African mind

6.4.3.1. Control and Dominance

The participants' remarks shed light on how the imposition of foreign liturgical practices, rooted in Western ideologies, served as a tool of control, dominance, and colonial power structures, contributing to the erosion of local cultural and religious traditions, fostering a sense of cultural inferiority, and perpetuating reliance on colonial ideologies within African churches.

The interviewee PTRR1 recognizes the detrimental impact of imposing Western liturgical norms on African churches. The respondent highlights how the adoption of European-style systems of worship not only facilitated the spread of Christianity but also reinforced colonial ideologies, supporting the maintenance of colonial power structures. By prioritizing Western practices and ideologies in the worship context, African churches inadvertently perpetuated a system of control and dominance that eroded local cultural and religious traditions, instilling feelings of cultural inferiority, dependence, and reverence towards colonial influences (Smart 1996:3). PTRR1 says that:

I believe that imposing Western liturgical norms frequently worked as an instrument of control and dominance, supporting the Black RCSA's colonial power structures. Adoption of European-style systems of worship aided not only the growth of Christianity, but also the propagation of colonial ideology.

The critique of the imposition of foreign liturgical practices highlights the broader implications of integrating Western norms into the worship environment, particularly

within the context of the Black RCSA. The adoption of European-style worship systems not only supplanted local traditions but also contributed to the erosion of cultural autonomy, identity, and self-reliance within African churches. By adhering to foreign liturgical practices, some churches continue to struggle financially and grapple with the legacy of colonialism, perpetuating a cycle of dependence, cultural erasure, and institutional fragility in the face of colonial legacies. This is shown by the words of PTRR2 who maintains that:

...That is why we are currently defending our colonisers. This imposition of foreign liturgical practices has led to the deterioration of local cultural and religious traditions, instilling a sense of cultural inferiority and reliance in our churches, some of which are still struggling to provide stipends to their pastors.

The information above emphasises the imperative of challenging, deconstructing, and decolonizing the entrenched Western norms and ideologies within the worship practices of the Black RCSA. There is need for a revaluation of the liturgical structures, practices, and ideologies to prioritize cultural authenticity, autonomy, and empowerment within the worship setting, reclaiming local traditions, identities, and values that have been marginalized, suppressed, or distorted by colonial influences. By dismantling colonial ideologies, challenging power structures, and revitalizing local traditions, the church can create a worship space that celebrates diversity, empowers self-determination, and fosters cultural revival, ultimately cultivating a more inclusive, autonomous, and culturally affirming worship experience that honours the diverse tapestry of the African congregation.

The participants continue to elaborate on how the organization of services, the distribution of influence, and the predominance of European languages within religious practices can evoke parallels with colonial governance structures, contributing to a sense of estrangement, cultural displacement, and the perpetuation of colonial ideologies within African worship contexts.

The way in which certain elements of religious ceremonies mirror colonial power dynamics and organizational structures has been observed by one of the participants. The participant PTRR3 highlights how the hierarchical organization of services, with leaders wielding significant influence akin to colonial rulers, reflects a

continuation of colonial legacies and power structures within the church. This parallelism reinforces societal hierarchies, consolidates power dynamics, and perpetuates a legacy of domination, control, and influence that echoes colonial governance models, fostering a sense of disempowerment and subjugation within the worship setting. PTRR3 elaborates that:

Certain aspects of our religious ceremonies, in my opinion, harken back to colonial days and how power worked. For example, the organisation of our services is like how society was governed during colonial times, with leaders wielding significant influence, as colonial rulers did.

The participants' criticism of the use of European languages in religious ceremonies as opposed to African languages underscores the broader implications of linguistic choices within the worship environment. The dominance of European languages can contribute to feelings of estrangement, cultural erasure, and internalized colonial ideologies among African worshippers. By privileging colonial languages over African languages, the church inadvertently reinforces the inferiority of local cultures, marginalizes indigenous identities, and perpetuates the sense of cultural displacement and disconnection from traditional roots among congregants (Smith, Lalitha & Hawk 2014:17). PTRR4 in addition says that:

The languages used during these ceremonies are frequently European rather than African, which can cause African worshippers to feel estranged from their own culture and colonial languages to appear more significant.

The participant accentuates the imperative of challenging and decolonizing the organizational structures, power dynamics, and linguistic norms within the worship environment to prioritize cultural authenticity, linguistic diversity, and equitable representation within the congregation. It calls for a redefinition of the ways in which leadership, influence, and linguistic choices are integrated into the worship experience to foster a more inclusive, culturally affirming, and empowering environment that honours the diversity, autonomy, and resilience of the African congregation, while dismantling colonial legacies and ideologies embedded within the worship practices. By retrieving indigenous identities, dismantling colonial

structures, and promoting linguistic diversity, the church can create a worship space that celebrates cultural heritage, fosters cultural revival, and empowers self-determination, ultimately cultivating a more inclusive, autonomous, and culturally affirming worship experience that resonates with the diverse tapestry of the African congregation.

The data from the interviews addressing the damaging contribution of liturgy in the colonization of African churches and the African mind show how certain aspects of worship practices, such as the way singing is conducted and the language used in discussions about religion, can inadvertently perpetuate colonial ideologies, reinforce notions of superiority, and contribute to feelings of inadequacy and cultural inferiority among African congregants.

The perception that the way singing is conducted in church, particularly the melodies used, can inadvertently reinforce the acceptability of colonialism and present European views as superior to others. Music, with its emotional and subconscious impact, has the power to shape perceptions, reinforce cultural norms, and influence beliefs (Clarke, DeNora & Vuoskoski 2015:62). The respondent highlights how the melodic patterns within church music may evoke colonial-era sentiments, subtly reinforcing the idea of European superiority and perpetuating a sense of cultural subordination and Eurocentrism among African congregants. PTRR5 accentuates that:

The way we sing in church due to melody frequently make colonialism seem acceptable and European views appear superior to others. Also, some of the ways we discuss religion in church may give the impression that Europeans are superior to Africans and that Africans are unable to make their own religious decisions.

The respondent's critique of the ways in which religion is discussed in church settings further underscores the damaging contribution of liturgy to the colonization of the African mind. The language used in religious discussions can unintentionally convey a sense of European superiority and African inferiority, perpetuating stereotypes, power imbalances, and internalized colonial ideologies. By presenting religious discourse in a manner that elevates European perspectives and diminishes African agency, the church inadvertently reinforces a sense of cultural dependence,

intellectual inadequacy, and theological subservience that reverberates throughout the congregation.

Through the recovering indigenous musical styles, embracing diverse linguistic traditions, and promoting a more equitable, culturally affirming dialogue, the church can create a worship space that celebrates diversity, autonomy, and cultural richness while dismantling colonial legacies and ideologies that undermine the autonomy and self-worth of African congregants.

PTRR1 expresses a profound sense of how colonial churches, designed in a European style, symbolized the dominance and authority of the colonizers over the indigenous African communities. The architecture and structure of these colonial churches, reminiscent of grand European cathedrals, served as physical manifestations of European cultural and religious superiority (Cantone & Demissie 2012:85).

The interviewee's perception of feeling insignificant and pressured to adopt European culture and values through the colonial churches sheds light on the deep-rooted impact of colonization on African identities and religious practices. The imposition of European norms within the sacred space of worship contributed to a sense of cultural displacement and a loss of autonomy in defining their own religious expressions. PRTT1 says that:

I feel that colonial churches like ours, which resembled huge European cathedrals, reflected the colonisers' control as well as the supremacy of European culture and religion.

Furthermore, the interviewee's observation that the influence of colonial churches continues to affect how African communities conduct worship sessions stresses the enduring legacy of colonialism in shaping religious practices and spiritual beliefs. The inherited structures and rituals from the colonial era constrain the ability of African churches to fully embrace and celebrate their indigenous cultural heritage within their worship experiences. PTRR2 further supports this by saying that:

Essentially, colonial churches encouraged us to adopt European culture and values, making us feel less significant. This continues to impact how we conduct worship sessions as Africans.

The interview data serves as a poignant reminder of the need to critically examine and challenge the historical injustices embedded in colonial-era liturgical traditions.

6.4.3.2. The Benefits of the Reformed Liturgical Practices

6.4.3.2.1. Sense of Ownership

The interview data presented delves into the significance of enabling congregants to actively participate in liturgical activities that resonate with their understanding and sense of ownership. The interviewee highlights the disconnect between congregants' engagement in specific liturgical actions during church services and their lack of comprehension about the underlying reasons or meanings behind these practices. This observation underscores the importance of transitioning towards a form of liturgy that is not only meaningful and accessible to congregants but also aligns with their cultural and spiritual identities.

The interviewee's assertion that a successful transition in liturgical practices, one that allows people to connect with and identify with the rituals, can have a positive impact, underscores the transformative potential of reforming Reformed Liturgy from a decolonial perspective. By empowering congregants to actively participate in and understand the liturgical actions they perform, church communities can foster a deeper sense of belonging, ownership, and connection to their faith practices. PTRR3 is of the view that:

I believe the potential benefits will be realised when congregants can undertake and engage in liturgical activities that they understand and feel ownership of. Congregants do specific things throughout the service but cannot explain why. If the transition is carried out in a fashion that people can identify with, it will have a good influence.

This insight carries significant implications for a study on Reforming Reformed Liturgy through a decolonial lens. It points towards the necessity of redirecting congregants' experiences, perspectives, and cultural contexts in the process of redefining and reshaping liturgical traditions. The interview data emphasizes the need to move away from prescriptive and Eurocentric liturgical norms towards

practices that are inclusive, engaging, and reflective of the diverse identities within African churches.

By fostering a greater sense of understanding and ownership among congregants regarding liturgical activities, churches can pave the way for a more participatory, empowering, and culturally affirming religious experience. PTRR4 argues that:

I believe that making certain modifications will help us African church members feel more connected to our culture and where we fit in. If we incorporate African music and rituals into our worship, we will feel more connected to the church and reminded of our African history. This will make us feel closer to our faith and African heritage.

The interviewee's recognition of the importance of ensuring that congregants can meaningfully relate to and interpret liturgical practices speaks to the broader goal of decolonizing religious spaces and dismantling colonial legacies that have historically marginalized African cultural expressions. This data underscores the transformative power of reforming Reformed Liturgy to reflect and embrace the diverse narratives, traditions, and spiritualities of African communities.

6.4.3.2.2. Relevance and Accessibility

The interview data provided offers a compelling perspective on the potential benefits of incorporating African cultural elements into liturgical practices to enhance the relevance and accessibility of the gospel message within African congregations. The interviewee suggests that by infusing African cultural components into worship, churches can effectively contextualize the biblical teachings, making them more relatable and meaningful to African communities. Drawing a parallel to Jesus' use of parables and symbols that resonated with his audience, the interviewee argues that integrating African cultural elements into worship can facilitate a deeper understanding and engagement with biblical truths in alignment with African ways of perceiving and interacting with the world.

The interviewee's emphasis on the importance of contextualization through cultural incorporation underscores a nuanced approach to decolonizing Reformed Liturgy. By recognizing the significance of cultural context in shaping religious experiences and interpretations, the interview data highlights the transformative potential of blending African cultural traditions with liturgical practices to bridge the gap between

established theological frameworks and the lived realities of African congregations. PTRR5 postulates that:

Hopefully, including African cultural components into liturgy would help contextualise the gospel message, making it more relevant and accessible to us as African congregations. Just as Jesus utilised parables and symbols familiar to his audience, including African cultural components into worship might assist our church in communicating biblical truths in ways that are consistent with African ways of perceiving and responding to the world.

In the context of a study on Reforming Reformed Liturgy from a Decolonial perspective, this analysis of the interview data underscores the need for a paradigm shift towards a more inclusive and culturally relevant approach to worship. The interviewee's insights shed light on the potential for enhancing evangelism and discipleship initiatives by embedding African cultural components into liturgical expressions, creating a more authentic and resonant platform for spiritual growth and community engagement.

This data signifies a departure from the colonial legacy of imposing foreign cultural norms and practices onto African churches, advocating instead for a reclamation of agency and identity through the integration of indigenous cultural elements into worship spaces. By aligning the gospel message with African cultural frameworks, churches can foster a sense of ownership, belonging, and empowerment among congregants, leading to a more holistic and transformative spiritual experience. In relation to the above PTRR1 says that:

This contextualization will increase the effectiveness of evangelism and discipleship initiatives, resulting in deeper spiritual growth and involvement among the community.

The interviewee's recognition of the role of contextualization in deepening spiritual involvement and community participation reflects a fundamental shift towards decolonizing religious practices and affirming African cultural heritage within the realm of worship. This analysis highlights the potential for reforming Reformed Liturgy from a Decolonial perspective to engender a more inclusive, culturally

diverse, and spiritually enriching worship environment that honours and celebrates the multifaceted identities of African congregations.

6.4.3.2.3. Sense of belonging

The interview data highlights the significance of rethinking church rituals to integrate African traditions to foster a sense of belonging and inclusivity among congregants. The interviewee emphasizes that by incorporating African cultural practices into liturgical ceremonies, churches can create a more welcoming and inclusive environment for individuals of diverse backgrounds. This approach, rooted in valuing and respecting all cultures, is seen as key to not only promoting a sense of belonging for Africans but also for individuals from various ethnicities and origins within the church community.

The interviewee's perspective on the importance of embracing African traditions within church rituals to eradicate colonial practices resonates with the broader goal of decolonizing Reformed Liturgy. By prioritizing cultural diversity and inclusivity, churches can move away from Eurocentric norms and create a space where all individuals, irrespective of their background, feel valued, equal, and appreciated. This approach aligns with the overarching aim of challenging the historical legacies of colonialism that have perpetuated systems of exclusion and hierarchy within religious institutions. This is evidenced by the words by PTRR2 who says that:

Changing the way, we conduct church rituals to incorporate African traditions might make everyone feel like they belong. If we value and respect all cultures in our church, it will be a more welcoming environment for Africans and people from other backgrounds.

In the context of a study on Reforming Reformed Liturgy from a Decolonial perspective, this analysis of the interview data underscores the transformative potential of integrating African traditions into worship practices. By embracing and celebrating diverse cultural expressions within church rituals, the study can contribute to the creation of a more inclusive, equitable, and culturally affirming space for congregants to engage with their faith. This approach not only acknowledges the richness of African heritage but also signals a shift towards a more diverse and inclusive representation of cultural traditions within the liturgical framework. PTTR3 puts it clearer that:

Embracing African cultural aspects in liturgical practices will help our church to decolonize theology and ecclesiology in the black RCSA. By restoring indigenous modes of worship and spirituality, the church will challenge the Eurocentric biases that have long dominated theological discourse and ecclesiastical architecture. This process of decolonization will also enable our church to express their faith in genuinely African ways, freeing them from the cultural imperialism that has frequently accompanied Western versions of Christianity.

The interviewee's call for a relook of church rituals to prioritize cultural inclusivity reflects a broader recognition of the need to dismantle colonial ideologies and practices that have marginalized African cultural identities within religious spaces. By refocusing African traditions in the reformation of liturgical practices, churches can actively contribute to challenging hegemonic structures and fostering a sense of unity, respect, and equality among diverse congregants. In addition, PTRR4 is of the view that:

...This will assist us in eradicating colonial practices and making everyone, regardless of origin, feel equal and appreciated.

Moreover, the interview data highlights the potential for integrating diverse cultural elements into worship to promote intercultural dialogue, understanding, and appreciation within church communities. By acknowledging and incorporating various cultural traditions, churches can cultivate an environment that embraces the multiplicity of identities and experiences present within their congregations, paving the way for a more harmonious and inclusive coexistence.

6.4.4. Theme 4: The process of integrating Africanism into the liturgical practices of the black RCSA

6.4.4.1. A Bottom-Up Approach

The interview data under the theme of integrating Africanism into the liturgical practices of the Black RCSA brings to light an important perspective on the process of reforming Reformed Liturgy from a Decolonial standpoint. The participant's viewpoint emphasizes a bottom-up approach to incorporating African cultural elements into worship services, advocating for congregants to play a central role in shaping the future of liturgical practices within their community. This perspective

underscores the significance of community participation, ownership, and agency in the process of reimagining and revitalizing worship experiences to better reflect the diverse cultural backgrounds and identities of congregants.

The participant's stance that congregants should lead and contribute to defining the structure and content of worship services signifies a departure from traditional top-down approaches that often dictate norms and practices from a position of authority. By prioritizing the voices and visions of congregants in shaping the direction of liturgical practices, this approach embraces a more democratic, inclusive, and community-driven model of religious expression that values diversity, collaboration, and shared agency. PTRR1 says that:

I believe that it should be bottom-up; congregants should first and foremost contribute to how they want worship services to look. Once the process is complete, we may analyse the expectations and begin the process of implementing the modifications. The key point here is that it should not be top-down.

In the context of a study on Reforming Reformed Liturgy from a Decolonial perspective, this analysis of the interview data highlights the transformative potential of decentralizing power dynamics within church structures to create a space for grassroots participation and co-creation. By placing congregants as active agents in the reformation of liturgical practices, the study can contribute to fostering a sense of ownership, engagement, and cultural relevance within worship spaces, thereby challenging the hierarchical legacies of colonialism and promoting a more equitable and inclusive approach to religious expression. PTRR2 elaborates that:

I appreciate the services, but I believe there is still a lot of space for growth, especially because the worship services lack an African flavour. So, the liturgy must be designed in such a way that it incorporates African taste. All our services follow Western liturgical standards, which have proven to be worthless in our culture. I believe the church should seriously consider reforming the liturgy.

The participant's emphasis on allowing congregants to shape the vision for worship services and contributing to the design and implementation of modifications underscores a commitment to dialogue, collaboration, and co-learning within the

process of integrating Africanism into liturgical practices. This bottom-up approach not only empowers congregants to articulate their cultural values and preferences but also catalyses a collective reimagining of worship that is responsive to the diverse needs, aspirations, and identities of the community.

Moreover, the participant's call for a bottom-up approach to reforming liturgical practices aligns with the broader aims of decolonizing religious spaces by dismantling hierarchical structures of authority and fostering a culture of mutual respect, reciprocity, and shared decision-making among congregants. By inviting congregants to co-create and co-own the transformation of worship services, churches can cultivate a sense of belonging, investment, and solidarity that transcends colonial frameworks and celebrates the multiplicity of cultural narratives and traditions present within the community.

6.4.4.2. Incorporation of Women

The participant's viewpoint on the importance of integrating Africanism into the liturgical practices of the Black RCSA by empowering women to lead worship sessions provides a compelling perspective on the intersection of gender equality, cultural inclusivity, and decoloniality within religious spaces. The participant argues that allowing women to take on leadership roles in worship aligns with the core tenets of Reformed theology by affirming the inherent value and contributions of all individuals, regardless of gender. This approach is grounded in a theological framework that emphasizes the diversity of gifts bestowed by God and acknowledges the historical and biblical significance of women in shaping religious narratives and practices.

The participant's assertion that incorporating women into leadership positions enriches the worship experience with diverse perspectives and backgrounds speaks to the value of promoting inclusivity, representation, and empowerment within the context of reforming Reformed Liturgy from a Decolonial perspective. By advocating for the active participation of women in worship leadership roles, the participant aims to challenge traditional gender norms, dismantle patriarchal structures, and foster a more inclusive and egalitarian approach to religious governance and expression. To views above are strengthened by the subsequent sentiment by PTRR3.

It is critical for our church to have women conduct worship sessions. Incorporating women into these roles will illustrate that every church member, regardless of gender, is valuable and makes a major contribution. This view is consistent with the core doctrines of Reformed theology, which hold that everyone who believes in God is valuable, and that God bestows diverse gifts on different people.

Data highlights the transformative potential of positioning gender equality and women's leadership within the process of integrating African cultural elements into worship practices. By promoting the inclusion of women in worship leadership roles, the study can contribute to dismantling colonial legacies of gender discrimination and patriarchal dominance within religious institutions, thereby creating a more equitable, diverse, and socially just worship environment reflective of the principles of equality and freedom espoused in the gospel. PTRR4 alludes that:

Furthermore, the Bible states that God provides His Spirit to all people, not just men, and that women have played essential roles in God's story throughout history. When the church allows women to lead worship, it enriches the worship experience with diverse perspectives and backgrounds, making everyone feel more involved and worship more alive. This is about more than just fairness; it's about living out the gospel's teachings on equality and freedom. When the church allows women to lead in worship, it demonstrates what it means to be like Christ's body, in which every member is important and has something unique to contribute to the church's worship and mission.

The participant's argument that allowing women to lead in worship embodies the ethos of Christ's body, where every member is valued and has a unique contribution to make, underscores the significance of fostering an inclusive and participatory worship culture that honours the diverse identities, talents, and voices within the church community. By promoting gender parity in roles of leadership and influence, churches can model a more egalitarian and communal approach to worship that celebrates the full spectrum of human experiences and expressions.

Moreover, the participant's call for women to take on prominent roles in worship leadership positions serves as a counter-narrative to colonial ideologies that

historically marginalized and silenced women within religious settings. By promoting the empowerment and visibility of women in worship, the participant advocates for a more inclusive, egalitarian, and culturally affirming approach to shaping liturgical practices that resonates with the core principles of dignity, justice, and liberation inherent in a Decolonial perspective.

6.4.4.3. Incorporation through diversity and inclusion

The participant's perspective on integrating Africanism into the liturgical practices of the Black RCSA through a strong theological framework underscores the importance of approaching this process with respect, intentionality, and cultural sensitivity. The participant advocates for a theological lens that embraces the dignity and value of all cultures, particularly highlighting the significance of recognizing and honouring the African lens in interpreting biblical narratives and theological themes. By foregrounding the African perspective in theological reflections, the church can deepen its understanding of God's redemptive work across diverse cultural contexts, emphasizing themes of migration, exile, and liberation that resonate with the African experience of displacement, oppression, and resilience.

The participant's suggestion to anchor the adoption of Africanism in a theological framework that emphasizes God's universal love and solidarity with the marginalized underscores a commitment to decolonizing Reformed Liturgy by putting themes of inclusivity, justice, and cultural affirmation. By integrating African cultural components into a theological narrative that amplifies the voices and experiences of marginalized communities, the church can foster a sense of belonging, affirmation, and empowerment for all members of the community, particularly those whose narratives have historically been silenced or marginalized within religious spaces. PTRR4 is of the view that:

Our church can ensure that the adoption of Africanism into its liturgical practices is respectful and meaningful by basing it on a strong theological framework that recognises the dignity and value of all cultures. This method, which recognises and acknowledges the African lens, entails examining the biblical narrative through this distinct lens, emphasising the ways in which God's redemptive work manifests itself across multiple cultural contexts.

The transformative potential of retelling biblical stories and theological doctrines through an African lens to engender a deeper sense of cultural resonance, solidarity, and belonging within the worship space. By reframing theological discourse to encompass diverse cultural perspectives, the study can contribute to a more inclusive, nuanced, and socially conscious approach to interpreting sacred texts and rituals, challenging colonial frameworks that have historically imposed hegemonic interpretations onto African cultural practices and beliefs.

“Our church can ensure that the adoption of Africanism into its liturgical practices is respectful and meaningful by basing it on a strong theological framework that recognises the dignity and value of all cultures. This method, which recognises and acknowledges the African lens, entails examining the biblical narrative through this distinct lens, emphasising the ways in which God’s redemptive work manifests itself across multiple cultural contexts”.

The participant's call to draw parallels between biblical narratives and the African experience of displacement, oppression, and resilience not only enriches the theological dialogue but also fosters a deeper understanding of the universal themes of redemption, liberation, and hope that transcend cultural boundaries. By weaving together biblical stories of struggle and triumph with lived experiences of resilience and liberation, the church can create a theological narrative that speaks to the shared humanity, struggles, and aspirations of diverse cultural communities, fostering empathy, connection, and solidarity across different backgrounds. PTRR5 says that:

For example, the church might use biblical stories about migration, exile, and liberation to highlight similarities with the African experience of displacement, oppression, and resilience. The church may develop a sense of belonging and affirmation for all members of the community by incorporating African cultural components into a theological narrative that emphasises God’s universal love and solidarity with the marginalised.

Moreover, the participant's emphasis on incorporating African cultural components into the theological narrative underscores a commitment to acknowledging and valuing the diverse cultural tapestry of the church community, uplifting the voices and

perspectives of historically marginalized groups, and reimagining worship practices in ways that are affirming, inclusive, and socially relevant within a Decolonial framework.

6.4.4.4. Continual Education and Contemplation

The participant's suggestion to focus on continual education and contemplation regarding themes of cultural diversity, equity, and inclusion within the context of worship presents a comprehensive and proactive approach to integrating Africanism into the liturgical practices of the Black RCSA. By emphasizing the importance of ongoing learning and reflection on issues related to intercultural communication, cultural sensitivity, and decolonization, the participant underscores the transformative potential of education as a catalyst for cultivating a more inclusive, respectful, and culturally affirming worship environment (Burnett-Cole 2023:1).

The participant's proposal to conduct workshops, seminars, and study groups on topics such as intercultural communication, cultural sensitivity, and decolonization signifies a commitment to fostering a culture of critical reflection, dialogue, and engagement within the church community. By creating spaces for congregants to explore, discuss, and deepen their understanding of cultural diversity and equity, the church can nurture a learning culture that empowers individuals to engage thoughtfully and empathetically with diverse perspectives, traditions, and experiences. PTRR1 believes that:

I believe that we should focus continual education and contemplation on themes of cultural diversity, equity, and inclusion in the context of worship. This could include conducting workshops, seminars, or study groups on themes such as intercultural communication, cultural sensitivity, and decolonization.

In the context of a study on Reforming Reformed Liturgy from a Decolonial perspective, this analysis of the interview data highlights the transformative potential of educational initiatives to challenge colonial ideologies, dismantle hierarchies of power and privilege, and promote a more just, inclusive, and culturally responsive approach to shaping worship practices. By fostering opportunities for cross-cultural interchange, collaboration, and learning, the study can contribute to dismantling

colonial frameworks that have historically marginalized African cultural expressions and narratives within religious spaces.

The participant's suggestion to invite guest speakers or musicians from diverse cultural backgrounds to participate in worship services reflects a commitment to creating opportunities for cross-cultural dialogue, collaboration, and exchange within the worship context. By incorporating diverse voices and perspectives into worship services, the church can underscore the richness, complexity, and inclusivity of the broader community, fostering a spirit of openness, curiosity, and mutual respect that transcends cultural boundaries and promotes a more holistic and interconnected understanding of spirituality and worship. PTRR2 argues that:

In addition, the church should create chances for cross-cultural interchange and collaboration, such as inviting guest speakers or musicians from various cultural backgrounds to participate in worship services. By developing a learning and open culture, our church can ensure that incorporating Africanism into liturgical practices is a dynamic and rewarding process that improves the spiritual life of the entire community.

Moreover, the participant's emphasis on developing a learning and open culture within the church community underscores the importance of creating an environment that is receptive to change, dialogue, and growth. By cultivating a culture of continual education and contemplation on themes of cultural diversity and decolonization, the church can ensure that the process of integrating Africanism into liturgical practices remains dynamic, inclusive, and responsive to the evolving needs and aspirations of the community, reinforcing the principles of equity, justice, and solidarity within a Decolonial framework.

6.5. Focus group participants

The focus group was chosen due to the advantages it offers for data gathering, since it provides an environment where participants can freely contribute to the discussion without any apprehension, so facilitating a better understanding of the questions at hand. Krueger (2014:4) asserts that focus groups facilitate self-disclosure among participants without any sense of unease. Understanding individuals' genuine thoughts and emotions on the subject matter is beneficial.

Alternative data collection methods, such as observations and questionnaires, were contemplated but ultimately excluded from this study due to their disadvantages. The questionnaire approach for data collection is associated with various drawbacks, including low response rates, potential bias resulting from misinterpretation, the possibility of dishonest responses, restricted scope of information or reliability for intricate matters, and a need for more chances for social engagement or input (Choi & Pak 2005).

6.5.1. Overview of the Focus Group Perspective on Reformed Liturgy

The researcher was optimistic that the focus group, characterised by its different perspectives, would generate distinct and valuable insights. Although the discussion revolved around decolonisation and the restructuring of reformed liturgy, the outcomes did not differ much from those of separate groups. Nevertheless, the significant input provided by the focus group regarding the integration of Africanism into the liturgical practices of the black RCSA, as well as the essential steps required for this transformation, emphasised the importance of their contribution. This made each participant feel valued and essential to the decision-making process.

The summary of the focus group findings indicated that the church's leadership should establish a specialised committee or task force, comprising of clergy, lay leaders, and individuals from various cultural backgrounds. This group, consisting of individuals with a range of viewpoints and experiences, will engage in research, collect input from the congregation, and formulate a strategic plan to incorporate African cultural components into worship. By engaging a heterogeneous set of stakeholders in the planning process, the church will guarantee that the initiative embodies the combined sagacity and goals of its members, fostering a sense of inclusivity and significance for everyone.

The focus group findings emphasised the significance of education and training in providing clergy and worship leaders with the essential knowledge and skills. The black RCSA can ensure the effective integration of African cultural elements into its liturgical practices, such as the inclusion of women in worship services, by providing workshops, seminars, or courses on African history, culture, music, and spirituality.

This is because in African communities, women often hold leadership positions in significant institutions. For instance, the function of "Makhadzi" is crucial in things pertaining to marriage as she assumes leadership within the family (Takawira-Matwaya 2024:157). Furthermore, receiving instruction in intercultural communication, conflict resolution, and cultural sensitivity can assist in effectively managing possible difficulties, promoting a considerate and all-encompassing approach.

In addition, they have expressed the view that the church should actively engage the congregation in incorporating Africanism into liturgical practices by promoting a culture of involvement, cooperation, and responsibility (Hendriks 2004 :52). Possible methods for facilitating this could be organising community forums, conducting focus groups, or organising cultural celebrations, where individuals can openly express their cultural heritage, preferences, and suggestions for integrating African components into religious practices. In addition, the church should promote the establishment of small groups or committees within the congregation to investigate certain facets of African culture and their potential integration into worship. By enabling the congregation to actively participate in the process of change, the church may foster a sense of ownership and commitment to the result, so inspiring and motivating each member to make their optimal contribution (Stetzer & Rainer 2010:2).

6.6. Conclusion

In conclusion the exploration of the significance of the current order of worship to African culture within the Black RCSA, the incorporation of African practices in worship, the damaging historical effects of colonial-era liturgy, and the process of integrating Africanism into the liturgical practices, a multifaceted narrative emerges, showcasing a trajectory towards decolonization and cultural reclamation within religious spheres. Through the critical analysis of these themes, this study underscores the imperative of embracing and celebrating African cultural heritage, dismantling colonial legacies, and fostering a more inclusive and culturally responsive approach to worship practices. By centering African voices, traditions, and experiences within the worship context, the study advocates for a more equitable and culturally affirming environment that resonates with the rich diversity,

resilience, and spiritual depth of African communities within the Black RCSA, embodying a vision of worship rooted in cultural affirmation, solidarity, and inclusivity through a Decolonial lens.

CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSIONS, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a succinct review of the subject matter and draw conclusions about Reforming Reformed Liturgy: An African decolonial study of liturgical practices in South Africa's black Reformed churches (RCSA). This analysis focuses on adopting an African decolonial viewpoint. The African decolonial approach is a critical paradigm for eradicating colonial institutions and processes that perpetuate injustice and marginalisation within African communities. This statement emphasises the importance of Africans taking ownership of their history, culture, and knowledge systems, as well as challenging dominant Western narratives that have defined the continent's growth trajectory. This strategy seeks to address the long-term effects of colonialism in several parts of society, including politics, liturgy, and church governance. Its goal is to promote self-determination, social fairness, and emancipation among African populations. For example, in the pursuit of reclaiming and commemorating African identities, this methodology may include an exploration of indigenous African knowledge systems and customs that were suppressed during the colonial era, such as traditional healing methods, African initiative schools that in still morals, African ways of honouring that they show to the king, and African order that they demonstrate in their celebrations where they shout and dance.

The researcher will now present a summary of the findings, covering chapters 1-6, with the primary goal of reconfiguring the order of worship. This reconfiguration will be approached from a decolonial perspective, with the goal of assuring its relevance and adaptability to the African setting in South Africa.

7.2. Synopsis brief for each Chapter

7.2.1. Chapter 1

Chapter One primarily aimed to introduce the process of reformation and decolonisation of Reformed Liturgy within an African setting, with a specific emphasis on the black Reformed Church in South Africa (RCSA). In addition to that the study explores the historical introduction of Christianity in South Africa, highlighting the relationship between European missionaries and African cultural practices. It advocates for African Reformed churches to reflect African identities and decolonize liturgical practices that have historically disregarded African values. The research aims to address colonial baggage and restore cultural pride by integrating African traditions into worship services. This transformation is crucial for spiritual and cultural liberation.

7.2.2. Chapter 2: A literature review on the Diachronic Historical overview of the Reformed 'Ordo' of worship in South Africa

Chapter two focused on presenting secondary material from multiple sources, specifically emphasising and demonstrating the historical development of the worship order in black Reformed churches. Moreover, it functioned as a manual for examining the decolonial viewpoint of black Reformed churches and striving to understand the events that took place in the past, thereby enabling a more thorough understanding of the present Reformed worship structure.

7.2.3. Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Chapter Three provides an in-depth analysis of the research methodology utilised to investigate the liturgical practices of the Reformed Church in South Africa (RCSA). The chapter emphasises the importance of employing systematic approaches for both data collection and analysis. The chapter discusses the importance of research design in guaranteeing the reliability and validity of findings. It specifically highlights the value of phenomenological research design, which captures the subjective interpretations and lived experiences of individuals participating in liturgy. It includes a detailed account of the applied EDNA Model and comprehensive strategy, including the population, sampling, data collection instruments, and analysis methods. The study also considers ethical considerations and ensures its credibility. The chapter emphasises the significance of theological research in comprehending

religious practices and convictions, as well as the necessity of formulating studies that are in accordance with research inquiries and objectives, all the while considering ethical ramifications. It is argued that phenomenological research is especially advantageous for comprehending the way in which liturgical practices impact religious experiences by employing qualitative techniques such as in-depth interviews and observations to capture the essence of these experiences. By incorporating African cultural perspectives, the structured and strategic approach recommended guarantees that the study is comprehensive, precise, and able to tackle the intricate aspects of liturgy in RCSA. In doing so, it ultimately aids in the process of decolonizing liturgical practices.

7.2.4. The influence of church Liturgy on the colonialism of the African mindset

Particularly within the black Reformed churches in South Africa (RCSA), Chapter 4 examines the profound effect that colonialism had on the African psyche as it pertained to church liturgy. The analysis commences with a consideration of how missionaries integrated Western customs into African religious practices and utilised church rituals to assert colonial dominance over Africa, thereby influencing the African psyche. The chapter explores the process of incorporating African culture into church liturgy, with a particular focus on the assimilation of traditional African dance, music, and communal values into Christian worship, frequently to the detriment of indigenous practices. Although this amalgamation managed to safeguard certain cultural aspects, it concurrently contributed to the decline of traditional African spirituality by stigmatising and repressing indigenous practices as pagan. Moreover, it critically examines the diverse strategies utilised by religious ceremonies to impose dominance over the African psyche.

7.2.5 Chapter 5: The necessity of Reforming and decolonising the Reformed Liturgy

Chapter 5 examines the importance of reforming and decolonizing the Reformed Liturgy to confront its Eurocentric and imperialist prejudices. The approach seeks to

rebuild cultural identities and incorporate indigenous components into worship, thereby honouring God's variety and serving as restorative justice. Critics argue that the existing liturgy is Eurocentric, excluding non-European congregations and maintaining colonial ideals. To create a more inclusive worship experience, decolonization requires critical study, informed discourse, and the incorporation of other perspectives. This method challenges established conventions while strengthening communal connection and spiritual fulfilment. Decolonisation also provides a means of reconciliation for individuals who have historically been oppressed by the church. It necessitates active listening, involvement with indigenous knowledge, and a commitment to justice and equity in the church and society.

7.2.6. Chapter 6: Empirical Data: Reforming Reformed Liturgy on a Decolonial perspective

In Chapter 6, the Reforming Reformed Liturgy was analysed from a Decolonial Perspective, with a specific focus on the Black Reformed Church in South Africa (RCSA) and its connection to African culture. An analysis was conducted on data obtained from interviews with five participants and a focus group consisting of ten members. The purpose of this analysis was to determine the importance of the current worship order, identify African practices that could enhance worship services, examine the influence of colonial-era liturgy on African churches, and explore methods of incorporating Africanism into the liturgical practices of the Black RCSA. The analysis emphasises the intricate nature of integrating African practices into worship, their significance in preserving cultural heritage and enhancing spiritual experiences, and the historical impact of colonial-era liturgy on African cultural identity. The study advocates for an academic and succinct approach to liturgical reform that embraces Africanism and promotes inclusivity, authenticity, and cultural relevance. Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of continuous education on cultural diversity and decolonization. It also suggests involving the congregation in transformative processes through community forums, focus groups, and cultural celebrations.

7.2.7. Chapter 7: Discussions, Findings and Recommendations

Chapter 7 presents the study's findings, providing valuable insights obtained from the research method. The recommendations are derived from these findings and propose practical measures for adoption or further examination. The chapter also examines possible directions for future research, emphasising areas that require further investigation or extension. Furthermore, it reassesses the original goals and objectives established at the start of the research, analysing how they were tackled and accomplished or modified during the study. Likewise, the research enquiries presented initially are examined, assessing how they were addressed or improved upon based on the acquired findings. This chapter functions as a thorough contemplation of the entire research process, bringing together the results obtained, suggesting avenues for future investigation, and reinforcing the study's initial aims and enquiries.

7.3. Findings of the study

Based on an analysis of available literature and data collected through interviews, the study has reached the following conclusions: The researcher reviewed his primary, objectives, and research enquiries, resulting in the subsequent discoveries: Chapter 2 successfully achieved the initial goal, while Chapter 4 addressed the second target. Chapter 5 focused on the third objective, and Chapter 6 covered both the fourth and fifth objectives. All of these chapters were supported by empirical data. The researcher successfully accomplishes his objective of investigating the decolonisation of Reformed liturgy and its influence on African church worship services in South Africa. More precisely, in analysing how liturgy contributes to the imposition of a colonial mentality on black churches, emphasising the significance of embracing an African worship structure.

7.3.1. The Reformed Liturgy, a complex amalgamation of Biblical ideas, cultural influences, and human intellectual viewpoints.

The study concludes that the RCSA is a combination of Biblical interpretation, cultural factors, and human knowledge, which gives it a significant role in the history of the Black Church. This study demonstrates that liturgy is not solely based on the

Bible, but also incorporates elements of culture and human understanding in determining the structure of worship and the components that comprise the liturgy.

The Biblical scriptures are central to its framework, serving as a theological and spiritual anchor, ensuring that worship is based on scriptural truth. The Reformed tradition emphasises God's sovereignty and the authority of Scripture, expressing a commitment to sola scriptura, a principle that asserts the Bible as the final authority in questions of faith and practice (Frame 2008:5). This liturgical shape, however, is not static; it interacts with the cultural context in which it is practiced. Liturgy's expression is influenced by historical and cultural settings, allowing it to resonate with current congregations while remaining true to its Biblical essence. This interaction is visible in the adaptation of hymns, prayers, and liturgical rites to reflect different communities' linguistic, musical, and artistic preferences, revealing the liturgy's responsiveness to the cultural contexts in which it exists (Old 2002:3).

Furthermore, the intellectual contributions of theologians and reformers have significantly affected the Reformed Liturgy, imbuing it with deep theological insights and philosophical profundity. Reformers like as John Calvin and Ulrich Zwingli advocated for simplicity and directness in worship, eliminating what they saw as extraneous and idolatrous aspects to return to a more real, scriptural form of worship (Gordon 2002:87). This intellectual foundation emphasises the liturgy's commitment to clarity and theological purity, which aims to foster a real experience with the divine. Furthermore, the structure of the Reformed Liturgy encourages active involvement and intellectual interaction among congregations, creating a communal context in which individuals are asked to engage profoundly with their faith. This combination of Biblical authenticity, cultural flexibility, and intellectual rigour assures that the Reformed Liturgy is a live and evolving expression of Christian worship, deeply entrenched in its historical beginnings while constantly engaging with the present (White 2010:3).

7.3.2. The existing state of Reformed Liturgy fails to connect with the black church, thereby requiring a deliberate and urgent overhaul.

The literature indicates that the reformed liturgy, which has strong foundations in Western cultures and intellectual thought, does not have relevance or significance for the Black church. Therefore, a complete restructuring is necessary. This gap stems from a lack of representation and assimilation of African diasporic elements into the liturgical framework, resulting in a form of worship that Black believers may find alien and uninviting (Cone 1997). To bridge this gap, it is critical to incorporate components of the Black church's vibrant worship style, such as call-and-response, spirituals, and a focus on communal and social justice themes (Lincoln & Mamiya 1990:382). This integration would not only recognise Black communities' cultural past but would also deepen liturgical practice by making it more inclusive and reflective of Christ's diverse body. This reform endeavour will necessitate a collaborative approach incorporating theologians, liturgists, and Black church leaders to ensure that the adjustments are both theologically sound and culturally significant. The purpose is not only to establish a Reformed Liturgy, but to envision a future in which our worship experience is both spiritually uplifting and culturally relevant (West 1999).

7.3.3. The Reformed Liturgy was employed to colonise the African psyche.

The study finds that the utilisation of Reformed Liturgy in Africa served not only as a religious ritual, but also as a mechanism for exerting cultural and psychological dominance. The colonial powers imposed a liturgical system with the intention of altering African spiritual and cultural identities to conform to Western standards. This had the effect of weakening indigenous beliefs and practices (Kalu 2008:4). The Reformed Liturgy, characterised by its Eurocentric theological concepts and worship practices, was utilised to enforce a perception of European dominance and to rationalise the colonial objective. As a result, African converts experienced a significant internalisation of colonial principles, which had a dramatic impact on their psychological well-being and cultural identity. This strategy entailed the methodical depreciation of African religious manifestations, frequently categorised as pagan or primitive, so undermining the cultural self-worth of African populations (Bediako 1997).

A thorough examination of this occurrence unveils the complex tactics by which liturgy was harnessed to assert cultural dominance, underscoring the necessity for an all-encompassing reassessment of Reformed Liturgy in the contexts of postcolonial Africa. Reclaiming and incorporating indigenous spiritual elements should be a top priority in the re-evaluation process to achieve decolonization of liturgical practices. Implementing this initiative would facilitate the restoration of cultural and spiritual autonomy among African Christians (Ukah 2007:18). This endeavour is crucial for fostering a worship experience that is authentic to theological ideas and significant within the framework of African culture, honouring the rich heritage of African Christianity.

7.3.4. To be pertinent and significant to the Black church, the Reformed Liturgy should integrate elements of African culture.

The study asserts that the inclusion of African cultural components is essential to guarantee the Reformed Liturgy's relevance and significance within the Black Church. Nevertheless, it is imperative to acknowledge that this process of integration may present certain challenges. For example, adding African musical traditions such as spirituals and gospel music, which are firmly anchored in the African American experience and express significant theological and emotional depth may entail a change to the existing liturgical music repertory. Furthermore, call-and-response patterns, which are common in African and African American worship, can increase congregational engagement and foster a more dynamic and communal worship environment (Barnes 2005:967). Including African art, dance, and storytelling in liturgical contexts can also give a rich, sensory experience that celebrates Black congregants' cultural identity. Furthermore, including themes of social justice and liberation theology, which are central to the Black church's purpose, helps ensure that the liturgy addresses the African diaspora's lived experiences and struggles (Hopkins 2000:8). By carefully addressing these potential problems and incorporating these components, the Reformed Liturgy can overcome its historical constraints and become a more inclusive, vibrant, and meaningful expression of religion for the Black church.

7.4. Limitations of the study

One notable drawback of this study on Reformed liturgy, namely the order of worship within the Black Reformed Churches in South Africa (RCSA), is the scarcity of extant literature and scholarly work on the issue. The academic examination of liturgical practices from a decolonial viewpoint remains underdeveloped, with few black theologians delving deeply into the complexities of Reformed liturgy in the African context. The scarcity of preceding research makes it difficult to develop a complete theoretical framework, mandating reliance on a narrow pool of sources. Because there are few documented African viewpoints on Reformed liturgy, this study must frequently venture into unknown academic area, which may restrict the depth of the analysis and the generalizability of the results. Furthermore, the historical dominance of Euro-western theological paradigms in academic and ecclesiastical debate has made it challenging to engage critically with African cultural aspects. This makes it more difficult to draw on a diversity of liturgical practices and interpretations. Understanding and interpreting African cultural aspects in Reformed liturgy presents substantial problems, necessitating a nuanced and compassionate approach that recognises the richness and complexity of these cultural expressions.

The study's focus on the order of worship in the Black RCSA is constrained by practical difficulties due to the diversity of African cultural manifestations. Because of South Africa's rich cultural tapestry, which includes the diverse traditions and practices of various ethnic groups such as the Tsonga, Venda, Zulu, and others, a one-size-fits-all approach to liturgical reform may fail to capture the complexity and nuances of these distinct cultural contexts. The model, which relied heavily on congregational input and participatory participation, was intended to achieve representativeness and inclusivity across the Black RCSA community. The EDNA technique, while helpful, poses issues in assuring representation and diversity across the Black RCSA group. Local cultural customs and personal experiences may impact congregants' opinions, potentially resulting in an inconsistent portrayal of overall liturgical preferences and needs.

7.5. Recommendations for further study

The present study has showcased the imperative need for further investigation on reformed worship to bridge the existing disparity. This is crucial because it is imperative for the upcoming generation to be actively involved in a church that engages in worshipping God via a contemporary liturgical style that incorporates elements of African culture. Based on the findings of this analysis, the researcher proposes the following topics for future research:

Recommended themes and rationale for recommending the above theme:

Historical Development of Reformed Liturgy in the black church in South Africa (RCSA)

Rationale: A comprehension of the historical evolution of Reformed liturgy in South Africa is necessary for situating its current practices and theological foundations in context. This subject matter will analyse the origins, developmental stages, and transformations of Reformed liturgical practices that emerged during the Dutch colonial period. This analysis will emphasise significant changes and patterns of continuity while exploring the impact of various cultural, social, and political factors on the development of liturgy in Reformed congregations. By delineating this historical trajectory, the research will provide an exhaustive framework for understanding and evaluating present-day liturgical practices.

Topic 2: Theological Underpinnings of Reformed Liturgy in the black church in South African Context (RCSA)

Rationale: Theological principles have a significant impact on shaping liturgical rites. This topic will examine the fundamental theological foundations that shape and direct the Reformed liturgy in South Africa. This study will examine the articulation and experience of doctrines like as God's sovereignty, covenant theology, and the priesthood of all believers within liturgical situations. The study will also examine how these theological concepts have been modified to fulfil the spiritual and cultural needs of South African congregations. This method will enhance our comprehension of the dynamic relationship between theology and liturgy, and how they mutually strengthen each other within the Reformed tradition.

Topic 3: Inculturation and Contextualization of Reformed Liturgy in the black church in South Africa (RCSA)

Rationale: Inculturation and contextualization are crucial for ensuring that liturgy remains pertinent and significant within diverse cultural settings. This topic will examine the adaptations made by Reformed churches in South Africa to their liturgical practices to incorporate and interact with local cultures, traditions, and languages. The study will explore instances of liturgical inculturation, evaluate theological and practical challenges, and determine the effectiveness of these adaptations in fostering genuine worship encounters. This study aims to demonstrate the intricate interaction between global Reformed liturgical traditions and local cultural manifestations, so contributing to ongoing discussions regarding the diversity and innovation of liturgical practices.

Topic 4: The Role of Music and Arts in Reformed Liturgy in the black church in South Africa

Rationale: Music and the arts are essential components of liturgical liturgy, with the potential to greatly augment congregational involvement and spiritual connection. Music, visual arts, and other forms of creative expression in Reformed liturgical practices in South Africa will be the subject of this research, which will assess their impact and function. The present research endeavour will analyse the utilisation of contemporary and traditional artwork and music during religious observances, investigating the theological and cultural justifications that underpin these choices as well as their impact on the congregation. The objective of this study is to clarify the capacity of the arts to enhance liturgical experiences and cultivate a more profound sense of reverence and connection among members of the congregation.

Topic 5: Reformed Liturgy in the black church and Social Justice in South Africa

Rationale: The examination of the confluence between liturgy and social justice is a crucial field of study, particularly in a setting characterised by both past and present social disparities. This topic will examine how revised liturgical practices in South Africa tackle matters of social justice, encompassing racial reconciliation, poverty, and human rights. The study will explore how liturgy might serve as a means of expressing and promoting prophetic testimony and activism, demonstrating the

church's dedication to fairness and harmony. The project will evaluate how liturgical practices motivate and engage congregations in social justice activities, emphasising the transformative power of worship in tackling societal issues.

7.6. An overview and proposal for decolonised church Liturgy for the black RCSA in an African context

The Liturgy utilised by Black RCSA is evidently lacking in relevance. Hence, it is crucial to ensure that the liturgy is designed in a manner that can cater to the needs of all individuals inside the church. The liturgies that must be constructed should bestow upon Jesus the role and honour that He rightfully deserves as the Initiator of worship. He assumes the role of the worship leader because he has the position of authority in the Church. He governs his church by his sacred teachings and his divine presence. The purpose of liturgy is to enhance the comprehension of Christ and His message of redemption among individuals from many cultures, regions, and eras.

The RCSA should develop a liturgy that does not subvert African culture or the specific circumstances in which the Church is functioning, as was observed throughout the historical arrival of missionaries in South Africa. African individuals possess their unique wisdom, perspectives, and principles, as well as their distinct culture, difficulties, and situations, which can assist them in creating a well-rounded liturgy that effectively resonates with their African identity. African individuals must reacquaint themselves with their indigenous traditions and culture, selectively incorporating beneficial elements into their lives to honour God, while discarding any cultural practices that contradict biblical teachings. By engaging in this practice, the Church will be implementing what is known as liturgical inculturation or a process of decolonizing and changing its liturgy. Nevertheless, the process of liturgical inculturation/decolonization must be approached with responsibility, as it does not imply that African people should completely undo everything. Certain elements of African culture are not in accordance with biblical ideals. Africans can selectively adopt beneficial aspects of their culture to worship God effectively and meaningfully in a manner that resonates with them.

The proposed liturgy of the Black Reformed Churches in South Africa will be a dynamic and culturally immersive manifestation of religion, meticulously crafted to fully connect with the spiritual and cultural legacy of its members. By integrating customary Reformed worship components with African cultural manifestations, this liturgical framework aims to establish a worship encounter that is both doctrinally sound and culturally significant. Additionally, it seeks to cultivate a feeling of cohesion and spiritual rejuvenation among the members of the congregation.

In order to cater to a wider audience, particularly the younger generation, the Church should consider including musical instruments into their worship sessions. The Reformed Church is losing young people partly because of its singing style. Another factor that the Church must consider is the acquisition of a projector, which would facilitate the visualisation of song lyrics for all attendees. Another potential answer is for members of the Black RCSA is to create original songs by drawing inspiration from the Bible and reflecting on their own personal backgrounds and life encounters.

In regard to the order of worship, the Church should organise a variety of courses aimed at instructing their members on the liturgy. The Reformed Church service should adhere to order, as God is characterised by order rather than disarray. Regarding individuals attending the Church service, it is expected that they demonstrate humility before God and behave in a respectful and organised manner, as mandated by God.

The proposed new liturgy will enable the congregation to have more influence, with a programme director who will alternate to make use of the talents of both men and women. Implementing this comprehensive strategy would not only enhance the liveliness of the liturgy but also foster a sense of active participation and appreciation among the congregation during the worship proceedings.

In regard to the dissemination of religious teachings, the Church must organise several workshops aimed at instructing Elders and Deacons on the art of crafting a sermon that possesses the capacity to profoundly impact individuals' lives. The proclamation of the Word is an indication of the authentic Church. It is imperative to expedite this task, as the dissemination of the Word holds paramount importance in

the liturgy.

In relation to the expression of religious beliefs, the Church must choose the method by which it can effectively interact with the general population. Individuals should refrain from confessing faith as a mere routine, but rather, they should engage in the act of confessing faith with full awareness and comprehension of their actions. Their faith should have a pervasive impact on every aspect of their existence.

Regarding the reading of the Ten Commandments, the Church must find a method through which the Ten Commandments can effectively communicate with the people. Individuals should refrain from reading the Ten Commandments as a mere routine; instead, they should engage in reading them with full awareness and comprehension of their significance. The reading of the Ten Commandments is crucial for members to acknowledge and comprehend their transgressions, enabling them to seek absolution from God.

Regarding announcements, it is recommended that the Church modify the timing of making announcements by placing them at the commencement of the service. This will prevent individuals from becoming bored throughout the announcements as they will remain new and engaging. They will have the capacity to comprehend and track the announcements. Even the one perusing the announcements should carry out that task with a sense of accountability.

Regarding the act of worshipping God, namely in terms of kneeling and standing, it is crucial for the Church to address this topic responsibly. According to the researcher's findings, it is important that the liturgy does not diminish culture and instead remains pertinent and significant to the congregation. The Church must engage in a thorough examination of the Bible, considering the specific context, circumstances, issues, and challenges faced by the congregation. Based on this analysis, the Church should develop answers pertaining to the act of worshipping God, specifically on the practices of kneeling and standing.

The Church should promote the practice of conducting prayers in a concise and engaging manner to prevent people from becoming drowsy. The preacher should be

aware that it is not feasible to pray for every matter during the church service. Instead, the preacher should promote the practice of members praying at home and during the week. The church service that God expects us to perform should aim to foster a sense of enjoyment and devotion in worshipping Him.

The act of seeking assistance, frequently through prayers of intercession and petition, is a crucial element that demonstrates the community's reliance on the benevolence and direction of God. Nevertheless, conducting a thorough analysis of this method can uncover its advantages as well as identify possible areas for enhancement, particularly when it comes to catering to the varied requirements and cultural sensitivities of the congregation.

The practice of seeking assistance in worship is based on the Reformed tradition's stress on *sola gratia* (grace alone) and the acknowledgment of human reliance on heavenly support. The initial utterances must be consistently delivered by the preacher, while the subsequent segment should be acknowledged by the congregation to ensure their active participation. Soliciting assistance in Reformed worship services is an essential ritual that epitomises the community's dependence on the divine favour of God. Nevertheless, it necessitates meticulous and discerning deliberation to guarantee its enduring significance, inclusivity, and efficacy. The Black RCSA churches can improve this practice by acknowledging possible limitations and integrating culturally sensitive and contextually appropriate features, so creating a potent and transformational aspect of worship that genuinely fulfils the congregation's requirements.

Regarding the matter of benediction, it is the act of seeking God's blessing upon the assembly as they depart into the world. In African tradition, the benediction holds a significance that surpasses being merely a concluding prayer or blessing. This is a ritualistic practice that seeks the blessings and safeguarding of a higher power, drawing from the shared beliefs and customs of African communities. The benediction includes components that strongly connect with the community's values and customs, highlighting the importance of togetherness, tranquilly, and reciprocal assistance.

The matter of engaging women in leadership roles in the worship service is another aspect that demands attention if the RCSA aims to increase and elevate the standard of worship services. Women play a crucial role in leading various aspects of worship services in the black church. The RCSA must eradicate this colonial exclusion in their next liturgy.

The service culminates with a period of fellowship, during which attendees engage in greetings with one another and the leaders, so strengthening the connections within the community and their shared beliefs. When examined from the perspective of African cultural customs, the acts of shaking hands and sharing a meal are intertwined rituals that strengthen the sense of community and mutual admiration. It is common in many African cultures to include an offer to share food or drink while shaking hands at the start or conclusion of a meeting. The juxtaposition of these actions emphasises a recurring pattern of hospitality and the establishment of connections that has great importance in African social culture. Integrating these cultural rituals inside a worship service can augment the feeling of community and belonging among the congregation. After the benediction and the ceremonial exchange of greetings, a community meal can function as a continuation of fellowship. This practice serves to strengthen the spiritual message of togetherness and love, while also adhering to cultural traditions that view sharing a meal as an expression of mutual respect and care.

This liturgy combines classic Reformed principles with vibrant African cultural manifestations to create a worship experience that is spiritually profound and culturally resonant. By acknowledging and celebrating the varied cultural backgrounds of the congregation, the Black Reformed Churches in South Africa promote a strong feeling of inclusion and active participation, enabling them to worship in a manner that is representative of their unique identity.

In addition to the previously described components of the Liturgy, the researcher believes that there is significant potential for enhancing and refining the liturgy. This is primarily because the worship services now lack an African influence. All the worship services of the Black RCSA adhere to the norms of Western liturgies. However, they are gradually losing their relevance in African current context and era.

This liturgy fails to empower African individuals to engage in African-centric worship of God, as it lacks relevance to their specific cultural and temporal circumstances. The church councils, Classis and the Synod, bear the responsibility of implementing these adjustments in accordance with the proposed decolonised church liturgy.

7.6. The suggested African-Reformed liturgy for the Black RCSA

7.6.1. The current liturgy

7. 6.1.1. Our God we have come to praise you.

- Singing.
- Asking blessing. (Votum)
- Greetings.
- Singing.
- Confession of Faith.
- Singing.

7.6.1.2. Our God forgives us for our transgressions.

- Reading of ten commandments.
- Singing.

7.6.1.3. Our God we have come to hear your word.

- Reading scripture.
- Brief Prayer for the Opening of Scripture.
- Singing.
- Message.
- Singing.

7.6.4. Our God, we thank you

- Prayer for thanking God for the message.
- Singing.
- Offering.
- Prayer for thanking God for the money collected.
- Announcement.
- Blessing: (Benediction).

The liturgy offered above does not incorporate African cultural traditions. African worship frequently incorporates music and singing as essential components, characterised by rhythmic drumming, call-and-response structures, and enthusiastic participation from the crowd. There is a dearth of African hymns and choruses, as well as a scarcity of indigenous instruments and, possibly, dance. The liturgy mentioned above also lacks communal involvement. In African religions, worship is usually characterised by a communal and interactive approach that prioritises the community experience rather than solo reflection. Activities like exchanging greetings and engaging in group singing foster communal involvement. The confession of faith, vatum, and reading of the ten commandments are handled in a manner that lacks communication with the congregation, rendering them meaningless to the congregation. Through a rigorous examination of the present liturgy in relation to these factors, it becomes evident that although there are certain components that correspond to African customs, there exists considerable opportunity for more profound incorporation. This potential presents a promising and positive perspective for developing a worship experience that is more culturally meaningful.

7.6.1. A suggested African Reformed liturgy for the Black RCSA

7.6.1.1. Programme Director.

7.6.1.2. Opening by prayer.

7.6.1.3. Welcoming of the people.

7.6.1.3. Renditions items

7.6.1.3. Announcement

7.6.1.4. Church service.

7.6.1.5. Song³².

³² All songs will incorporate a combination of traditional and modern instruments to enhance the worship experience.

7.6.1.6. Asking help (votum).

7.6.1.6.1. The pastor representing God.

7.6.1.6.2. The response of the church.

7.6.1.7. Song.

7.6.1.8. Singing of the Confessing.

7.6.1.9. Song.

7.6.1.10. Singing of the Ten commandments.

7.6.1.11. Song.

7.6.1.12. Reading of the Word.

7.6.1.13. Song.

7.6.1.14. Prayer from preacher.

7.6.1.15. Preaching of the Word.

7.6.1.16. Prayer from the congregation.

7.6.1.17. Song.

7.6.1.18. Collecting money for poor.

7.6.1.19. Song.

7.6.1.20. Thanking the collection.

7.6.1.21. Song.

7.6.1.22. Blessing.

The proposed African Reformed liturgy includes a wide range of instruments, including both traditional drums and modern instruments, in all musical creations, from hymns to psalms and choruses. This proposal is based on our existing cultural situations. Many members of the congregation compose musical compositions using various instruments in their homes, cars, and other venues. Drumming is a cultural

tradition among Africans, used to pay honour to their ancestors. Even after religious conversion, it is critical for people to continue using these tools to experience a profound sense of delight and spiritual connection with God during worship services.

Furthermore, the planned liturgical changes require the program director to initiate the service, with a rotational system in place. Furthermore, the job of welcoming the congregation will now be shared among the congregation members on a rotating basis. For example, members of the congregation can rotate leading the welcome and opening prayers. This change has been made, coupled with the addition of a request for blessings, which will be carried out collaboratively by both the preacher and the congregation. The speaker will fulfil his duty in the same way that the congregation will in their meeting with God. This may entail the congregation responding to the preacher's blessings with their own affirmations. This will increase participation in church rituals, as participants voiced discontent with a single pastor leading the entire liturgy from beginning to end.

Furthermore, singing throughout the worship session will be used to express one's ideas and recite the ten commandments in order to effectively transmit the message to the congregation. This is mostly due to the fact that singing has permeated almost every element of African society, contributing to increased overall engagement. The Black RCSA should consider accepting the Belhar confession, which began in the anti-apartheid movement in Southern Africa. The Belhar confession is a persuasive profession of faith that addresses three fundamental problems shared by all churches: church cohesiveness and harmony among all members, relational restoration within the church and society, and God's righteousness. Furthermore, it speaks to the historical context of the black church, providing a compelling and culturally important alternative to foreign religious connections. This is in contrast to depending only on foreign confessions formulated in a distant nation to handle challenges we have not encountered.

The planned liturgy will remove the ritual of shaking hands, which is not common in most African cultures. In African civilisations, conventional greetings may include actions such as bowing, clapping hands, or verbal niceties, rather than shaking hands. For example, in certain Southern African cultures, people show respect for

their elders by applauding their hands. Shaking hands was primarily introduced to African nations through colonial influence. European colonisers and missionaries imported their customs, such as handshakes, which were gradually incorporated into various African settings. This change adheres to the congregation's historic customs while still complying with health procedures, particularly in light of the COVID-19 epidemic.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that in African culture, standing during the request for blessings and receiving blessing is considered a sign of pride. Sitting or kneeling down on the other hand, is considered a sign of humility, especially when dealing with elderly people. When serving God, one must follow the same principles.

7.7. Conclusion

The goal of this chapter was to use an African decolonial study of liturgical practices to provide a concise analysis and make conclusions on the reformation of Reformed Liturgy in the context of black Reformed congregations in South Africa (RCSA). Using an African decolonial framework, this study seeks to challenge dominant Western narratives, abolish colonial institutions and processes, promote African sovereignty over historical, cultural, and knowledge systems, and investigate the long-term effects of colonialism in church administration, politics, and liturgy. It also aims to promote emancipation, social justice, and self-determination among African populations by studying restricted traditional practices and knowledge systems. The study indicated that the RCSA liturgy, which combined intellectual, cultural, and scriptural elements, required immediate adjustment to remain relevant to the black church. This remake would feature traditional African hymns, among other African cultural elements, visual renderings of Biblical narratives influenced by Africa, and social justice themes (such as prayers for the liberation of oppressed peoples). It acknowledged that the liturgy had historically acted as a tool of imposing cultural supremacy throughout the colonial era; thus, it emphasised the importance of reclaiming indigenous spiritual components to create a meaningful and inclusive worship experience. Given this context, the study advised additional research into the theological and historical evolution of Reformed liturgy.

7.7. References

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Reforming Reformed Liturgy: An African Decolonial study of liturgical practices in the Black Reformed churches of south Africa (RCSA)

Appendix A: Structured questions for the interview.

1. What are your views in traditional liturgical practices have contributed to or reinforced colonial ideologies within black church communities? Would you say that there are any specific liturgical elements or practices that you feel have perpetuated a colonial mindset within black churches?
2. How would you describe the Black RCSA's current order of worship regarding African culture? Do you think that the Black RCSA's current order of worship reflecting elements of African culture?
3. From your perspective, what aspects would you say that in the current order of worship do you believe resonate most strongly with the cultural values and traditions of African communities?
4. From your perspective, what are some key African cultural practices that you believe could enrich worship services within the black Reformed churches in South Africa? Can you provide examples of specific rituals, ceremonies, or traditions from African culture that you think would be particularly meaningful to incorporate into worship services? Have you observed any gaps or areas within current worship services in black Reformed churches where African cultural elements could be introduced? If so, could you describe them?
5. How would you describe the historical role of liturgy in the colonization of African churches and its impact on the African mind? Can you provide examples of specific liturgical practices or elements that you believe have contributed to the colonization of African churches and influenced the African mindset?
6. From your perspective, what potential benefits do you see in transforming the liturgical practices of the black RCSA to embrace African cultural elements more fully?
7. How do you envision the process of integrating Africanism into the liturgical practices of the black RCSA? What steps do you think should be taken to initiate and sustain this transformation?

8. How might the black RCSA ensure that the incorporation of Africanism into its liturgical practices is respectful, inclusive, and meaningful to all members of the community?

Appendix B: Agreement Form signed by participants

Participant's Full Name:

Study Title: Reforming Reformed Liturgy: An African Decolonial study of liturgical practices in the Black Reformed churches of south Africa (RCSA)

Names of principal Investigator:

Objective of the Interview:

The objective of this individual interview, which is an essential component of the study, is to collect qualitative data. The interview will delve into subjects pertaining to (.....).

Process of conducting an interview:

The interview will be done on an agreed-upon date and venue, with each participant being interviewed separately. The interaction can take place either face-to-face or remotely, utilising video conferencing or telephone communication. The interview is anticipated to have a duration of roughly (.....) minutes. The participant will be presented with a sequence of inquiries pertaining to the subject matter of the investigation. Participants are strongly urged to openly and candidly share their opinions and experiences. The interview may be recorded in audio format to ensure accuracy in transcribing and analysing the material. The participant's identity will be kept confidential, and all data will be made anonymous in the final research report.

Rights of the participant:

Engagement in this interview is completely optional. You possess the entitlement to discontinue your participation in the study at any juncture without incurring any adverse repercussions. The participant possesses the prerogative to decline responding to any inquiry or terminate the interview at any given moment. The preservation of the confidentiality of the participant's responses is of paramount concern and will be upheld to the maximum degree feasible. Access to the data will be limited to the primary investigator and authorised research professionals, guaranteeing the protection of your privacy and maintaining your trust in the study process.

Consent: I, (.....), acknowledge that I have comprehended the aforementioned details pertaining to the individual interview for the research study entitled (.....). I hereby express my willingness to engage in this

interview of my own will and give my approval to the recording of the interview for research purposes.

Participant Signature: _____ Date:.....

Signature of the Principal Investigator: _____ Date:

Appendix C:ETHICS APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

NAME OF RESEARCHER/INVESTIGATOR:

Rev N Mudau

STUDENT NO:

22021793

PROJECT TITLE: Reforming reformed liturgy: An African decolonial study of liturgical practices in the black reformed churches of

South Africa (RCSA).

ETHICAL CLEARANCE NO: FHSSE/24/HS/02/2503

SUPERVISORS/ CO-RESEARCHERS/ CO-INVESTIGATORS

NAME	INSTITUTION & DEPARTMENT	ROLE
Dr HP Khoza	UNIVEN, Human Sciences	Supervisor
Dr LM Mudimeli	UNIVEN, Human Sciences	Co-Supervisor
Rev N Mudau	UNIVEN, Human Sciences	Investigator — Student

Type: Doctoral Research

Risk: Minimal risk to humans, animals, or environment (Category 2)

Approval Period: March 2024 — March 2025

The Research Ethics Social Sciences Committee (RESSC) hereby approves your project as indicated above.

General Conditions

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application forms please note the following.

- The project leader (principal investigator) must report in the prescribed format to the REC:
 - Annually (or as otherwise requested) on the progress of the project, and upon completion of the project.
 - Within 48hrs in case of any adverse event (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the project. ■ Annually several projects may be randomly selected for an external audit.
- The approval applies strictly to the protocol as stipulated in the application form. Would any changes to the protocol be deemed necessary during the project, the project leader must apply for approval of these changes at the REC. Would there be deviated from the project protocol without the necessary approval of such changes, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.
- The date of approval indicates the first date that the project may be started. Would the project have to continue after the expiry date; a new application must be made to the REC and new approval received before or on the expiry date.
- In the interest of ethical responsibility. the REC retains the right to:
 - Request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project,
 - To ask further questions; Seek additional information; Require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process.
- withdraw or postpone approval if.
 - Any unethical principles or practices of the project are revealed or suspected.
 - It becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the REC or that information has been false or misrepresented.
 - The required annual report and reporting of adverse events was not done timely and accurately, ■ New institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions A it necessary

ISSUED BY:
UNIVERSITY OF VENDA, RESEARCH ETHICS
COMMITTEE Date Considered: March 2024

Name of the RESSC Chairperson of the Committee: Prof M. Mwale-Manjoro

Signature.....



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