An assessment of the perception of the role of the Christian religious leader in the political process: the case of the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality

By

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DECLARATION

I, Thomas Frank Terblanche with student number, 209026358 hereby declare that the dissertation for Magister Atrium in Political Science is my own work and that it has not previously been submitted for assessment or completion of any postgraduate qualification to another University or for another qualification.

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List of Abbreviations

ANC     African National Congress
ACDP    African Christian Democratic Party
AZAPO   Azania Peoples Organisation
CSC     Civil Society Coalition
CNE     Christian National Education
CSS     Critical Social Science
DA      Democratic Alliance
DP      Democratic Party
DRC     Dutch Reformed Church
EFF     Economic Freedom Fighters
FF Plus  Freedom Front Plus
IMF     International Monetary Fund
ISS     Interpretivist Social Science
LI      Liberal International
NDP     National Development Plan
NGO     Non-Governmental Organisation
NMB     Nelson Mandela Bay
NMBM    Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality
NNP     New National Party
NP      National Party
NPO     Non Profit
OGOD Organisasie Vir Godsdienste Onderrig en Demokrasie
PP Progressive Party
TRC Truth and Reconciliation Commission
TCN Transformation Christian Network
UCDP United Christian Democratic Party
ZCC Zion Christian Church

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Abstract

The Church and clergy, during Apartheid played a significant role in the South African political process. It was possible to divide the church into three distinct groups, pro-government, anti-government and neutral churches and clergy. The Dutch Reformed Church because of its close association to the National Party was often dubbed the “National Party of Prayer.” They played an important role in providing moral legitimacy for the regime. On the other hand, church leaders including Allan Boesak and Desmond Tutu were synonymous in their fight against apartheid.

The Church still plays a significant role in a democratic South Africa. By virtue of Stats SA 2011 which states that just under eighty percent of South Africans have Christian affiliations. However, democratic South Africa has secular constitution which clearly indicates the separation between church and government. Clergy find themselves in an ambiguous situation in a ‘secular state.’ What exactly is the broader role of the Church and in particular clergy in democratic ‘secular’ South Africa? The ambiguity is also fuelled by politicians who often request clergy’s participation in the political process and on other occasions state that clergy should keep to “church business”

Part of this enquiry is be answered by asking clergy what they believe their role is. In 2014 a selection of Christian leaders in the Nelson Mandela Bay area decried the governance in the NMBM and South Africa in general. It is to be seen as awakening of clergy in the political process.

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. to look at how Christian religious leaders construct their role in a post-apartheid context with a specific focus on the NMBM
2. to capture the views of government and political parties on what role the Church should play in post-apartheid South Africa.
3. A comparative thematic analysis to determine if there are any similarities or differences in how the Church perceives their political role vis-à-vis the perception of government.

Key Concepts: Clergy, Community, Perception, Political Process, Religion, Secular, Secularism, Theology

1 The ANC, DA and EFF will be the main focus given that these are the three largest parties in post-apartheid South Africa (www.elections.org.za).
Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 Contextual background

One cannot imagine the South African political landscape without considering the role the Christian religion and religious leaders played in opposing apartheid or creating a theological justification for apartheid rule. Within the South African Council of Churches (SACC) Christian leadership played a pivotal and active role in the South African politics, most notably during apartheid. Generally, one may group theological actors into three groups: (1) passive observers, who were silent about politics and the regime; (2) the critical churches who actively opposed the apartheid state; and, (3) the pro-apartheid churches and leaders. Indeed, Kotze and Greyling, (1994:125) noted that “because the church (and its leadership) is a reflection of society, they embody not only societies and theological differences within society, but also political differences and tensions”.

The apartheid government implemented racial separation in all aspects of social life. Laws were enacted to legislate and regulate racial separation. This also affected the Church. For example, the prominent Pentecostal church, the Assemblies of God, was one movement with an executive that included diverse race groups, but often experienced differences on apartheid and race based issues (Watt, 1992:171-185). There were several Assemblies of God Churches and ‘sub-executives’ established followed racial lines for Black, White, and Indian and Coloured South Africans (Bond, 1994: 259-270).

While religion can act as a catalyst to generate social cohesion (Durkheim, 1915: 25), in apartheid South Africa religion became racialised and divisions emerged along racial lines (Wilson, 1982: 37). Wilson (1982) further highlights that in more dominant religions, including Christianity, it had become a norm to have denominations ostracising each other based on diverse views. And, at times these dominations were so caught in conflict that they are unable to speak with the proverbial one voice.

One cannot negate the political role of the Dutch Reformed Church(DRC) and its leadership during apartheid. Indeed, this Church was colloquially referred to as the ‘National Party of prayer’ due to the strong alliance between the Church and the political party (Graybil, 1995: 2).
The Dutch Reformed Church provided a ‘religious’ ideological justification for the so-called legitimacy of apartheid, and through this, provided a constituency the National Party could lobby for support as well (Graybil: 1995:1). It is also important to note that many Prime Ministers and Members of Parliament during the apartheid years had also served in the Dutch Reformed Church in some capacity, including that of a minister in the Church.

Consider the following DRC statement issued in 1943 (a mere five years before the National Party took power on the policy platform of apartheid):

This assembly has taken note of the increasing agitation for colour and racial equality in our country, but wishes to point out that in truth, according to the Bible, God brings nations into being thus (Gen 11: 1-9, Acts 2:6, 8, 11), each with its own language, history, Bible and church, and that the salvation of the native tribes in our county should also be sought in sanctified self-respect and God-given national pride (Council of Churches, 1943: 22).

The DRC endorsed their own interpretation of Calvinism to promote Afrikaner nationalism and philosophy of separate development. According to a number of then prominent theologians (including Moodie, 1975, De Klerk, 1975, Templin, 1984), God had supposedly divided mankind into distinct nations and chose the Afrikaner as the elect people in South Africa to fulfil His great mission. The biblical interpretation of the COC was along the same rationale of the ideological premise of racial separation and white supremacy. Other examples include Nazism in Germany (1933-1945), Jim Crow laws (1877-1965) in the America often understood as ‘separate but equal’, and fascism in Mussolini’s Italy (1919-1935). Give this; the Council’s interpretation of scripture to a large degree was influenced by the dominant ideology of the period in history. In other words, the interpretation of the Bible or their pseudo-theology was guided by the reasoning of the dominant ideology of white supremacy and racial separation.

The belief system is regarded as pseudo for two main reasons. Firstly, the DRC had denounced its own theology in 1986:

The church is convinced that forced separation of people cannot be seen as a prescription. Such an attempt to justify it from the Bible must be recognised as an error and rejected. The church is convinced that the use of apartheid as a socio-political system which causes injustice to people and incorrectly gives one group preference over the other cannot be accepted on Christian ethical grounds because it militates against brotherly love and justice, and it inevitably affects the human dignity of those involved (Parks 1986).

2 Not to be confused with the South African Council of Churches
Secondly it contradicts the essential principles of Christian universalism that generally rules out inequality based on racial and ethnic differences (Voster, 2008: 145). Christian universalism is founded on the principle that Christianity is a universal religion that is not restricted to a certain group of people and a particular time of history. It also does not give preference to a particular racial group. All people are therefore equal before God regardless of race, culture or creed based on the promise that, “God so loved the world that he gave his only son” (John, 3:16) as revealed by the Christian Bible. Apartheid theology was based on the fact that the Afrikaner was elevated on a higher platform to other racial groups in South Africa.

There was not one universal voice by Christian leaders and one may conclude that their thought pattern regarding their beliefs on prescribed role was influenced and guided by an ideological zeitgeist that characterised the 1940s. Kotze and Greyling (1994: 124) note that religion reflects society, and as such embody theological differences and societal differences. Society consists of individuals or groups of people with different backgrounds and different experiences. South Africa is divided along racial, cultural and economic lines. These divisions were further entrenched by apartheid whose cornerstone ideology was the separation of racial groups. The Christian religion found itself intertwined within the broader socio-political societal engineering that Apartheid advocated as separate development.

The DRC and its leadership was the conserver of the political status quo. For black followers of the Christian religion, it was the longing to be political and economically free. The Black South African longed for a proverbial Moses to free them from oppression of ‘Pharaoh’ (the Apartheid regime), the White DRC supporter perceived him as maintainer of the order, that God had chosen apartheid leadership to govern over the people (Boesak, 2009: 207-215).

Someone fulfils the role of priestly sanctificator where government is seen as ordinance of God (Niebuhr, 1964:270). This is taken largely from the Pauline Doctrine, which stresses, “government was God’s servant” (Romans 13: 4). Contextually, he pens his views during a period of persecution from the church by the Roman empire (Feinberg, 1999: 89). In spite of the persecution Paul encouraged or even commanded the Roman Christians to obey authority by exclaiming that the Roman governors were given the although to hold political office because of the Christian God.

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3 Paul was one of the most influential Christian leaders in the early Church and is major contributor of the new testament, hence Pauline Doctrine
It is often through this premise that neutral church leaders did not get involved in secular politics and the overall political situation in apartheid South Africa. Steve Biko (2012: 55-61) was a chief critic of the pacifists, arguing that they focused more on the irrelevant sections of theology i.e. those who merely focused on the minor sin issues instead of the major sin of apartheid. Kotze and Greyling (1994: 126) also suggests that the pacifists primary concern in theological circles were ‘spiritual issues rather than political issues’. They consisted of the Pentecostal churches, the conservative English churches, the Charismatic Churches and the Zionist Christian Church (Kotze and Greyling 1994: 126). The ZCC is ironically the largest single denomination in South Africa but was not vocal about political issues.

There are other religious leaders who played an important role in fighting against the apartheid system and may be understood as critical leaders, such as Dr. Allan Boesak, Chief Albert Luthuli, Arch Bishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, Reverent Frank Chikane, and Dr. Beyers Naude. These clergypersons are dubbed critical because they actively took a stance against apartheid and vocally expressed their grievances against this system of racial segregation.

1.2 Rationale and Motivation for the Study

If one considers the political role of the Dutch Reform Church in apartheid South Africa, a key question that emerges is what the role of churches, the Christian religion, and clergy in a democratic South Africa is. Thus, this study seeks to determine, what if any, the clergy perceive their political role to be in a democratic context. Furthermore, the study also seeks to determine how the ruling African National Congress and opposition parties construct or perceive the role of the church in a democratic South Africa.

On the surface, it seems that both the ANC and the former NP evoke Christian rhetoric in their speeches and engaging the Church in an effort to gain support during elections. For example, President Jacob Zuma has been ordained as a laymen pastor (Makhaye 2007). He has also claimed that “those with an ANC membership will pass through the gates of heaven and that the “the ANC will rule until Jesus comes” (Makhaye, 2007).

The use of Christian rhetoric in the political sphere is not only prominent within the South African context. Robert Mugabe stated that “God had called me to lead Zimbabwe and only He could remove me” (Ireland, 2008). This even though the 2008 Zimbabwean General Elections, which were marred with irregularities and several deaths, was characterised by electoral violence as ZANU-PF sought to cling to political power. Also, at Mugabe’s ninetieth birthday party celebrations, Zimbabwe’s Public Service Commission Chairperson Mariyawanda
Nzuwah, reiterated Mugabe’s sentiments that he has been chosen by God to lead the country. According to Bulawayo 24 News (2014) Nzuwah stated that Mugabe was a messenger sent by God to liberate and lead the Zimbabwean people and that his work was not yet complete. Former president of the United States of America, George W Bush, whilst facing widespread criticism on his War on Terror campaign, also claimed that God had chosen him to lead the nation (Harris, 2003). Political leaders and political parties often evoke Christian rhetoric to validate their leadership and governance to counter criticism and increased opposition. Donald Trump have also affirmed his Christian conviction during his 2016 presidential campaign for the United States presidency( Burke 2016). Trump affirmed that the United States will be protected by God and that he confirmed that he is a protestant( Burke, 2016).

There is an increase in noticeable tension between several pastors and other Christian leaders, political leaders, and local government leaders in the NMBM area. They have all spoken about the desire to get more involved in the political landscape of the NMBM (Williams: 2014):

We\(^5\) have attempted to engage the municipal authorities and the president of the land in the past to no avail, and continue to observe a growing discontent among our communities about the state of our country. We are determined to retrieve lost power and to use it to the benefit of our society as a whole. As the church we will not be hijacked by any political party. We support the ideal that our people have the power to change their situation through the ballot box. The balance of power given by the majority needs to move leaders towards serving the people instead of ruling the people.

Between 2011 and 2012, the ANC in the NMBM was engaged in factional battles between the camp of the then mayor of the NMBM, Zanoxolo Wayile and former ANC regional leader, Nceba Faku. These factional battles have in many cases delayed crucial service delivery, as Council did not achieve quorum in order to pass budgets and other key decisions (Algoa FM News, 2012). Furthermore, in the ensuing years leading up to the 2014 General elections the seat of the mayor had changed more than once and the office of the city manager had on many occasions also changed, this too has caused service delivery delays Shaidi (2013: iv), concludes that service delivery protests in the NMBM are caused by *inter alia*, “slow pace of service delivery, especially in the delivery of sustainable human settlements, poor public participation and other underpinning systemic factors.”

\(^4\) Pastor Neville Goldman of the Ebenezer Centre, national leader of the Apostolic Team, the Rev Danie Mouton, the secretary of the Metro Council of Churches and convener of the Nelson Mandela Bay Consultation of Christian Churches, Archdeacon Zwelidumile Tom, the chairman of Transformation Christian Network, Pastor Mvusi Gwam, the regional leader of AFM Church, Pastor Patrick Douglas-Henry, and Grahamstown District of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa’s Bishop Musi Lasaba.

\(^5\) See Footnote 3
It is in this context that the clergy released their statement in 2014, emphasising the socio-political situation of their followers and the perceived deterioration of South Africa as a result of mal-administration. They were also acutely aware of their numeral advantage in reference to their political strength. The Christian religion is the biggest organised group in South Africa. Stats SA (2011)\(^6\) reveals that more seventy per cent of South Africans are Christians. Hence, in contrast to the apartheid regime where clergy openly supported political formations and parties, the church in 2013 stated:

> We as the Church are adamant that respect for the rule of law, open management, ethical decision-making and transparency must guide the way our metro conducts its affairs. For us, this is non-negotiable. We will support all actions being taken true to these values and principles. It is the proven way to lead the city to the benefit of all its citizens We, honourable mayor, are also concerned about the reported fallout between your office and the office of the city manager. Unless speedily resolved, it will have a further detrimental effect on service delivery. We therefore request an urgent meeting with you and the deputy mayor of NMMM. We have appointed a delegation of five leaders to represent us in such a meeting. We are being asked by our membership about our prophetic stance and witness in this situation. We need to consult urgently with you in order to inform our constituency about the relevance and credibility of your actions to address this catastrophic state of affairs. We know that only urgent and effective action will turn us away from the brink of disaster. (Viljoen 2013)

According to Viljoen (2013) the municipal manager claimed that the mayor and his deputy were interfering with her duties. The instability and political interference is seen by the Church collective to be a major contributor to the hampering of service delivery, thus negatively affecting the wellbeing and lives of their congregants. Voster, (2006, 4) attributes this to institutionism, which for him is a form of church life where elected or ordained leadership is the sole face and voice of the church and often addresses socio-political issues on behalf of their members.

Both statements reveal the willingness from clergypersons in the NMBM to work with political leaders, but not supporting a particular political party. Purportedly, the Zuma Administration in certain cases seeks to actively involve Church leaders in policy formulation, as evident in the following statements:

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\(^6\) The Census 2001 is the most recent census data available for South Africa’s religiosity. The 2011/2012 Stats SA report merely repeats the data provided in 2001. It is omitted in the 2011/2012 Stats SA as it is not deemed a priority.
Church leaders should be able to tell government leaders if they are straying and their laws clash with the teachings of the Lord...The church “must advise and criticise if there are things we do that are not in keeping with the principles of God” (van Onselen, 2012).

Zuma, effectively states that the clergypersons are to play a role in actively guiding the laws of the nation, which is in opposition to South Africa as a secular state. This will be interrogated later in the study. In short the church is to be separated from active politics i.e. governing and the government to allow for religious freedom and autonomy. Zuma is also in effect stating that pastors should perform a watchdog role, a function ordained to Chapter Nine institutions by the South African Constitution through Section 182(2-5). This includes the offices of the Public Protector and the Human Rights Commission among other institutions created to ensure government accountability and the rule of law. The president reiterates this role that the Church should play, but that the measuring rod according to President Zuma must be the principles of the Christian God, and not the necessarily the constitution.

The views that the church leaders should act as a moral compass for leaders are also evident at municipal level. According to the local Port Elizabeth newspaper Gateway News reporter, Andre Viljoen (2013) the mayor of the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropole (NMBM), Ben Fihla, has urged the Church and Church leaders to get involved in assisting the NMBM’s municipal leadership in social upliftment of the Bay area through programmes to assist with the reduction of drug abuse in the Northern Areas.

As South Africa progresses into its third decade of democracy, it would seem that there is an active call by government to lobby the Church to become more involved. However, the level of involvement and exact role remains unclear. What is also not known is how the Church perceives its political role in a post-apartheid context. Religious leaders have been relatively silent in the political space in democratic South Africa when compared to their activism during the apartheid years.

It is equally imperative to investigate the role of the Church and leadership as captured in the democratic constitution. South Africa is a constitutional democracy thus making the constitution the highest body of law (and by default authority). By understanding the role of churches from the constitutional vantage point, as well as how the church perceives their political role, and how political parties construct the role of the church in post-apartheid South Africa, one is able to tease out the construction and understanding of the role of Christian leaders and the church in the broader socio-political landscape in a post-apartheid South Africa.
Founded on liberal democratic principles the South African constitution clearly states that South Africa is a secular state. According to Burchardt and Wohlrab-Sahr (2013: 613) the general understanding of secularisation refers to the declining influence of religion in the public sphere, endorsing the decline for the sake of progress, modernity and rationality. Yet, the political narrative of some political leaders call for an increased role of the church in South African public life, albeit, seemingly to maintain ANC rule.

1.3 Problem statement

Christian leaders are influential figures within society and in South Africa by virtue of a large majority (more than 70%\(^7\)) prescribe to Christianity and theoretically are under their guidance and leadership. But what role do they serve and what role should they serve in the broader political landscape and more specifically in the NMBM area in the post-apartheid context?

The political role of the Church in a post-apartheid context has been ambiguous. One notes an increased tension between Church leaders and political elites. We see political elites calling on the Church to become involved in political society, while clergy becomes more vocal in criticising the political leadership for failing to fulfil their electoral mandate.

It is in this light that this study will be undertaken. The study seeks to determine and assess what the political role and how this role is constructed for the Church and clergy in a post-apartheid context. The study will explore the views of both Church leaders and local political elite to construct the narrative of the role of the Church in a post-apartheid South Africa.

1.4 Research objectives

The primary research aim of the study is to look at how Christian religious leaders construct their role in a post-apartheid context with a specific focus on the NMBM. Christian leaders are individuals who are ordained preachers or pastors within their respective denominations or hold leadership status with in the Christian community. The political environment does not necessitate active involvement in party politics and governance, but rather the involvement and role of clergy in the general political landscape and in socio-political life.

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\(^7\) See page 7 Stats SA
The second objective is to capture the views of government and political parties on what role the Church should play in post-apartheid South Africa. Therefore, the study will construct the narrative of the role of the Church as narrated by government using Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality as the case study. This is particularly important as both at a local and national government level, political elites have been calling on religious leaders to become politically active. However, there has not been a conclusive and unified voice from government on what exactly they see as the political role of the Church.

Lastly, the study will conduct a thematic analysis to determine if there are any similarities or differences in how the Church perceives their political role vis-à-vis the perception of government to tease out how the role of the church in a post-apartheid South Africa is constructed.

1.5 Methodology and approach

The study will employ an interpretivist social science approach (ISS) as there is no central hypothesis that underpins the study. The study is primarily concerned with perceptions, and as such, the qualitative methodological framework will be best suited to achieve the research objectives. Neuman (2011: 105) points out that the purpose of interpretative social science provides readers with a deep feeling for another person’s social reality by revealing the meanings, values schemes, and rules of daily living. Neuman further points out that interpretative social science is idiographic in nature which represents a “thick description of something else”. The researcher’s aim is to provide an in-depth understanding of the perceptions of the role clergy play in the post-apartheid socio-political landscape.

Neuman (2011: 102) notes that from an interpretivist point of view the “social reality is largely what people perceive it to be”. This study thus constructs the perceived social reality for clergymen/women with regard to their political role in a post-apartheid South Africa. The study employs a constructionist lens where the views and narrative of clergymen/women to describe their reality based on their beliefs (ideological and theological) and interactions (with government both in this dispensation and the previous one). A similar approach is followed with government officials and political elites.

8 The ANC, DA and EFF will be the main focus given that these are the three largest parties in post-apartheid South Africa (www.elections.org.za).
One cannot ignore the physical context of inequality as seen in townships. This is a direct consequence of the apartheid legacy. The analysis will therefore need to be sensitive to the physical and geographical characteristics of the community the clergy serve as this could play a role in how they construct their political role in a post-apartheid context. For example, those living and leading in the Northern areas\(^9\) of Port Elizabeth may have a different perception to their role vis-à-vis those living in the Western areas\(^10\) because the context and issues they deal with on a daily basis may be different. The clergymen and women may find themselves being influenced by the needs of their congregants, which may guide their perception and construction of socio-political reality. This will enable creating an understanding what drives the clergypersons perceptions and how context drive perception with regard to their role in post-apartheid South Africa.

Central to the interpretivist approach is “that no view or single point of view or value position is better than the other and are equally valid to those who hold them” (Neuman, 2011: 107). Thus, no opinion is seen as more valid or important than another. Rather diverse views and opinions will form the basis on which one is able to construct how clergy and politicians view the role of the church in a post-apartheid South Africa.

The study is explorative in nature as it seeks to discover a relatively new phenomenon in democratic South Africa. One may argue that the phenomenon is not new because religious leaders played an active involvement during the apartheid regime. However, in a post-apartheid setting there is not a definitive understanding on the role of the Christian religion and religious leaders in the political process.

Kuperus (2011, 278) notes, “although scholars have provided considerable insight regarding the churches’ role in the political process during the apartheid era, the material devoted to religion and politics in the post-apartheid era is not as abundant.” In addition, one needs to remember that the political context is completely different in post-apartheid South Africa then it was during the apartheid regime. Democratic South Africa is a secular state constitutionally, and no longer does the church have an overtly influential role in political life as was the case in the previous regime.

In his observation of the church and politics, Voster (2008: 1) notes that after 1994 the churches lost political relevance and receded to spiritualism which “emphases the spiritual nature of Christianity to such an extent that the social task become obsolete.” What exactly happened

\(^9\) The Northern Areas, is historically designated for Coloured and Indian persons during the Apartheid era. The NA is largely characterized by gangsterism and high levels of unemployment. However, there are several middleclass areas.

\(^10\) The Western suburbs of Port Elizabeth was reserved for White persons during the apartheid regime. It is still regarded as a middle to wealthy class suburb.
during approximately the first eighteen years of democracy to cause this perceived political retreat? Conversely, what are reasons behind their seemingly recent resurgence in the political process, more notably in the NMBM region? Neuman (2011: 38) argues that the exploratory research usually questions what the social activity is about. In this the study, the researcher wishes to discover the perception of clergy of their role in the political process.

Because there are few guidelines as it is a relatively new study a great depth of open mindedness is required. In other words, one cannot approach the study with rigid thought patterns and must allow for wide range of discussion and questioning. The end goal is to obtain enough information that will guide future research.

1.6 Methods and Techniques

The data collection strategy was three-fold. The literature review conducts a thematic content analysis to unpack the theoretical debates on the political role of Churches. Ideology cannot be ignored in the theoretical realm. The literature review provides an overview of the narrative on the role of the Church within the following ideological paradigms: Black Theology, Liberation Theology, Volk Nationalism, Liberal Nationalism, and the Reconciliation Model. This allows one to effectively categorise and code the narrative of Church leaders vis-à-vis government leaders on the political role of the Church in post-apartheid South Africa given the concepts that inform the theory and ideological of these paradigms.

In order to demonstrate the contested nature of the relationship between Church and government, a media analysis was done using the online database SA Media, the Herald Port Elizabeth and other reputable online news media. The author also studied statements and speeches by clergypersons and government officials and political elites in order to identify main themes on how the political role of the Church is being constructed within the public realm.

The third method of data collection is that of in-depth interviews in the data collection process. Guion, Diehl, and McDonald (2011, 25) stress that,

In-depth interviews are most appropriate for situations in which you want to ask open-ended questions that elicit depth of information from relatively few people (as opposed to surveys, which tend to be more quantitative and are conducted with larger numbers of people.

This type of analysis is most appropriate as one was able to get a sense of the construction of political reality as well as the perceptions that guide the construction of social and political reality. Surveys do not facilitate an in-depth measurement of this, and as such is not an appropriate method for the study. Questions will be open ended so as to allow a
conversation between interviewer and interviewee. It enabled the construction of an analysis into the underlining factors that leads to particular perceptions. It can only be achieved through an in-depth conversation. Neale and Boyce (2006: 3) argue that an in-depth research is the preferred option when one wants to explore new issues as well.

As this is an exploratory study, the use of open-ended questions and discussions allowed the interviewee to consider aspects which the researcher might not have been aware of. Neale and Boyce (2006: 3) further point out that in-depth interviews will also paint a clearer picture on already collected and available data. Between 2012 and 2014, a number of pastors had become active in terms of voicing their opinion in the political landscape; the in-depth interview will simply paint a clearer picture in understanding as to why the clergymen are getting involved in local political issues. More importantly, this will allow the researcher to determine whether the clergy indeed sees a political role from themselves in a post-apartheid context. A great advantage of the in-depth-interviews is that it provides a relaxed atmosphere and environment (Boyce and Palena, 2006: 4).

There are several limitations to this method. The interviewer may be prone to bias (Neal and Boyce, 2006:4). In other words, the researcher may have a preconceived notion of what the perception of the role of religious leader is before coming to the interview and somehow arrange the interview to move in that way by asking specific questions that will guide the conversation in that direction. In overcoming this limitation, the researcher piloted the interview schedule with someone in the clergy in order to get a sense of whether bias is present or not. After the interview schedule has been piloted, it was refined and finalised.

Interviews are time consuming (Boyce and Palena, 2006: 5), because this method is an open-ended conversation between the researcher and the interviewee. Data analysis can also be time consuming as the data transcript of the interviews can be quite lengthy. However, the study employs a purposive sampling method, in that specific individuals have been identified as possible participants, and this method does not require a large sample to get in-depth data. To facilitate the use of the interpretivist paradigm, the interviewer must:

1. **Attending fully** to what the speaker is saying by focusing wholly on what is being said. Active listening requires the listener to give full attention to the speaker until either the message has been received or the speaker has finished speaking. If there is unclarity, the researcher needs to ask for further elaboration where needed.

2. **Paraphrase** what the speaker is saying to confirm whether the researcher has interpreted the information correctly. Paraphrasing also
has the added benefit of forcing a speaker to focus wholly on the conversation, thus limiting distractions.

(3) Reflect back on the emotions of the speaker as this can also expose the inherent meaning of the message the interviewer is trying to convey. By paying attention to tone and emotional content, the interviewer can gain a greater understanding of the messages being delivered

1.7 The Sample

The study targeted clergy, but mostly clergy who occupy key leadership positions in the Church community, such as Bishops and other regional and provincial Church leaders. Leaders who have large number of congregants was considered as influential leaders given that they are able to influence a large number of people. The sample was spread across geographical locations in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality in order to get a representative sample of the city’s demography. The researcher targeted key political leaders and government officials, approaching the Religious Unit situated in the office of the Speaker of Council. The Religious Unit represent local government. The author sought to interview the leadership of the three main political parties in NMBM. The African National Congress, the Democratic Alliance, and the Economic Freedom Fighters were selected on based on the results of 2014 and 2016 National and Local government election results, where these parties emerged as the three largest parties in South Africa. The EFF was the only party available for interview. As a countering mechanism, the author made use of information in tools such as the online media database SA media and the Herald Port Elizabeth’s online database to search for political statements and speeches that referenced and referred to clergy.

The researcher interviewed thirteen individuals. Eleven were from the religious fraternity while one represented the EFF and the NMBM. Ethical considerations include guaranteeing anonymity if asked, and making interviewees aware that they may withdraw at any time from the interview. The study was scrutinised by the NMMU Research Ethics Committee. The Ethics clearance number was H/15/ART/PGS-001

1.8 Data Analysis

The primary method of data analysis is a discourse analysis. The primary purpose of the paper is to discover the construction of the political role of religious leaders in a post-apartheid
context. To this effect, a discourse analytical approach was best suited to analyse the interview transcripts to reveal the construction of political reality for religious leaders.

Discourse analysis can be characterised as a way of approaching and thinking about a problem (Dewey, 1933: 9). Ideology is key to the analysis of any discourse. In a narrowly defined concept an ideology is an “all-encompassing and closed system of thought” (Neuman, 2011: 15). Neuman (2011:15) highlight that the type of definition of an ideology suggests that it is opposite to scientific explanation. Religious leaders by virtue of adhering to a set value system may be rigorous in their views based on their biblical conviction, van Dijk (year unknown: 72) suggests that,

Through complex and usually long-term processes of socialisation and other forms of social information processing, ideologies are gradually acquired by members of a group or culture. As systems of principles that organise social cognitions, ideologies are assumed to control, through the minds of the members, the social reproduction of the group.

Data analysis employed words and phrases used by the clergymen and political leaders to these out themes associated with the role of the clergy. In the qualitative form, soft data i.e. words, sentences pictures is preferable in data collection process. Figure 1 presents the data categories. On the flank of the ‘perception block’ are the soft data rooted in the objectives of the study, in other words, the perceptions of the religious and political elite. Below the centre block is the Ideology or pseudo-ideology block that informs and guides the clergy and political leaders discourse perception of their roles.
1. 9 Chapter presentation

Chapter 2: Literature review: An analysis of the various religio-political ideologies: The study is guided by an ideological discourse analysis therefore a large portion of this section will a wide variety of ideologies which may guide the clergymen’s perceptions. The ideologies that will be discussed include; Liberation theology, Steve Biko’s (1946-1977) black theology as discussed in *I write what I like*, Nationalist/Volk nationalism, Constitutional/Liberal nationalism and the Reconciliatory model.

Chapter 3 The Constitutional and Public construction of the role of the Church in post-apartheid South Africa: In this chapter the author will explore the role of religion and religious leaders as captured in the South African constitution. Although South Africa is founded on liberal democratic practices, there has often been the use of the religious rhetoric in official government affairs. When parliamentarians are sworn into office they are permitted to swear by God. Government officials and political leaders have used the religious rhetoric as well. The ambiguity of the role of religious leader will be discussed in this section. Also does the position of the church in terms of their constitutional disqualify them from being active in the political landscape of the nationally and locally? This chapter will present the public construction of the role that the Church should play politically.

Chapter 4 and 5 The perception of clergymen, political leaders and NMBM The chapters will deal with an analysis of data collected from the interviews by selected clergymen and political leaders in the NMBM. Data collected will be compared to the ideologies discussed in the literature review.

Chapter 6 Conclusion: This chapter summarises what has been discussed in the previous chapters and make a final conclusion on the role religious leaders perceive they should play, what the actually do and what the law states they should do. The author will also will advise what how government can work with these religious leaders to improve the situation in the local municipality.

1. 10 Concluding remarks

The chapter provided an outline and road map for the study. It also sought to give a rationale for the study and the purpose behind the study. It has been established that this study explores the role of the Christian religious leader in secular state. The intension is to add to the broader
notion of the role of church within a secular and democratic post-authoritarian context. It has been established that the church and clergy played a fundamental role in the political process of oppression during the apartheid regime where some church leaders legitimised apartheid rule, while others vehemently opposed it. This study is rooted in the interpretative social science tradition and constructs the role of the church in a post-apartheid context as perceived by political parties, government, and the clergy.
Chapter 2

Literature review: An analysis of the various religio-political ideologies

2.1 Introduction

The chapter focuses on the broader Church and not specifically on clergy. It may at the onset appear that there is certain limitation but the author argues against such a notion. Clergy may be loosely defined as, “the body of people ordained or recognised by a religious community as ritual or spiritual leaders” (Hodge, 2011). Clergy are spiritual leaders of the Church and theologians often guide intellectual discourse in a particular religion. They fall within in the broader spectrum of the Church, which much of the literature focuses on.

Clergy play a key role in guiding the group. Beatty and Walter (1989: 129) notes, “the group model also assumes the translation of theology into political terms, but the translation occurs within the religious group setting with clerical guidance and leadership”. Indeed, the group model argues that clergy play a key role in guiding the political consciences of their congregants and constituencies by virtue of their esteemed place within the religious system. They are best placed to guide discourse regarding the role of the Church in the political process. They are the official heads of a particular denominations and they often speak on behalf of the congregation and to the congregation through preaching. Clergy are also seen by many Christian followers as ‘God’s chosen servants’ to guide and lead them (see Dunin-Borkowski,1910).

This chapter therefore seeks to contextualise literature within the parameters of the Christian religious leader. While reviewing the literature the author noticed several themes repeated within the literature. These are: anti-government, pro-government, and reconciliation approaches towards government and socio-political issues in general.

2.2 Anti-oppressive government ideologies and theologies

Liberation theology and Black theology form the focus of this section, with emphasis on Biko’s letter to the churches entitled The Church as seen by a young layman. The ideologies and theologies cannot be limited to anti-government stance, only, but must be contextualised within a broader theme of oppression. Barker (2003:15) defines oppression as follows:
The social act of placing severe restrictions on an individual, group or institution. Typically, a government or political organisation that is in power places these restrictions formally or covertly on oppressed groups so that they may be exploited and less able to compete with other social groups. The oppressed individual or group is devalued, exploited and deprived of privileges by the individual or group which has more power.

The definition articulates the relationship between the oppressed and the oppressor. The oppressor is seen as the in-group in broader society while the oppressed can be constructed as an out group, politically, socially, and economically.

One may further separate the oppressor into two groups: leadership and participants in oppression and, participants are divided into two subgroups, namely ‘formal’ and ‘covert’ participants. Formal participants usually practice oppression by means of legalised violence geared towards maintaining oppression. This group includes government officials, lawmakers, the judiciary, as well as security forces such as the police and the military. In sophisticated systems of oppression, formal participants are able to penetrate all areas of society, including business, civil society, and institutions of education.

Those in leadership create sophisticated propaganda tools employed to legitimise oppression, and as such seek to generate “legitimate” authority for the oppression. For example, although the system of apartheid was legal in South Africa, the nature of racial oppression under the banner of “separate oppression,” constituted an illegitimate regime. Thus, while apartheid was legal, it held little legitimacy, and, in this context, religion was also used a tool of propaganda in an attempt to legitimise and illegitimate political system.

This interpretation of oppressor, however, limits those involved in oppression to individuals in formal power structures. One may find more latent forms of oppression not found in formal power structures. For some this manifests in the notions of white monopoly capital and neo-liberalism in democratic South Africa. Mbele (2014) of the Azania People’s Organisation (AZAPO), a liberation-movement-turned-political-party dedicated to black consciousness, notes

In the context of today, one of the instruments through which dominance of oppressed groups maintained is the facility of formal discourse and in particular, the language that is used to frame critical discourse. In this connection, the neo-liberal academic, research and media institutions have become the hegemonic-agenda-setters for what society thinks or discusses. Therefore, those concerned with the liberation of any group or class must get into the habit of asking themselves: who determines the content and form of societal discourse and most critically, what is their agenda? Viewed in this context, we will immediately realise that, in the neo-liberal epoch of
imperialism, discourse-framing is not just increasingly being used to distort our perception of what is real, but it has also become a tool, through which the status quo is being maintained, under the pretext of changing it.

The text above demonstrates that government is not mentioned as the oppressive system. Rather, oppression is attributed to a particular value and ideological system, in this case neo-liberalism.

Liberation theology is formulated in the midst of an oppressive economical system in Latin America, while Steve Biko thoughts during apartheid era informed the development of Black Theology. Mbele’s sentiments validate that liberation and black theology may remain relevant in a latent oppressive environment.

2.2.1 Contextual theology

Both liberation and Black theology hermeneutical approach may be understood as contextual. Tingle (1991:53) notes that contextual theology “is deeply relativistic; it is also essentially humanistic, focusing on man rather than God.” For example, the Christian God’s response to the black race’s oppressive state is a primary concern for the proponents of black theology. In this instance, the black race is the central figures and the Christian God bears less significance. Biko articulates a desired relationship between the Church and blacks South Africans during the apartheid regime. For him, “Black Theology therefore is a situational interpretation of Christianity. It seeks to relate the present-day black man to God within the given context of the black man’s suffering and his attempts to get out of it” (2012:64).

While orthodox Christian theology promulgate the study of God in relation to human kind as a central theme, contextual theology is submerged in the notion of oppression and the experience and interpretation of the oppressed group. The protagonist of the contextual theological narrative is the oppressed while the antagonist is the oppressor.

Rowland (1999: xiv) explains that contextual theology “is a term now widely used to designate theological reflection which explicitly explores the dialogue between social context and scripture and tradition.” Liberation and Black theology is aligned with a critical social science tradition. Neuman (2011:109) notes that the primary purpose of the critical social science “is not simply to study the social world but to change it.” Both ideologies are concerned with transforming their societal realities, through exposing and conquering oppressive systems they find themselves in.

Theologians and Clergy from Black theological school of thought condemned the subordinate position of black citizens during the apartheid regime. They sought to expose the euro-centric theology (such as the Afrikaner Calvinist interpretation on race) and argued for a theology
which understands the black man’s reality. Furthermore, they argued that black clergy’s message was irrelevant, as it did not address the material issues of the black man’s situation, oppression. Biko (2012: 56)

In a country teeming with injustice and fanatically committed to the practice of oppression, intolerance and blatant cruelty because of racial bigotry; in a country where all black people are made to feel the unwanted stepchildren of a God whose presence they cannot feel; in a country where father and son, mother and daughter alike develop daily into neurotics through sheer inability, tolerate the present to the future because of a completely engulfing sense of destitution, the Church further adds to their insecurity by its inward-directed definition of the concept of sin and its encouragement of the "mea culpa” attitude.

Biko, in his analysis of black clergies’ presentation of the Gospel, notes that their emphasis of sin is at the micro level. Whereas they ignore the bigger and a societal, sin and injustice, the apartheid regime. Their inactivity in the fight against the apartheid regime is an indication that they do not address black persons’ oppression.

Tingle (1991:54) adds that contextual theology is a “critical reflection on the Bible and as a result scripture is highly selective and interpreted within the ideological spectrum of the theology.” For instance, Liberation theologians depict the Exodus narrative, when the Judeo/Christian God freed the Israelites from Egyptian oppression, as a symbol of His desire to free all oppressed peoples.

Orthodox Judaism interprets God’s promises Abraham, the Israeli patriarch, that the Land of Cannon will be given to him and his descends as an inheritance (See Genesis 15: 18-21). The promise in ensuing years is repeated to both his son Isaac and grandson Jacob. The location is subsequently dubbed “the promised land.” However, after a number of generations, the Israelites are forced into slavery. It created an impression that God had forgotten His promise to Abraham. Consequently, the Israelites bemoaned their situation and God responds by instructing Moses (and later Joshua) to lead the Israelites into the Promised Land: “See, I have given you this land. Go in and take possession of the land that the LORD swore he would give to your fathers—to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—and to their descendants after them” (Deuteronomy 1:8). The Promised Land in Christianity is also a metaphor of heaven.

Johannes Metz (1980:15) argued against orthodox theology: “…Western theology that was presented to us as a neutral and universal, the holy has since need exposed to actually a theology of the liberal capitalist ideology. It is a theology of oppression, exploitation and domination”. Metz rationale resembles Marxist rhetoric. Marx believed that religion played a critical role in fuelling the agenda of the elite bourgeois in relation to the plight of the poor. Marx and Engels
(as quoted by Blaidsdell, 2003:134) explains, “law, morality, religion, are for him so merely so many bourgeois prejudices, behind which as many bourgeois prejudices interests are concealed.” In other words, religion may be used as in indoctrinating tool. An example is the practice of slavery where biblical scriptures were used as a legitimising tool. Thus, for some, slavery removes people from a culture that “worshipped the devil, practiced witchcraft, and sorcery and other evils” (Morrison 2005).

Metz’s (1980) is of the opinion that the “interests of the bourgeoisie” is liberal capital ideology. He argues that liberal capital theology creates an environment for exploitation and domination. For example, there is school of thought in theological circles based on Paul’s reference to how one should respond to government. Regardless of their governance, whether it is evil or noble, the clergy and Church has a responsibility to obey government. The Pauline doctrine on government originates from his statement in Romans thirteen verses 1-2 as well as verse 4:

Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. 2. Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves…4. for ‘he’ is God’s chosen servant to administer good (Barker, 2008:1759).

Within this interpretation, God has instituted government and, because He inaugurated it, we should obey it. Thus, government cannot exist outside the consent of God and, due to its very existence, it can be assumed that it has been heavenly ordination. Similarly, when Jesus was interrogated about whether or not one should pay taxes to Caesar, he stated that the Jews should “render unto Caesar what is Caesars, and render unto God what is God’s” (Mark 12: 17)

The context is important, and here the Jewish nation was oppressed by the Roman Empire at the time of Jesus’ interrogation. The Israelites believed that the Messiah would free them from Roman tyranny. Jesus’ enemies presented an important test to Him when they quizzed Him as to whether or not a tax should be given to a perceived illegitimate government. In accordance to Jewish interpretation on the role the Messiah, Jesus would not encourage the payment of taxes.

Jesus is the central figure in Christianity. Similarly, He remains a central figure in contextual ideologies. However, contextual ideologies hold a specific symbolism of Jesus. Nolan (1988:15) notes,

11 Paul contributed to much of the writing of the New Testament in the Christian Bible.
12 The New International Version of the bible edited by Barker is the standard Bible used in the study.
Jesus suffered and died on a Roman cross because (He) was horrified by the sufferings of the people, shared in their sufferings and was determined to do something about their plight. Jesus was one of the oppressed struggling to free all who suffered under the yoke of repression. That is the meaning of the cross.

Black Theology uses the concept of a “Black Jesus” to describe their construction of who Jesus represents to them. Bradley (2008: 22) notes,

The notion of "blackness" is not merely a reference to skin colour, but rather is a symbol of oppression that can be applied to all persons of colour who have a history of oppression (except whites, of course). So in this sense, as Wright notes, “Jesus was a poor black man” because he lived in oppression at the hands of "rich white people.”

Both theological traditions define Jesus as an oppressed individual and, as such, aims to give relevance to the gospel message of the oppressed groups. Those in the liberation theological tradition see Jesus’ mission on earth as one of freeing the oppressed, while Black theologians regard Jesus as a black oppressed individual (although empirical evidence for this does not exist). Jesus was of Jewish decent and therefore neither white nor black (from the seventeenth to twentieth definition of race).

Constructing the ‘Black Jesus’ and ‘Oppressed Jesus’ is likened to the situational experience of ‘His’ followers in a particular setting. The ideal is for Jesus not only to be submerged in their lived experienced but also to defeat oppression.

2.2.2 Clergy, facilitator of liberation: Liberation theology

Liberation theology originated in Peru in July 1968 (Gutierrez, 1988: xviii). Gutierrez (1988: 2), a leading liberation theologian, defines liberation theology as follows:

A theological reflection based on the Gospel and the experiences of men and women committed to the process of liberation in this oppressed and exploited sub-continent of Latin America. It is a theological reflection born of shared experience in the effort to abolish the present unjust situation and to build a different society, freer and more humane.

The definition on the outset reveals that the theology is associated with the socio-economic and political issues facing Latin America. Contextually, the poor were the indigenous Latin Americans. Gutierrez (1988:19) understands theology as the study of the Christian God and His love toward His people. In a liberation theological context, the focus is on how the Christian
God loves the poor and marginalised as well as the actualisation of his love through the abolition of an unjust society.

There are several definitions of the term gospel. The term gospel under the Judo-Christianity literally means news of victory, glad tidings of Messianic restoration and glory (Burrows, 1946: 22). Burrows further highlights that the word gospel is found in the Torah\(^{13}\) or Old Testament. The narrative of the Old Testament as revealed by the prophetic texts brought a message that a Messiah who would free Israel from oppressive rule (see, The Bible and Amaral, 2008). Israel was a colonial entity during various periods of its history, and during the life of Jesus of Nazareth’s\(^{14}\), it was under Roman occupation. Many Jews believed that the Messiah would physically overturn the colonial masters and establish His kingdom, bringing prosperity and peace (Amaral, 2011: 25).

Liberation theology is a political and socio-economic theology that engages in a narrative seeking to change the economic and political reality of oppressed people. It is generally accepted that a religious group follows the example of the central figure. Jesus in the gospels said, “If you are my friend you will obey my commandments” (John 15: 14). However, as Gutierrez (1988: 20) points out, poverty for many Latin American Christians was a stumbling block for Christian witness in the region.

Salvation is a central theme in biblical accounts. There are numerous references and examples of salvation: God saves Noah and his family from the floods (Hebrews 11: 7); He saves Israel from oppressive regime in Egypt (Psalm 78), Daniel is saved from the lions’ pit (Daniel 6: 27) and Paul from ‘lions mouth’ (2 Timothy 4: 17). The salvation narrative is interpreted in two ways: (1) as personal sin and (2) sin towards others. Both interpretations of salvation highlight the dire human need to be saved from spiritual, emotional and physical oppression. According to the Christian Bible mankind’s salvation is only attainable through divine intervention of God, thus He is the liberator of mankind, as only He can free people from their torment and oppression.

The Christian belief system is built on the account where God sends his son Jesus\(^{15}\) to save mankind through dying on the Cross of human sin. John 3:17 highlights, “God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through Him.” McGovern (1993: 75) notes that Greek philosophy initially influenced Christian rationale in that God came to be seen as eternal, unchangeable and outside of history. However, recent interpretation sees God as part of history, where He is actively engaged in history through the salvation of mankind.

\(^{13}\) Judaism’s supreme Sacred/ religious text. It is the same as the Christian Bible’s old testament

\(^{14}\) Jesus was seen as the ‘Son of God’

\(^{15}\) When translated from Greek literally means salvation.
What does mankind need salivation from? One school of thought believes that Jesus’ primarily came to save mankind from their own ‘sin’ and ‘evil’ behaviours. It is viewed as ‘spiritual sin’. When an individual sin, he or she is sinning against God, thus incurring individual debt against God. Instead of collecting the ‘debt,’ God ultimately pays the debt in place of mankind through sending Jesus, His Son, to die for human sin. Romans (4:25) explains it as follows “He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification;” as well as Isaiah 53: 4 “surely He took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted.” For Henry (1961) this means that,

By His Death He paid our debt, in His Resurrection He received our acquaintance, Isaiah 53:8. When He was discharged, we, in Him and together with Him, received the discharge from the guilt and punishment of all our sins. This last verse is an abridgement or summary of the whole gospel.

This view of salvation holds truth in the Christian belief, but does not explain how one can be saved or liberated from an external circumstance, which does not inherently come from one’s own actions. It focuses on individual or collective sin against God, neglecting the notion that individuals can sin against another individual or perform an act of evil. Secondly, how do we interpret salvation from macro bodies such as nation-states and large corporations. For Gutierrez (1988: 102) sin is seen as,

But in the liberation approach sin is not considered as an individual, private or merely inferior reality – asserted just enough to hesitate ‘spiritual’ redemption which does not challenge the order in which we live. Sin is regarded as a social, historical fact, the absence of fellowship and love in relationships among person, the breach of friendship with God with other persons, and therefore, an interior, personal fracture.

Gutierrez (1988:2) argues that a narrow understanding of sin within Christianity alienated the poor and marginalised of Latin America. These masses needed salvation from oppression at a macro level, which can be seen as similar to the suffering the Israeli people endured in Egypt. This sense of Latin American oppression and need for salvation led to the birth of liberation theology (1988: xxi). Sin in its holistic form is the evil we create as human beings, as well as evil created through human systems.

Populist governments, such as Peron’s Argentina and Vargas’ Brazil, led South American nations during the twentieth century. In the 1950’s these Latin American developmental policies pursued aggressive economic development. However, these developmental policies were characterised by a deliberate decline of both foreign manufactured imports and raw material exports while industrialization increased (Kaufman and Stallings, 1991: 15). Modernisation theory informed a great deal of the developmental economic model. Its
theoretical basis seeks to explain the transition from traditional to modern societies by looking at a set of instruments that will usher in modernisation (read westernisation), and included the means of communication, cultural reception of technology, the fight against corruption, and state reform, micro-sociological subjects such as attitudes toward human reproduction (Della Faille, 2013:156).

By the mid-1960s Latin American countries were in a vulnerable economic position and the gap between the wealthy and the poor was severe (Gutierrez, 1988:51). Political leaders, the middle class and urban proletariat, as well as owners of the so-called ‘means of production’ benefited from the development capitalist model at the expense of the majority of the rural peasantry of Latin America, who remained caught in a cycle of poverty.

Sunkel (1972: 517-518) points out that:

The development strategy of industrialisation as a substitute for imports was supposed to free the economy from its heavy reliance on primary exports, foreign capital and technology. It has not only failed to achieve these aims, but has in fact aggravated the situation and nature of "dependencia."

*Dependencia*\(^\text{16}\) refers to the theoretical bases that seeks to explain the continuous impoverished status of the poor in relation to the wealthier counterparts (Ferraro, 1996:2). Because the developmental strategy was formulated to modernise industry, large sums of government money were directed towards the creation of industry and infrastructure in city centres at the expense of the poor, often found in rural and underdeveloped areas (see Boff and Boff, 1987:2). Furthermore, Boff and Boff highlight that inequality and exclusion were perpetuated through limited education resource allocation to poor and rural areas, which created a perpetual cycle of poverty and exclusion, thus entrenching a specific pattern of inequality.

After an economic collapse, Latin American states became dependent on western states as well as international financial organisations such as the International Monterey Fund (IMF). The IMF imposed structural adjustment programmes forcing the restructuring of development models and the free inflow of economic investments from multi-national companies. This led to reduced social spending on health care and education, which again, entrenched patterns of historical inequality, exclusion, and marginalisation.

Like the Marxist position, liberation theology is rooted in exposing the socio-economic inequality and the plight of the poor and marginalised. According to Gutierrez (1988: i) liberation theology is founded on two principles (1) God loves all persons equally and gratuitously; (2) God loves the poor preferentially. On the outset this may seem contradictory.

\(^\text{16}\) Spanish and Portuguese word for dependence.
Remember the Latin American Church was becoming irrelevant for the people, and in an effort to maintain relevancy, it spoke to the lived reality of poverty experienced by its constituency.

Biko in his analysis of apartheid South Africa and black clergy followed a similar rationale. Below Biko (2012: 60-61) explains:

Therefore, to be looked at in terms of the way it was introduced in this country. Even at this stage, one notes the appalling irrelevance of the interpretation given to the Scriptures. In a country teeming with injustice and fanatically committed to the practice of oppression, intolerance and blatant cruelty because of racial bigotry; in a country where all black people are made to dwell unwanted stepchildren of a God whose presence they cannot feel… Stern faced ministers’ stand on pulpits every Sunday to heap loads of blame on black people in townships for their thieving, house breaking stabbing, murdering, adultery, etc. No one ever attempts to relate all these vices to poverty, unemployment, overcrowding, lack of schooling and migratory labour.

Biko argued that the message given by black pastors was not relevant to the lived reality of black congregants. For him, Clergy should rather focus on the primary evil of apartheid and colonialism, instead of concentrating on social ills as the consequences of apartheid and colonialism. As with liberation theology, poverty remained the main form of oppression.

Liberation theologians identify three different distinctions of poverty. It includes material poverty, spiritual poverty and solidarity with the poor (Gutierrez, 1988: xxv). Gutierrez (1988:163) defines material poverty as: “…the lack of economic goods necessary for a human life worthy of the name”. Material poverty in its totality comprises of the following:

Death, lack of food and housing, the inability to attend properly to health and education needs, the exploitation of workers, permeant unemployment, the lack of respect for one’s human dignity and unjust limitations placed in personal freedom in the areas of self-expression, politics and religion (Gutierrez, 1988: xxi).

For Gutierrez poverty is the result of oppressive systems. The definitions as quoted above, coincides with the United Nations declaration on poverty. According to United Nations, (1998:01) absolute poverty is:

Denial of choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It means lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society. It means not having enough to feed and clothe a family, not having a school or clinic to go to, not having the land on which to grow one’s food or a job to earn one’s living, not having access to credit. It means insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individuals, households and communities. It means susceptibility to violence, and it often implies living in marginal or fragile environments, without access to clean water or sanitation.
Thus, poverty has a more holistic effect felt through social exclusion experienced by one group. Social exclusion perpetuated by poverty may also find expression in exploitation and oppression of one group over another. Here, the primary form of exclusion or ‘outness’ is based on economic disparity, which influences and impacts on other exclusions like undermining basic human rights, a lack of social capital, and lack of education, among others.

2.2.2.1 The role of clergy in the political process

In this liberation theological tradition, the primary role of the Clergy is to act vanguard in the process of liberation. The oppressed are to play an active role in their liberation. The word most theologians and clergy use for this idea is conscientisation. In the Marxian narrative, Clergy would in a sense be the petty bourgeoisie whilst the oppressed as mentioned before are the proletariat who need to be made aware of their state of oppression.

Clergy must educate the oppressed of the oppressive system and institution, and the pulpit is often the most convenient platform to conscientise the congregation (Wogaman, 1988: 54). Freire (1970: 3) notes that Clergy should not to play the paternal/ teacher to child/ student role in the process of education, but rather should focus on enabling the oppressed to think critically about their state of oppression. Questions such as, ‘How did we get here; Who oppresses us; How do we overcome oppression; are central themes to consider. Originally Clergy would create small base groups where they would study scripture pertaining to liberation, for example, the. Exodus narrative, and engage in other religious practices such as prayer (Wogaman, 1988: 55).

2.2.3 Christianity that speaks to the black person’s condition: Black theology

Analysing Steve Biko’s letter: “The church as seen by a Young Layman”

In this section the author will discuss an influential paper written to black Clergy by anti-Apartheid activist and Black Consciousness movement leader in South Africa, Steven Bantu Biko. The paper entitled The church as seen by a young layman promotes Black theology.

Steve Biko, a black South African and a self-proclaimed Methodist,17 delivered his paper at the height of Apartheid in 1972. The audience is a black elderly (or perceived elderly) Clergy at the Black Ministers of Religion Conference. Within this period of time, religion played a significant role in black society, but simultaneously there was pressured to adapt to the status quo of apartheid (Biko, 2012: 58). Kotze and Greyling (1994: 25) thus notes that the largest Christian denomination in South Africa, the ZCC, was not actively involved in the liberation of black South Africans. Their congregants were largely black, but uninvolved in political

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17 Denomination in the Christian religion.
activities that either supported or opposed the apartheid regime. Kotze and Greyling (1991:20) labels these denominations as passivists. It is in this context Biko addresses clergy and hopes to persuade them to get involved in the struggle to oppose the apartheid regime. Biko (2012: 57-59) explains how the status quo was also practiced in the Christian community.

It is also a known fact that most of the Churches have 70, 80, or 90% of controlling power in white hands. It is still a known fact that white people simply don't know black people, and in most cases do not have the interests of black people at heart. Therefore, it can be reasonably concluded that either the black people's Churches are governed by a small non-sympathetic foreign minority, or that too many black people are patronising foreign Churches. Which of these two it is not quite clear, but let us assume that it is the former, since the majority of the people in this country are black people.

Biko argues that the Church’s leadership reflected the political imbalances of the country. In other words, the Church’s leadership was a mere reflection of the apartheid status quo: white leaders with black majority. Biko’s desire for Church leadership was for it to reflect a liberated South Africa, and in line with black consciousness rationale, black people should dominate leadership (See Biko, 2012).

Black theology was originally formulated in the United States of America in the 1970s after years of black oppression dating as far back to the period of black slavery. It is important to note that Biko did not conceptualise the idea of Black theology, but rather contextualised it in the South African situation. It is thus important to first view it from its original conceptualisation to obtain a broader understanding of Black theology.

The main contributors to the formulation of the theology were individuals such Dr James H. Cone, Professor of Theology at the Union Theological Seminary, New York and author of Black theology and Black Power. Marcus Garvey (1887-1940), Martin Luther King (1929-1968) and Nat Turner (1800-1831) also played a significant role in the formation of notions of black power and empowerment, which forms the root concept of black theology. Cone (1970: 120) defines black theology as:

- a rational study of the being of God in the world in light of the existential situation of an oppressed community, relating the forces of liberation to the essence of the gospel, which is Jesus Christ.
- What does the Christian gospel have to say to powerless black men whose existence is threatened daily by the insidious tentacles of white power?

Theology is primarily the study of God. Black theology therefore asks the questions on who God is and how He reveals Himself to the black oppressed. In other words, how should the oppressed interpret who God is during their oppressive state? Is He the God of peace and “turning the other cheek”? Does He desire to see blacks freed from their oppression? Cones
(1969: 20) argue that black theology must introduce the view of a God as one who desires to see justice and freedom from oppression.

Biko (2012:65) defined black theology as:

…a situational interpretation of Christianity. It seeks to relate the present-day black man to God within the given context to the black man’s suffering and his attempts to get out of it. Its shifts the emphasis of man’s moral obligations from avoiding wronging false authorities by not losing his Reference Book, not stealing food when hungry and not cheating police when he is caught, to be committed to eradication all cause for suffering as represented in the death of children from starvation, outbreaks in epidemics or the existence of thuggery and vandalism in townships.

Biko argues that the definition must focus on reimagining the viewpoint of sin or evil. The true evil was apartheid and not the effects of apartheid as seen in stealing food when hungry and not cheating the police when hungry.

Under apartheid blacks were oppressed politically, socially, and economically. However, Biko also argued that psychological oppression was also a reality for black South Africans. The doctrine of racial supremacy works together with racial inferiority to perpetuate oppression.

To overcome oppression, black people needed to work together in order to eradicate the idea among people that whites are the standard of humanity and blacks are the deviation of that standard (Biko, 2012 53). He argued that black people would be doing God an injustice if they do not see themselves as equal to white South Africans (Biko, 2012:53). The Church, of course, played an integral role in maintaining this belief.

What does it mean to be black? It is an important question that needs to be addressed if we are to understand the ‘black experience’ in relation to Christianity. The apartheid legislation’s, Population Registration Act 1950 (30) classified South Africans in four racial categories Black (Bantu), White, Coloured and Indian (Davenport, 1988: 256). In an amendment to the Act, racial groups were further classified Coloured’s into Cape Coloured, Malay, Qriqua, Chinese, Indian, other Asian and Other Coloured. In accordance with the Act, a Bantu (black) person was someone who formed part of the aboriginal group e.g. Xhosa, Zulu, Sotho, and so forth. Biko problematised the narrow definite version of the term black. He claimed that “black” cannot be viewed simply by the Population Registration Act and proposed the following definition: “Blacks are those who are by law or tradition politically, economically, and socially

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18 A transgression of a religious or moral law, especially when deliberate.
19 Bantu is a derogatory term. The operative term is black African. But is used in this sense to differentiate between other Black South Africans. Bantu in this context was used during the apartheid era and the author will only use it in this section as its focus is on a period of time when Biko penned down his thoughts.
discriminated against as a group in the South African society and identifying themselves as a unit in the struggle towards the realization of their aspirations” (Biko 2012: 52).

Biko further argued that blacks are only to be considered as black if they active in opposing the system that has put them under oppression. Because of the racial classification of Population Registration Act and the philosophy of apartheid (of separate development and white superiority), most blacks did not consider each other as one race group.

Non-whites are individuals who espouse to whiteness but cannot, as their pigmentation does not allow them to be white (Biko, 2012: 52). Biko explicitly mentions two types of individuals who are non-whites 1. Someone who calls a white man ‘baas’ 2. Individuals who served with security forces to maintain oppression (Biko, 2012:52).

Biko rebukes clergy for allowing the superiority culture philosophy to persist and entrenching it in the system. For instance, the lack of black clergy in denominational leadership positions was of concern to Biko. Although the majority of congregants were black, the top leadership was white, which reflected the power dynamics of apartheid society. Black clergy were called to be vocal against outright discrimination, but because black Clergy remained, they could be considered “non-white”, who were compliant with a racist system.

Biko (2012: 60) also reflected on the role of Christianity in advancing cultural assimilation to whiteness:

Christianity was made the central point of a culture, which brought with new styles of clothing, new customs, and new forms of etiquette, new medical approaches and perhaps new armaments.

The people amidst whom Christianity was spread had to cast away their indigenous clothing, their customs, their which were described as being pagan and barbaric.

With this, Biko problematizes Christianity as a Eurocentric religion that disregards the value of black culture. For him, black Clergy not only tolerated this practice, but promoted it through elevating European practices as an alpha-practice (and by default side-lining and black indigenous cultural practices).

Black pastors grappled with a serious problem in its adapation of culture. Certain practices that black Africans practiced were not permissible in mainstream Christianity, including ancestral worship and polygamy. Biko (2012:59) argues that in order to remain relevant black Clergy

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20 In Apartheid black South Africans often used the word ‘baas’ as a blanket term when addressing whites. Blacks’ referral to a white person as baas would be an admission that the white person is superior and the superiority of their culture. It would amount to the antithesis of Biko’s ideology. When translated to the English the term literally mean boss.

21 The black security forces were effectively assisting the apartheid government in keeping the black majority under oppression
cannot preach and practice without ignoring black culture. Elizabeth Elborne (2003: 3) as an example summarizes the following regarding Khoisan conversation to Christianity:

Khoisan converts were attracted by the missionary promise that God would intervene on the side of the oppressed. Conversion was also used by the Khoisan both as a tool for the reintegration of a shattered society and as a means of gaining access to power which had been kept on the Christian side of a "heathen"/ "Christian" divide; at the same time, it accelerated the destruction of "traditional" culture. With the political failure of the early Bethelsdorp model in the 1810s, Khoisan converts attempted more consciously to mould themselves to a hardening British model of 'civilization’ and to act as loyal colonial citizens.

The text demonstrates the use of religion in promoting and advancing cultural assimilation. The text reveals that the Khoisan adopted British customs and culture through the introduction of Christianity. One way the Khosian were able to gain power and acceptance was through adopting the Christian religion at the cost of their customs and culture. This process was articulated by Marx and Engels (1970) as the ‘means of mental production’.

Thus, for Biko, the main constraint black Clergy faced was the promotion of a particular racial groups culture in relation to the lived black reality. Biko cites examples of Black Africans cultures but does not engage on other black race groups like Indians, Chinese and Coloureds.

2.3 Pro-government/ nationalist Ideologies

At the dawn of the twentieth century, the Church’s active role in governance was diminished drastically with the rise of secular states. Regardless, the Church still enjoyed major influence in government. In this section, the author will analyse two pro-government/governmental order ideologies, that is the pro-apartheid Nationalist government and Liberal Nationalism.

Nationalism has multiple manifestations. Degenaar (1986: 19) lists eight forms. For the purpose of this analysis so as to focus the discussion on the South African context, the author will focus on two: volk nationalism and constitutional/liberal nationalism.

Degenaar, (1986:13) traces liberal nationalism to the writings of John Locke:

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23 Loosely translated as people. It connotes people of certain ethnicity, and in the South African context, predominantly the Afrikaner minority.
Constitutional or liberal nationalism rests upon John Locke’s thesis of the state. Locke developed three main principles that the state should perform, 1) individual freedom, 2) political power residing in the people i.e. the people shall govern and a democratically elected government who can be trusted i.e. by the people for the people.

The individual is the main concern of liberal nationalism, while in volk nationalism, the nation forms the core focus area.

Degenaar (1986: 13) defines volk nationalism as “the principle of sovereignty resides essentially in the nation, no body of men, no individual, can exercise authority that does not emanate expressively from it.” The definition suggests that an individual or the collective must submit to the greater good of the nation or “volk.” Thus, the nation’s rights supersede individual rights. Consequently, Hans Kohn in his analysis of the nationalism stresses that the individual’s “supreme loyalty of man is therefore due to his nationality”.

This section focuses on the role of religion in advancing the “volk” in the form of Afrikaner nationalism. Within this context, the Clergy is considered a defender of the system, regardless of whether there was active or passive participation.

Degenaar (1986: 12) defines a nation as a “common language, geographical placement, race and tribe and ancestry”. We know that the notion of separate nations was cornerstone of apartheid rationale. It rested on two principles: firstly, through race which still continues in post-apartheid South African with the use of apartheid systems of racial classification (Stats, 2011)24, and secondly, through culture. In South Africa there are several ethnic groupings that the apartheid government proposed to divide within their own geographical areas and post-apartheid patterns of urban spatiality still mirror urban planning during the apartheid years.

2.3.1 Volk Nationalism: Government God’s chosen servant

Christian nationalism rests upon the Pauline doctrine that government is the Christian God’s chosen ‘servant.’ It is based on two assumptions 1) If God has chosen them then if they are acting incorrectly, God will judge them and 2) because God has chosen them and through criticising government we, in turn, criticise God, who had chosen rulers.

The enemy of the nationalist agenda it often demonized. The two enemies of the South African government at the time were the South African Communist Party and the African Nationalist

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24 This the most recent data available.
Congress. They were referred to as the ‘rooi gevaar’\textsuperscript{25} and the ‘swart gevaar’\textsuperscript{26} respectively. Pamphlets were often used as propaganda tools (See figure 1). Gabrielle Malan (1977) wrote a series of pamphlets explaining a conflict between communism and Christianity. At the bottom left there is a logo with the Christian symbol. The cross is encircled by the South African map and an anchor represents communism. This is an attempt by the writer to convey a message that communism in South Africa is working to destroy a Christian South Africa. The anchor, which is logged onto the cross, pulls towards the ocean. In other words, communism wants to eliminate White Christians by casting them into the sea. The National Party regularly made this argument.

Figure 1: Example of apartheid pamphlet detailing the dangers of communism from a Christian perspective

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{pamphlet.png}
\caption{Example of apartheid pamphlet detailing the dangers of communism from a Christian perspective}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{25} Red danger- A propaganda term used by the Apartheid government to describe the communists.
\textsuperscript{26} Black danger – A propaganda term to describe the ANC and black liberation movement.
Wogaman (1988: 72) points out that the clergy and churches against communism were neo-conservative in nature. Wogaman further highlights that religious leaders in this tradition promote the practicing religion in the public sphere (1988:84). For example, when a public official is sworn into power, they would have to swear by the Christian God and biblical education was compulsory at public schools.

Education may be used as a political tool to indoctrinate young minds. Governments may guide their policies to suit their ideological disposition. The apartheid government adopted this approach. Coetzee (1987:2 as quoted by van Eeden and Vermeulen 2005: 179) comments on Christian National Education (CNE): “CNE mainly obtained an Afrikaans accentuation under specific South African circumstances. Broadly...it indicated that education should be characterised by Protestant-Christian principles.” Coetzee (1987 :2 as quoted by van Eeden and Vermeulen) further highlights certain CNE objectives that gave Calvinist/ Dutch Reformed Christian doctrine precedents

1. Life-view should have a Christian foundation based on the Holy Scripture.
2. Under the ‘national’ principle it is understood that everything is loved that belongs to the own, such as ‘our country, our language, our history, our culture’. Educational instruction should be conducted through the mechanisms of religious instruction, mother tongue instruction, civil educational instruction, Geography and History. Discipline in school is a God-given authority and therefore imposes great responsibility on the Christian teacher.
3. Schools should not carry out their function independently from the home, the Church or the state. The undertaking should rather be a joint effort of all three together.
4. Educational instruction for adults, especially Europeans and Afrikaans-speaking citizens, should be given on a principle of cultural apartheid and on the basis of a Christian National attitude to life.

Luther, a church reformer and influential figure in the Dutch Reformed and Protestant churches, stressed two reasons why children should go to school. First, the spiritual benefits in preparation for Christian ministry; Second, to prepare young men and boys for state management (Luther: as quoted by van Eeden and Vermeulen, 2005: 178). Indeed, the objectives presented by Coetzee fall under the parameters of the Luther’s conceptualisation on the purpose of education. The CNE main objectives also outlined prepared children and youth for separate development as conceptualised in apartheid ideology. The separated development for individual nations was ‘based on Christian foundation’, a point the DRC made regularly through the use of Biblical references.
2.3.2 Constitutional/ liberal nationalists

Democratic South Africa is essentially a constitutional democracy based on liberal principles. The South African constitution is lauded as one of the most liberal constitutions globally through the inclusion of rights to all, regardless of sexual orientation. The author will use the ‘secular’ theory as an underpinning in the endeavour to explore the possible make up of a constitutional/ liberal nationalist clergyperson.

Liberalism is a broad ideological worldview that developed over the course of the last three centuries. The advent of the French Revolution, and the subsequent Enlightenment is seen as the genesis of liberalism. (Heywood, 2013: 116).

Liberal nationalist clergy should not be confused with liberal theology, which does not have any bearing on liberal-nationalism, but may be mistaken for having links to it because of its shared title. It is important, that the author briefly clarifies what liberal theology is, and why it does not apply to liberal nationalism. Liberal, in this context is derived from its philosophical underpinning and not the political ideology. Liberal theology is a non-theist theology and employs a post-modern approach in studying the Bible. It does not draw its theology from the inspiration of God and neither views the Bible as a scientific document (McGrath, 2011:300).

Almost certainly, the constitution is respected, upheld and promoted by this group of Clergy. They may not be in full agreement with certain of the provisions of the constitution based on theological and personal convictions, but they still uphold the importance of diversity in views, regardless of conflicting views. Liberal nationalist clergy will advocate for the importance of the separation between state and Church. The argument as Wogaman (1988: 90) highlights, is that the notion of the ‘sinful nature of mankind’ and that the Christian God will be frustrated by mankind’s nature.

Wogaman (1988:98) points out that liberal clergy and theologians state, “justice often requires an expanded role of the state.” This is contrary to the liberation theologian rationale that argues that government plays a key role in maintaining injustice of the poor. The members of the Churches Centre for Theology and Public Policy noted the aggression against the U.S. government by certain sections of the clergy and stated the following in opposition to the aggression:

The anti-political animus of American political culture makes the restatement of the case for positive government a prime task: that government really can and must serve the people in that range of human need which will never be justly served by private action. What a mature religious faith must do is not only to offer prophetic principles from which to criticize government: It must
lift up the most creative human possibilities of achieving the common good through government action (Wogaman: 1988:98).

Liberal clergy are promoters of good clean governance. It propagates a democratic perspective in terms of criticising and holding government accountable. Government must uphold the constitution of the nation if it is to be regarded as a good governance. They are also proponents of democratically elected government and, therefore, believe that each government must be chosen by the ballot box. However, they do believe that God’s will is sovereign and that the leadership elected although chosen by the people are as a result of the ‘will of God.’ Furthermore, they are strong proponents of national sovereignty.

2.4 Reconciliation Model-Clergy as reconciliatory members of society

“Blessed are the peace makers for they will be called sons of God” (Matthew 5:9)

The statement above forms part of Christ’s introductory ‘speech’ called the beatitudes as recorded by the gospels. It forms the basis of what is to be considered the role of Clergy in the peace process and within a broader societal role.

Clergy in some instances have claimed that the Churches are the custodians of peace in society and that they are to play a leading role. van de Merve (2003:2) interviewed then General Secretary of South African Council of Churches, Rev Charity Majiza, who, highlighted the centrality of reconciliation as part of the Church’s societal responsibility:

I also believe that the term reconciliation is a very Christian or a biblical term. I do not think it belongs to the secular world. At the same time, I am not advocating a position that reconciliation is (to be clearly monopolised by the churches) only a religious concept, but I think that the depth of it could be missed if it is not looked at from its roots.

Critics of Majiza’s rationale would argue that that historically the Church itself has had several debilitating divisions. This laid the foundation for fragmented religion that has several thousand denominations often in conflict with one another, not due to doctrinal, but political and bureaucratic issues within the broader body of the Church. An example is the deep-rooted tensions between the Protestant and Catholic denominations in Ireland, stretching at least twenty-five years in the late twentieth century, which eventually led to a civil war (Darby, 1998: 754). The Church in South Africa in many cases also represents a social and racial divide. van de Merwe (2003: 273) confirms this perception,

Churches are often divided internally along racial lines – divisions between different congregations, branches, etc. These internal divisions make the churches excellent laboratories
for reconciliation. For a church to seriously consider itself as an agent of reconciliation, it would have to firstly look at how these internal divisions can be dealt with.

There is also a school of thought that propagates for the working together of secular and religious institutions in the pursuit of reconciliation. van der Merwe (2003:270) quoting Rev Wesley Mabuza\textsuperscript{27}, notes,

But I need to say that this idea that there is secular on one side and religious on the other is a western approach. For us it is an ubuntu situation. Whether you are religious or not, what is the human thing to do in this situation? From the African mind I would have problems with this demarcation. I would say reconciliation is reconciliation.

Indeed, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was an example of how secular and religious institutions were able to work together to bring about a programme of reconciliation. It was conceptualised by secular and political institutions within the context of secular environment and led by Arch-Bishop Desmond Tutu and deputised by Alex Boraine, former president of the Methodist Church of South Africa. Lodge (2002:178) reflects that the first human rights abuses hearing of the TRC was preceded by a Church service, which included preaching, prayer, repentance, and singing of a traditional Xhosa hymn, “the forgiveness of sin makes a person whole.” Additionally, Lodge (2002:179) noted that most of the commissioners believed that their task was “profoundly religious and spiritual.” The opening of the TRC replicated a quasi-religious experience. In addition to the singing of hymns and Arch Bishop Desmond Tutu opened the proceeding with prayer, there after a large white candle engraved centred by the Christian cross (Lodge, 2002:183). Lodge (2002:186) records that after the hearing of Jacques Hechter, a member of the Apartheid Security Unit, at the TRC, he requested to ask for forgiveness at a Church in Soshunguwe. van de Merwe (2003: 271) reveals that there were two major events that the Church and TRC organised: Religious Sector Hearings and Children’s Hearings. The Church thought it was helpful to have religious figures on the Commission. It also offered some limited counselling at local churches (van de Merwe, 2003: 270). In her response on the partnership of the religious and the secular in the TRC, Lesley Morgan noted the following:

I do think it was helpful to have religious figures on the Commission. Otherwise it would have been very dry and analytical. Religious people brought a spirituality and a compassion and an understanding. They brought the spiritual attributes that we actually need. If it had just been a secular thing it may very well have just deteriorated into a legal process. There was something so much more than a legal process.

The church and clergy in this sense is seen as provider of emotional support. There were, however, some problems with partnership. Because the commission’s role was to create healing

\textsuperscript{27} Director of the Institute for Contextual Theology
through sharing experiences, the legitimacy of witnesses and victim’s testimony were never tested (van de Merwe, 2003: 274). van de Merwe (2003: 276) further reveals that there was confusion between law and morality. Bishop Marcus notes, "I believe that the principle of the TRC was biblical. The Lord says that if somebody confesses his sins and asks for forgiveness he should be forgiven" (van de Merwe, 2003:273). Legally certain individuals were to be tried, but the Christian gospel allows for perpetrators to be forgiven without any consequences of sin. The Bishop made reference to this interpretation. However, the TRC never obligated perpetrators to show remorse or “repent”, thus even biblically the bishop was incorrect.

Reconciliation may be regarded as a Christian term because it is a major theme in the gospels. Gruchy (2002: 17) notes,

Christians dare to claim with St. Paul that ‘God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself and that this is the point of departure for understanding its meaning. As such, reconciliation is a reality we appropriate now by faith and we do so in anticipation of eschatological fulfilment. This conviction is at the heart of Christian Tradition

This understanding of reconciliation in this tradition has been dubbed the Pauline trajectory of reconciliation. In the sections of the Bible he authored, the word reconcile appeared at least fifteen times (Gruchy, 2002:51). Gruchy (2002: 51) claims that the word ‘reconcile’ according the original Greek text literally means to exchange. The Christian narrative rests upon the notion that he exchanging His Son for their ‘sins’ will reconcile humanity to the Christian God. It also stresses that God is the initiator of reconciliation (Gruchy 2002:51). Therefore, whenever clergy who follows the Pauline doctrine ensues to pursue reconciliation between two or more groups, they generally attribute it to the empowerment of the God.

There are generally two ideological underpinnings within the Christian discourse of reconciliation. The first view of reconciliation gives a greater sense of leeway to the perpetrator. It rests on several statements that Christ proclaimed in the gospels. For example, when asked by his disciples how many times one should forgive an individual, he said “forgive them seventy times seventy” (Matthew 18: 22). It denotes that one should continuously forgive an individual/group. Elsewhere Jesus stated, that “if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly father will so forgive you but if you do not forgive men of their sin your heavenly father will not forgive you” (Matthew 6:14). Forgiveness in this interpretation comes without conditions. It originates from the notion that Christ, who was portrayed as perfect, died for the sins of mankind. He did not ask for any reparations according to the gospels. Furthermore, the

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28 Christian tradition notes that Paul wrote much of the New Testament. All books credited to him has been combined to be called the Pauline doctrine
Bible stresses the importance of ‘loving thy neighbour.’ Forgiveness is a manifestation of the concept.

Similarly, the victims of a wrong are not interested on justice being served on the perpetrators. Leader of the Chilean’s Truth Commission Jose’ Zalaquett, stated that “reconciliation could be achieved either through punishment of wrong doing or it forgiveness (Lodge, 2002:178). He goes on to suggest that forgiveness is the morally superior prerogative, adding that it is stressed in most religious and traditions (Lodge, 2002:178).

Desmond Tutu (as quoted by Lodge, 2002: 179) also argues that traditional African jurisprudence central concern is “the restoration of broken relationships” over retribution. Additionally, Alex Boraine states that ANC has a history of “politics of grace” as it embraced Africanism (Ubuntu) and he cited Nelson Mandela’s symbolic gestures of visiting the wife of Hendrik Verwoerd, central National Party figure often referred to as the architect of apartheid (Lodge,2002:179). Wendy Orr (as quoted by Lodge, 2002: 180), another TRC commissioner noted that, “throughout the process of the TRC there has not been an act of vengeance against a perpetrator who came forward or a perpetrator freed from prison.”

Supporters of the Kairos Document criticised what they called ‘church theology’ of being too liberal in their approach to reconciliation. This view focused on liberal ideology of fairness, regardless of race, class or religion, both sides deserve equal audience (Leonard, 2010: 15). Leonard (2010: 15) notes,

Liberation theologians on the other hand argued that reconciliation cannot occur unless injustice has been dealt with correctly. In the South Africa context, it would be totally unchristian to plead for reconciliation and peace before the present injustice have been removed. Any such plea plays into the hands of the oppressor by trying to persuade those of us who are oppressed by trying to persuade those of us who are oppressed to accept our oppression and to become reconciled to intolerable crimes that are committed against us. This is not Christian reconciliation; it is a sin. It is asking us to become accomplices to our own oppression, to become servants of the devil. No reconciliation is South Africa is possible without justice.

Reconciling takes place when the perpetrator asks for forgiveness. Peter Kooijimans former chairman of the United Nations Human Rights Commission concerning many victims of human rights violations “the most important thing is that people want to be recognised that they were victims…they are not interested in seeing the perpetrators behind bars (Lodge, 2002: 178).

If one were to continue to use the Pauline trajectory narrative it would be important to mention that the humanity is reconciled fully to God when they appeal for repentance (Leonard, 2010:15) Repentance in the Christian sense is asking God for forgiveness of one’s sin. In the
same manner in order for reconciliation to take place the perpetrators would have to ‘repent for their sins’ in the presence of the victims.

The others school of thought rested in the importance of judicial justice for perpetrators. Lodge (2002: 196) reveals some of the harshest critics of the TRC was individuals associated with the South African Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church who opposed the notion of restorative justice for the perpetrators of apartheid and, by default, the TRC leader’s belief that it was a divine principle. Leonard (2010:15) notes, “liberation theologians…argued that reconciliation cannot occur unless injustice has been dealt with correctly.”

The TRC under Desmond Tutu’s leadership, however, recommended that government afford financial reparation individuals or family members of individuals who had died or was injured as a result of the struggle against apartheid (Lodge, 2002:176) Indeed, it had resemblances of restorative justice, unlike the liberation theology model which pursued for distributive justice. Maise (2005) explains the notion of restorative justice as follows:

Restorative justice is concerned with healing victims' wounds, restoring offenders to law-abiding lives, and repairing harm done to interpersonal relationships and the community. It seeks to involve all stakeholders and provide opportunities for those most affected by the crime to be directly involved in the process of responding to the harm caused.

2.5 Concluding remarks

Section one dealt with the anti-government and anti-oppressive schools of thought. Clergy in this section react in opposition to unjust systems, like that of apartheid and the Latin American governments in the 1950’s. The central thesis for opposition rests on the notion that clergy need to speak up on behalf of the oppressed and marginalised. The Bible says, “Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy” (Proverbs 31:9) as well as “Learn to do right; seek justice, defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow” (Isaiah 1:17). Clergy in this school of thought generally respect government, but are willing to oppose it if they oppress people as instructed in the above scriptures.

Context is of utmost importance. Anti-government theologies also fall under a contextual theology. The oppressed provide the context to the theologies. In other words, theologies are shaped around the position of the oppressed people. Black theology focused on the black oppressed people of South Africa and America, while Liberation theology focused on the economically disenfranchised of Latin America. Contextual theology’s central figures are humans, and not God. How does God view the oppressed? It is an imperative question that the theologies seek to answer and used as the bases for their opposition to government.
Its theoretical foundation is formulated from the critical social science paradigm. This school of thought advocates not merely understanding conditions or the status quo, but also changing it for transformative purposes.

Pro-government ideologies centred on protecting national and governmental interests. Nationalism provided a theological backdrop. The author discussed two forms of nationalism: volk nationalism and constitutional nationalism. The former rested on the idea that the nation takes precedents over the individual, while the latter places importance on the constitutional role of the church. The DRC were rooted volk nationalism. The central thesis rests on the notion that Government is God’s chosen servant as preached in the Pauline doctrine of government found in the book of Romans.

In constitutional nationalism the church’s role is that of a prophetic voice. It speaks up when government does go against its constitutional mandate. Unlike the anti-oppression/governmental schools of thought, it is not contextual in nature and does not necessarily call for an overhaul of the system. It does however place the constitution in high regard and in doing so advocates for the separation of powers. Both nationalism places emphasis on stable governance

The reconciliatory model arises in post-conflict situations. In South Africa for example the likes of Desmond Tutu played a critical role in attempting to united race groups in South Africa. Tutu led the TRC, although was secular played a critical role; the church played a role in it. There are two ways reconciliation takes place, one ‘turn the other cheek’ i.e. the oppressed offering forgiveness or restorative justice or the oppressor repenting and providing some form of restitution. Liberation and black theology would argue for the latter.

The combined literatures are all proponents of stable governments. Their views on unstable governments, however, differ. Anti-oppressive theological ideas will forcefully take on systems, while nationalist, most notably volk nationalism, will show restraint and may support regimes if they are protecting a specific ethnicity. It protects the idea of nationalism even by legitimising corrupt governments. Reconciliatory model wants stability but tries to intervene by creating as space for peace.

The following chapter will look at the constitutional role of the church in South Africa.
Chapter 3

The constitutional and public construction of the role of the Church in post-apartheid South Africa

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the role of religion, specifically the Christian religion and Clergy, as captured in the South African constitution as well as the level of importance and value South Africans places on the church and Christian faith. Approximately 80% of South Africans are members of a religion, while an overwhelming majority subscribe to the Christian faith (Stats SA, 2011). By constitutional standards, South Africa is a secular state, where Church and state are separate entities. Thus, the state cannot interfere with business of the Church, and likewise the Church cannot interfere with the business of the state. In the South African context, however, there are three interesting factors that make this balance difficult: 1) the apartheid Christian legislation and the institutionalisation of the faith in society 2) the support for Christianity in the country, especially when the state is perceived as interfering with Christianity, 29 3) the state’s progression towards a more secular outlook.30

The discussion will commence with a historical backdrop, outlining the legislative bounds the apartheid government placed on the church. This is important given that that some Christian inspired legislation enacted during the apartheid regime seeps through into the new dispensation. These acts include but were not limited to the Witchcraft Act, the Liquor Act, and the Immorality Act.

This section seeks to explore South Africa’s secularity at constitutional level and explore the impact of this at a societal level. This is done by discussing secularisation theory explaining societal evolution to secularism. Secularism, which describes the relationship between the

29 For example, there were allegations that the state was intending to remove Christian holidays. It was met with great opposition by many within the Christian community (Badenhost,2015).
30 For example, The Children Act 2003 No 5 Amendment Bill currently before the legislature proposes that all forms of chastisement be abolished. The state proposes that the religious conviction may not be used as a justification for chastisement
state and religion and how the state manages the separation between state and church, will be framed through a lense of Secularism in Political Praxis.

Morality is subjective. Through the influence of the Church, the apartheid regime essentially legislated societal morality, most notably separation based on race. The sections explores how the South African people define their morality and whether or not the Christian religion still plays that integral role in guiding morality.

3.2 The constitutional construction of the role of the church in apartheid: A historical backdrop

It is important to briefly discuss how the apartheid state through legislative measures sought to establish the role of the Church. Because Christianity and specifically the DRC played a pivotal role in constructing morality in an apartheid South Africa. Upon assessing the role of the DRC and more broadly the Christian faith, it will be helpful to decipher whether or not South Africa was as religious state, had a state-religion or state-church, in the form of the DRC? The preamble of the apartheid constitution reveals the Christian influence. Consider an extract form the preamble of South Africa’s 1983 constitution (1983: 1-2).

in humble submission to Almighty God, Who controls the destinies of peoples and nations, Who gathered our forebears together from many lands and gave them this their own, Who has guided them from generation to generation, Who has wondrously delivered them from the dangers that beset them, we declare that we are conscious of our responsibility towards God and man; are convinced of the necessity of standing united and of pursuing the following national goals: To uphold Christian values and civilised norms, with recognition and protection of freedom of faith and worship. … 1. The Republic of South Africa, consisting of the provinces of the Cape of Good Hope, Natal, the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, shall continue to exist as a republic under that name. Sovereignty and guidance of Almighty God acknowledged 2. The people of the Republic of South Africa acknowledge the sovereignty and guidance of Almighty God.

Although God is mentioned several times in this constitution, de jure authority is never given to the Church and clergy. Temperman (2010: 12-13) outlines that a religious state is characterised by legal-positivistic identification in relation to explicitly positioning itself as a confessional state. Marshall, (2010: 1) explains that process of confessionalisation as follows:

in the later sixteenth and earlier seventeenth centuries territorial rulers identified themselves closely with particular forms of confessional Christianity, and promoted them in their territories; that this policy was closely connected with centralisation and state-building; that an alliance of
secular and ecclesiastical authorities sought to promote stricter forms of religious and moral discipline, which served as an instrument for the “social disciplining” of more obedient subjects; and that the coalescing of religious reform and state-formation wrought genuine and lasting social change, and acted as a vector of modernization and modern national identity.

A key element of this definition is the role the state plays in promoting the Christian religion. In the South African context, the apartheid constitution promoted Christian religion and places it as a central component to nation-building. This is evident in this extract from the 1983 apartheid constitution:

we declare that we are conscious of our responsibility towards God and man; are convinced of the necessity of standing united and of pursuing the following national goals: To uphold Christian values and civilized norms.

Religious and moral discipline was also exercised through legislation. For example, the viewing and creation of pornography and homosexuality were illegal as it did not prescribe to accepted norms of morality, most notably according to the Dutch Reformed Church doctrine (Cameron, 1995:89). The apartheid government’s education policy, CNE is a good example of how a particular strand of the Christian doctrine together with state ideology was propagated. The aim of this policy was:

broadly...it indicated that education should be characterized by Protestant-Christian principles and, simultaneously, should be able to find tangent points with the nature, way of living and the specific own of the cultured community/nation for whose children it was meant to be (Cotzee,1987: 2 as quoted by Van Eden and Vemeulen, 2005).

The education system performed a critical role in shaping this ‘modern- national identity’ through protestant values, whilst simultaneously constructing societal morality. Of course central to South African Dutch Reformed Protestant values were the platform of separate development enacted through apartheid. This was seen as a God-given command (Davenport 1988; van Eden and Vermeulen, 2005). Davies (1978:1) concluded that the Afrikaner population, who implemented CNE, understood ‘Christian’ as the Calvinist doctrines of the three Afrikaans churches, and ‘national’ as a love of everything purely Afrikaans.

As mentioned in previous chapters the National Party and the Dutch Reformed church had an ‘unofficial’ alliance as there was no legal relationship. However, for all intents, the DRC was a party church and by extension a de facto state church. Legally, it was not a state church
because the apartheid constitution attempted to maintain a semblance of secularism. Termperman (2013: 32) points out that most state churches and religions obtain their official status through legislation. For example, Catholicism is the official state-church for Costa-Rica Malta and Monaco. In Norway the state religion is Lutheranism. The Norwegian constitution stipulates that, “the evangelical–Lutheran religion shall remain the official religion of the state” (Constitution of Norway as quoted by Termperman, 2010: 33). It holds de jure prominence. As a broad generalisation, Norwegians live a secularised lifestyle as most do not attend church services on a regular basis, where for example, in 2015, the Church of Norway demonstrated that while membership is at 73% of the Norwegian population, only 3% of members attended church regularly (Church of Norway, 2015).

Termperman (2010: 33) explains the purpose of state churches:

Though it clearly depends on arrangement, typically the rationale behind the establishment of religion is one of mutual interest: to foster a religio-ethical legitimisation of state authority in return for financial, ethical pragmatic and other forms of support for the religion in question.

The Dutch Reformed Church served as legitimisation tool for the National Party. In the 1930’s the National Party instructed the Church to search for biblical scriptures which coincided with the regime’s ideology (Davenport, 1988: 560). The NP’s constituency was white Afrikaners, the same congregants for the DRC.

One may thus find a correlation between the Christian morals as detailed in the 1983 apartheid constitution and morals prescribed by the DRC. There two arguments to support the claim. 1) Many lawmakers and leaders of the NP belonged to the DRC (Davenport, 1988: 650). Therefore, the first point of reference to God or their understanding of God was the DRC. Secondly the CNE stated that its education policy aimed to promote Calvinistic values.

Most South Africans were not members of the DRC. Therein lies the problem when attempting to explain the apartheid state’s perception and constitutional proclamation of the Christian religion during apartheid. Especially, if one considers that the apartheid government did not recognise the majority of the population as citizens given that the black majority was denied South African citizenship31 It may therefore be argued when it stated that “national goals”, it was crafted for a specific audience, namely white Afrikaner South Africans. This would also influence ‘charities values’ as prescribed by the DRC.

31 The Black Homelands Citizens Act (1970) designated black South African’s to various geographical areas in relation their ethnic grouping. As a consequence, all blacks who resided in ‘white South Africa’ had to carry pass books commonly referred to as the ‘dompas’
Democratic South Africa inherited certain religious inspired legislation and practices of the apartheid system. The Liquor Act 27 of 1989, for example, prohibited the sale of alcohol on a Sunday. Sundays are regarded as holy for Christians and, as such, the inspiration behind this legislation was to respect the ‘holy day’ (Du Plesis, 2009: 17). The Act was repealed in 2003 and came into effect in 2004 by The Liquor Act 59 of 2003 (Department of Trade and Industry: 2016). Christian holidays are another example. Christmas and Easter are public holidays. Many public schools still have tenants of Christian education, including reciting the Lord’s Prayer, biblical education and singing Christian hymns at assemblies and gatherings (Mestry, 2006: 70).

3.3 Fundamentals of secular theory: Understanding the makeup of a secular government

The Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) values secular ideals; that is the separation of the state and Church. In this section the author will explore three secular theories, namely secularisation, secularism, and secularism in the form of state praxis.

Religion played a dominant role in the shaping of government and government policies of Western governments. This was most evident during the medieval period under feudal systems. The monarch obtained its ceremonial and legal authority from the Church, citing that it was God’s commandment to obey the monarch (Bovey 2015).

In due time, however, due to the oppressive nature of monarchies, multiple revolutions such as the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, the British Reformation, and the Bolshevik Revolution, challenged the norms of God-ordained right to rule. This laid the foundation for secularising governance and separating Church and state. Goldman (1968: 31) points out that most writers32 during the Enlightenment were anti-theist, arguing that theism and God was used by the bourgeoisie to keep the working class in subjugation. Rebelling against the authority is fundamentally rebelling against God. The Church not only ruled through government, but influenced societal norms and values, the academy (and education in general) and philosophies. Emanuel Kant (as quoted by Goldman, 1968:3) notes the following.

I set the central achievement of Enlightenment, that is, of man’s emergence from his self-imposed minority-above all in matters of religion. I do so because our rulers take no interest in playing the

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32 This includes thinkers like Rousseau, Mably, Voltaire, Pascal, Kant and Marx.
guardian to their subjects in matters of art and science. Besides, this religious dependence is both the most damaging and the most humiliating of all.

The eighteenth century Enlightenment period in essence was the anti-thesis for the dominant Christian dominant culture. The synthesis: religion will be transformed into superstition, outside of the public life and confound only to the private life (Goldman, 1968:94-95). In other words, societal norms, values, and educational pedagogy should be informed outside of the realm of the Church and, in this view, religion tolerated.

Before entering into the discussion about secular governments, it is important that I briefly differentiate between sociology’s secularism, secularisation and political science’s secular. The concepts are all interlinked but have different theoretical underpinnings. Secularisation is a term often used to describe the process of the diminishing influence of religion in society. While secularism is a ‘principled distance of religion in society and secular speaks to the separation between state and church (Taylor, 2010: 6).

3.3.1 Secularisation

Secularisation is one of the social sciences long standing theoretical projects (Glasner, 1977: 1). Additionally, (Glasner. 1977:14) highlights that according to this school of thought, rationalism in all forms of life must be performed outside of the influence of religion. In secularised societies, religion will therefore be null and void. A more secular society will assist in the creating of a secular government (Taylor, 2010 24). The premise is that secular societies naturally support the notion of a secular government. Although the proportion may be true religious-sensitive nations also accept and support the notion of a secular state (Taylor, 2010: 24).

What does a more secularised society entail and what is the process of secularisation? How can it be measured? Lynd and Lynd (1929: 1937) suggests that an endorsement of or no opposition to events especially sporting events taking place on ‘holy days’ such as Sundays and Easter and Christmas in one form provides evidence. In addition, one may gauge the reaction to practices that are generally frowned upon in religious circles such as homosexuality and abortion. The reason behind the acceptance is also important. Does society accept merely as an act of tolerance or because they are embracing the ideas of difference outside of the ‘God’s rationale’”? Religious ordinances in public spaces will also decrease or become meaningless.
Glasner (1977: 32) ascertains the following on how a fully secularised state would ideally look like: “in a fully secularized state a man can be born, received into a family, educated, married, be able to work and receive honours without recourse to institutional religious forms.”  Wilson (1982: xiv) argues that secularisation is the process “whereby religious thinking, practice and institutions lose their social significance.” All these elements may be used as a litmus test to determine levels of secularisation within states.

It is helpful to apply this test in the South African context. Marriage ceremonies and preferences and the manner in which its conducted provides one lense into the possible secularisation of the South African society. There are three legal ways to get married in South Africa, (1) civil marriages, (2) customary marriages, and (3) civil unions. In addition, civil marriages are conducted in two forms, through religious ceremonies or at the magistrate’s courts. One may argue that in a Christian dominated society, there will be more civil marriages than civil unions and to a greater extent less customary weddings. Traditionally customary weddings do not fit within in main stream Christian doctrine. Customary marriages often include polygamy, a forbidden practice in Christianity.

The basic assumption is that couples who do not get married in Church and have civil unions are less religiously inclined. However, couples may not choose to get married in the rational sense because of financial reasons as Grant (2015) suggests. Grant (2015) also concedes that although there was a decline in civil marriages vis-à-vis the rise of the civil unions during the financial crises, the same percentage persisted after the recession as demonstrated in Figure 2.

**Figure 2: Civils Unions in South Africa: 2009 - 2013**

[Graph showing increase in civil unions]

Figure 2 illustrates that while between 2012 and 2013 the number of civil unions remained somewhat unchanged, there was a marked increase in civil unions between 2011 and 2012. Interestingly same-sex marriages are only legal through civil unions and not civil marriages.
South Africa’s constitution guarantees that one may not be discriminated against on the basis of sexual orientation. The largest united Church body, the South African Council of Church, supported the Civil Union Act, but there is not sufficient evidence as to whether or not it supports civil marriages. Consider the statement by the South African Council of Churches (South African Council of Churches 2006) on the Civil Unions Bill:

The SACC's Open Letter to the Portfolio Committees on Home Affairs and Justice, therefore, conveys two aspects that lie at the heart of this submission. First, it supports the Constitutional Court's decision and recommendations that parliament craft legislation that seeks to "establish public norms that ... protect vulnerable people from unjust marginalisation and abuse." Second, also in line with the Constitutional Court judgment, is our concurrence that legislation so crafted ought not to interfere with the way in which faith communities recognise, celebrate or bless unions/marriages. Overall, our critique of the Civil Union Bill and recommendations to parliament are geared toward the fulfilment of the Constitutional Court's mandate, acknowledging its sovereignty over parliament. This we do despite knowledge of religious arguments that claim aspiration toward divine sovereignty which, in turn, seek to subvert the parliamentary decision-making process, by calling for an amendment to the Constitution.

The SACC supports the constitutional obligation of equality, believing that unions should be treated as equal, but the Church should use its own discretion as to whether or not they would conduct the marriage ceremony. However, as an institution, there is no evidence to suggest that they do support homosexual marriage.

3.3.2 Secularism

Secularism as a concept and practice has many facets to it, but it is best explained by the tools as designated by the French revolution’s foundation phrase of liberty, equality and fraternity. On the outset it is important to note the differences between secularism as a concept and a secular state as praxis. Taylor (2010: 25) notes the following, “we think that secularism (or laicite) has to do with the relation of the state and religion, whereas in fact it has to do with the (correct) response of the democratic state to diversity”. In other words, it is not the separation between the state and religion in governance, but rather how government should act towards diverse religious and non-religious groups.

Secularisation on the other hand seeks to secularise society as oppose to merely attempting to figure out how to respond to diverse religions. Holyoake (1996:41), who is often referred to as the father of secularism, endeavours to differentiate between the two complex concepts as
follows: “secularism is far more limited in its range than secularisation, which defends secular pursuits against theology, where theology attacks them or obstructs them. But pure secular knowledge is confined to its own pursuit.” He suggests that secularism does not want to abolish religion as is the case with secularisation. Secularism does not stand in enmity to religion; it is merely not prone to religious rationale and doctrine and places a more neutral face than its secularisation counterpart.

However, secularism as a concept (and not as a governance doctrine) also has major similarities with secularisation. Holyoake (1996: 41) defines secularism as follows, “a code of duty pertaining to this life, founded on considerations purely human and intended mainly for those who find theology indefinite or inadequate, unreliable and unbelievable”. Secularism like secularisation denies the existence of a sacred order and approximates more to intellectual antagonism. So, in terms of scientific enquiry, religion is not used as a basis of knowledge. Grothuysen (1934 as quoted by Germani, 1981: 63) further expands on secularism by stating that, “the attempt to establish an autonomous sphere of knowledge purged of supernatural, fideistic presuppositions”. A key component that draws the two concepts together is their non-belief in religion i.e. non-believers.

Is it possible then for secularisation and secularism to be both present in society? If so how do they uniquely effect an influence the role of clergy in political life? The author believes that it is possible. If one uses the scenario where the Church leaders launch a campaign against corruption or any other oppressive state activities, support and approval from society and non-religious organisations will largely depend to how the church is perceived. This relates to questions on whether the Church does indeed have a moral voice. Thus, is the Church and clergy through their religious affiliation able to influence in society based on the construction of morality? Within the secularisation school of thought, in a secularised, the church will not have a monopoly over what would be a voice of societal morality. For example, non-religious media houses and agencies in South Africa gave a great deal of coverage when Emeritus Archbishop Desmond Tutu scolded the ANC and the president Zuma exclaiming that, he would ‘pray for the demise of the ANC in the same way that clergy prayed for the demise of the apartheid regime’ (Smith 2011). Thus, non-religious institutions (in this case the press) may still acknowledge the moral high ground of Tutu. Conversely, there may also may be others within society who do not view the Church (or Tutu) as having a high moral voice, for them, the Church and their religious leaders do not hold morality over the construction of monopoly.
3.3.3 Secularism in political praxis: freedom, equality and fraternity in a secular state

As mentioned previously secularism in political praxis is centred on the ideas of freedom, equality and fraternity. In this section, I seek to establish how the South African state approaches these principles.

3.3.3.1 Freedom

Section 18 of the South African Bill of Rights guarantees freedom of association and section 15 specifically focuses on religion. The South African constitution stipulates that:

(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion;
(2) Religious observances may be conducted at state or state-aided institutions, provided that—
   (a) Those observances follow rules made by the appropriate public authorities;
   (b) They are conducted on an equitable basis; and
   (c) Attendance at them is free and voluntary.
(3) (a) This section does not prevent legislation recognising:
   (a) Marriages concluded under any tradition, or a system of Religious, personal or family law;
   (b) Systems of personal and family law under any tradition, or adhered to by persons professing a particular religion.
   (c) Recognition in terms of paragraph (a) must be consistent with this section and the other provisions of the Constitution.

The Constitution presents a clearly defined understanding on an individual’s rights concerning religious freedom. Of course, the freedom also protects one’s rights not to belong to a religious institution. One also notes that religion may be practiced in official state-aided institutions. In terms of the separation between state and Church, the above section of the constitution may be problematic Termperman (2010: 111) explains,

a secular state declares that it not be bound by religious laws or principles. In establishing itself as a non-religious and non-denominational state. The state denies any form of positive identification with religion. Historically such proclamations of secularity were of course particularly intended as a means of cutting ties with the dominant religion.

The Constitution seems to present diversion from the stricter form of secular government. Indeed, it lends close to the notion of secularism in that it is not a complete separation, but
rather, the Constitution guarantees equal recognition of diverse religions and practices within South Africa. However, the Constitution does not allow for religious entities to directly influence decision-making in government, thus bringing South Africa in line with the greater tenants of a secular state. We know that when politicians are being sworn into public office, like Parliament and cabinet positions, or when Presidents are inaugurated, they are permitted to take an oath before God. The oath is usually cited as follows, “So help me God.” (Ali-Dinar 2013). The public official states this after reciting his/her duty and reasonability in context to his/her office, thus confirming that the conduct of duty will be done with the help of God. Public officials and politicians have the right and freedom to religion, but this must not interfere with their conduct within the realm of the state. For example, the DA allowed its members to vote according to conscience in the Civil Unions Bill of 2006. The Bill proposed amendment to include homosexual unions. The vote of conscience could be seen as a means to appeased individuals who were against the notion of legalising homosexual unions based on religious conviction (Alexander, 2006). Although reasons behind voting against this bill were not known, one may have assumed that individuals may have abstained or voted against this bill due to religious conviction. The Constitution, however, gives Members of Parliament the right to vote on the basis of their religious consciences. Chapter 15, section 1 of the Constitution declares “everyone has the right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion” (Constitution of South Africa, 1996: 13). Recently, however, the DA has endorsed homosexual unions as a constitutional imperative, thus indicating that an official position may be in conflict with religious convictions of some members (Democratic Alliance, 2016).

Public schools are permitted to sing Christian hymns and recite the ‘Lord’s Prayer’, further confirming freedom to practice religion in the public domain. However, the Constitution does set certain parameters on this: “religious observances may be conducted at state or state-aided institutions, provided that

(a) those observances follow rules made by the appropriate public authorities.”

This indicates a more secular rationale in facilitating freedom to practice religion. And, the state has the final say regarding the practice of religion in public entities. Thus, the state determines boundaries of practising religion within the public domain, not the Church.

33 This bill was eventually enacted into law
34 The Lord’s Prayer refers to the prayer reciting by many Christians at religious gatherings and Church services. It is referred to as the Lord’s Prayer because Christ taught his disciples this particular model prayer.
3.3.3.2 Equality

All religions in a secular state must enjoy equal status in a secular state (Taylor, 2010: 23). There also needs to be equality between individuals of different faiths, as well as those who do not subscribe to any religions (Taylor, 2010: 23). Thus, one may not be discriminated against on the basis of religious preference and non-preference. This is also in line with international human rights on freedom of religion.

The Constitution makes provision for equality in religion and protects individuals from discrimination based on religion:

> The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth (Bill of Rights, Section 9 (3-4))

No person may be directly or indirectly discriminated against in terms of subsection 3 of the South African Bill of Rights. National legislation must be enacted with a view to unfair discrimination. Freedom to practice and subscribe to any religion is standard practice in liberal democracies globally, thus aligning South Africa with international human rights convention (Du Plesis 2009).

Section 15 (2) allows one to observe religious practice in public institution, but this is on the basis that each religion enjoys equal status and privilege, the rules made by appropriate public authorities are followed, and observing these is free and voluntary. The Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities (CRL)\(^35\) (2013: 3), as part of its draft resolutions at the National Conference on Religion in Schools, resolved that, “the Department of Education and other role players in the education system, including with School Governing Bodies, to promote better understanding and greater accommodation within educational facilities of the practices of different religions”. Because of CNE, Christianity was institutionalised as a dominant religion in public schools. This tradition permeated in to democratic South Africa, evident in the number of schools who continue with public prayers, singing of Christian hymns, and Christian student committees. To promote equality of religions, the CRL proposed that the Department of Education train educators and educational administrators on how respond to diverse religions. At a government level there are positive steps to promote religious equality, but, one may also argue that many

\(^{35}\) The Role and work of the CRL will be discussed later in this chapter
schools were not able to decisively deal with religious and cultural rites and practices. A key example is the controversy surrounding Rastafari dreadlocks and the rules guiding cutting of hair in Rastafari belief systems.

A contentious issue in South Africa that remains is that of religious public holidays. Easter and Christmas are celebrated holy days for Christians, and, in South Africa these days are declared public holidays. Other religious groupings, like Hinduism or Islam, are not afforded the privilege of their holy days being declared public holidays.

The literature suggests that a secular state based on secular principles will take root in society if there is a democratic culture of tolerance and equality. Lipset (1959: 79) argues that creating a society based on values of tolerance and equality depends on political culture built on democratic norms. It would also initial that a society built on respect and recognition of diversity, tolerance, and equality would not necessarily favour one religion above another. The CRL has received a number of complaints regarding what other faith groups see as preferential treatment of Christianity through declaring Christian holy days as public holidays, most notably Easter and Christmas (News 24 2012):

The South African Law Reform Commission36(as quoted by the CRL,2013) one of the leading voices for the revision of the Public Holiday’s Act noted,

Section 2 of the Public Holidays Act declares the days mentioned in Schedule 1 as public holidays and Good Friday and Christmas Day are days observed by Christians. The declaration of the two main Christian holidays as paid public holidays sets about creating a differentiation between those who practice Christianity and those who practice other religious faiths in the country, whose faith-based occasions are not included in the holidays. This provision is a violation of section 9 (3) of the Constitution and amounts to direct discrimination on the basis of religion and belief. There is an element of prejudicial treatment in that the two main Christian holidays are declared as paid public holidays and adherents of other religions who celebrate other faith based holidays are disadvantaged in that their holidays are not declared public holidays and they do not have an

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36 The Law Reform Commission is a constitutionally recognised body within the Justice Ministry. They core function related to “…research with reference to all branches of the law of the Republic and to study and investigate all such branches in order to make recommendations for the development, improvement, modernization or reform thereof…” (The Law Reform Commission, 2016)
automatic benefit of pay on those days. This section should be reviewed. It is suggested that either
these holidays be reviewed or that equal weight be given to holidays of other faiths.

While the Law Reform Commission argues that the Constitution has been violated, one also
has to be cognisant of the fact that most South Africans are Christian. The LRC argues that the
Act in its current state poses a threat to the doctrine of secularity. However, there has been some
strides in secularising public holidays. The Christian holy days of Assentation Day and Easter
Monday were removed as paid public holidays in 1994 (Freedom of Religion, 2016).

Unsurprising, there was considerable outcry from the Christian community (CRL, 2016). The
CRL was tasked with holding public hearings, assessing current legislation, and drawing up
report on the Public Holiday’s Act concerning religious holidays. The report entitled: Public
hearings vs religious/cultural holidays: in pursuit of equality and religious and cultural groups,
found that most believed that because the majority of South Africans belong to the Christian
faith that the two public holidays should be given preference. Furthermore, the CRL (2016:
29) found that,

16.1 From the oral and written submissions during the investigation, the Commission’s
findings are that:

16.1.1 There is mischief in Public Act in that
16.1.1.1 endorses Christianity and 16.1.1.2 excludes other religions
16.1.2 The Basic Employment Act does not regulate leave for religious
holidays

Thus, they recommended “amending the Public Holidays Act by adding religions under
schedule 2 of African Traditional Religion, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam, Bahia, Rastafarism and
Buddhism. And that each of these be allotted only one day” (CRL, 2016: 31).

The findings and recommendations indicated the CRL as an organ of the state’ positions on
dominant religions showcases a preference for secularism and secular rationale as opposed to
promoting the rights of the majority. However, as an international standard, most countries
acknowledge all religions but the dominant religions’ in those particular territories often receive
preferential treatment in relation to religious public holidays (CRL, 2016:5). Internationally,
minority37 religious groups as do not have a holiday, but are permitted to seek leave to observe
special days (CRL, 2016: 5).

37 In terms of size
3.3.3.3 Fraternity

Every individual has the right to belong to or to abstaining from belonging to a religious organisation. It is in reference to the notion of fraternity. Chaskalson (as quoted by Du Plessis, 2009:15) summarises the state’s responsibility to afford individuals the right to belong to a religious grouping,

The essence of the concept of freedom of religion is the right to entertain such religious beliefs as a person chooses, the right to declare religious beliefs openly and without fear of hindrance or reprisal, and the right to manifest religious belief by worship and practice or by teaching and dissemination.

The state’s provision of fraternity, must be accompanied by (1) primarily the right to adopt one’s own religion but also to practice freely—that is as mentioned in the summary above, and declaring one’s religious beliefs opening, and (2) manifest your religious beliefs through practice and teaching. The state must also permit and provide safety for individuals to freely choose whether or not they wish to belong to a particular religion or faith. Chapter 15 (2) (c) of the Constitution states,

Attendance at them is free and voluntary.” The law is made in context to religious observations at state venues such as government buildings and schools. However, it does provide a revelation as to the state’s approach to religious diversity. The state also permits through section 29 (2) the right to “establish and maintain, at own expense, independent educational institutions – including, for instance religiously and/or denominationally specific schools (as quoted by, Du Plessis, 2009: 12).

This enables individuals to manifest their religious beliefs. One of key questions secularism grapples with is how the state responds to religious diversity (Taylor, 2010: 25) In the South African context there is a degree of religious diversity coupled with dominant religion Christianity. The national census shows that approximately 80% of South Africans identify as Christians, while 15% do belong to a religion and, 1, 4 % was undetermined (Stats SA 2011). Furthermore, 1.5 % of South Africans as with the Islamic faith, while 1.2 % are Hindu, 0.3 % adhere to African traditional beliefs, and 0.2 % identify as Jewish. A small minority of 0.6 % indicate that they subscribe to ‘other’ faiths.
There has been instances when state institutions, notably public schools, have not permitted observing religious practices from other religions. For example, in 2013 a grade ten pupil at Siphamandla High School in Khayelitsha was not permitted to attend school until he had cut his hair; even though the pupil was Rastafari (South African Publications Authority 2013). Even though the Department of Education intervened in this case, and the pupil had been permitted to return to school, (SAPA, 2013), it is not an isolated incident (see Scholtz, 2011; Fredericks, 2016). In another case the Court ruled that a learner from the Hindu faith was entitled to an exemption under the school code of conduct to wear a nose ring as part of her religious and cultural tradition (Mhango, 2012: 2). In South Africa, school governing bodies are given juridictive authority to create school rules on the provision that these do not contradict the Constitution. These two examples illustrate a gap between societal norms and constitutional obligations to respect the religious practices of “minority” religions in South Africa. Interestingly, at major state events, such as the inauguration of the state president, religious representatives from all faiths are often invited to deliver a prayer.

The South African state does have a body to protect cultural diversity in line with constitutional obligations. This is the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities, a legal body constituted by legislation to promote, protect the right to choose and protect individuals and groups from discrimination based on religious, cultural and linguistic beliefs and practice. The CRL mandate is explained as follows:

The CRL Rights Commission is a constitutional body established in terms of the South African Constitution of 1996. Its constitutional mandate is to strengthen our constitutional democracy. The Commission was established in order to protect and promote the cultural, religious and linguistic community rights. Its mandate is achievable through both proactive and reactive approach. The CRL Rights Commission is set out to build the nation by providing space for each of the cultural, religious and linguistic communities and to promote unity amongst diverse communities and to contribute.

Democratic South Africa, in line with secular principles, provides a space for all religious groups, including minority religious groups, to operate freely. Minority religious were marginalised by the apartheid regime given that the Nationalist party promoted Christianity, and also used Christianity to legitimise their apartheid policy. Because Christianity was the de facto state religion, most laws were influenced by Christian and Calvinist values systems. In a post-apartheid context, an inclusive space for all religions and faith had to be created. This was done with the establishment of the CRL. The CRL was tasked to uncover discriminatory laws that were levied against religious, non-religious, cultural and linguistic groups.
3.3.3.4 Religious discriminatory action

A key challenge for secular states relates to maintaining a legal balance between freedom of speech vis-à-vis discriminatory speech and the freedom of religion vis-à-vis discriminatory and human right violations under the guise of religious practice. de Vos (2015) South African constitutional expert, advocates that religion, particularly the Christian religion, has too much influence and authority. He notes,

Some religious beliefs and practices do get a free pass – both from society and from courts that have to enforce the sometimes conflicting rights contained in the Bill of Rights. First, this may be the case because many of these religious beliefs and practices mirror the deeply embedded beliefs and practices of the economically and politically powerful in society. For example, in a patriarchal society like South Africa, one in which the lives and feelings of women, gay men, lesbians and transgendered people are not valued to the same degree that the lives and feelings of heterosexual men are valued, it is perhaps not surprising that many religious institutions endorse discrimination against members of the former groups.

An interesting example is that of homosexual ministers and female ministers, especially in relation to what de Vos calls a ‘free pass.’ The Bill of Rights stipulates that one cannot be discriminated against on the basis of inter alia sexual orientation and gender, especially in the work environment. However, the Church in South Africa have dismissed individuals who have professed to be homosexuals. Furthermore, and in certain Christian denominations woman may not be ministers. In 2015 a self-professed homosexual Methodist Church minister lost a case in the Constitutional Court after being dismissed for revealing her sexual orientation. If this scenario had played out in a private or public entity, the Constitutional Court probably would have ordered her reinstatement as this is a discriminatory practice. In summarising the ruling, Deputy Chief Justice, Justice Dikgang Moseneke (2015 as quoted by the South African Legal Information Institute) conceded,

I am persuaded by the submissions of the Church that arbitration would be the ideal forum for Ms. De Lange and the Church to see where the balance between dogma and tolerance should be struck… It would not be appropriate for this Court to interfere at this stage, especially considering that the line is close to the Church’s doctrines and values …it will require all the judicial, if not Solomonic, wisdom we Judges can muster right through our court system

One may argue that the Constitutional Court upheld to the notion of separating Church and state by not getting involved, but could potentially have undermined the basis of equal treatment
regardless of sexual orientation. This case demonstrated that the Christian religion may have influenced the decision of the Constitutional Court. De Vos makes a valid case in his observation that there is interconnectedness in the values of the Christian religion and the elite. In this instance he cites patriarchy and a ‘value imbalance’ towards homosexuals, transgender individuals, and women vis-à-vis heterosexual men. This is also supported by research conducted by the Pew Research Centre (2013:1), who found that 66% of South Africans believed that homosexuality should not be accepted in society, thus demonstrating a correlation between religion and societal beliefs of morality.

Corporal punishment remains a contentious issue in post-apartheid South Africa. In 2016 the South African Human Rights Commission ruled against the Joshua Generation Church (South African Human Rights Commission, 2016), when a pastor argued the importance of reasonable chastisement of children based on biblical prescripts. The complaint was a caricature of the church’s teachings in relation to the scriptural bases of “potential discipline” and the investigation “unduly entangles the state… in the internal working of both religion and family life (Human Rights Commission, 2016: 6) It is believed, that Sonke Justice, a social justice NGO believed that the pastor’s sermon was a violation against children’s rights, consequently they laid a complaint to the HRC for adjudicate on the issue(Human Rights Commission, 2016).

Section 15(1) and Section 28 (1) (d) and 28 (2) of the Bill of Rights are important in light of this case and may possibly provide two possible alternative outcomes. Everyone has the right to religion vis-à-vis their beliefs and conviction. However, there are also laws that protect the rights of children against abuse. Currently corporal punishment in the home is permissible under common law, limited in that is should be “moderate and reasonable chastisement on a child for misconduct provided that this was not done in a manner offensive to good morals or for objects other than correction and admonition” (Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment 2016). Others hold the view that any form corporal punishment should be illegal.

The Commission concludes that the Church’s rights to ‘religion and beliefs’ are limited to the extent that it limits the rights of others, which in this context are children (South African Human

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38 “Spare the Rod, Spoil the Child” (Proverbs 13: 24); “Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you strike him with a rod, he will not die. If you strike him with the rod, you will save his soul from Sheol” (Proverbs 23: 13-14); Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it (Proverbs 22: 6)
39 Everyone has the right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion (South African Constitution, 1996)
40 to be protected from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation
41 A child’s best interests are of paramount importance in every matter concerning the child (South African Constitution, 1996)
Rights Commission, 2016: 33-59). The Child Act of 2005 third amendment Bill reads as follows, “no child may be subjected to corporal punishment or be punished in a cruel, inhuman or degrading way” and “the common law defense of reasonable chastisement ... is hereby abolished”. Thus, if the Bill is passed in parliament it will be seen as defeat for segments of the church that are proponents of chastisement. There is international trend towards the criminalisation of corporal punishment. According to the Global Initiative to End of all Corporal Punishment (2016) fifty-one states globally have banned corporal punishment in its totality while a further fifty-five have made a commitment to banning it. This amendment thus brings South Africa in line with international practice surrounding the rights of children and banning corporal punishment.

The Church in South Africa does not have a unified position with regards to corporal punishment. The South African Council of Churches responded the proposed amendment to the Child Act as follows:

The South African Council of Churches has - with regard to legislation developed in line with children’s rights - consistently held to the principle that policy developments and their impact should always remain in the best interests of the poorest, most vulnerable and marginalised children. The injunctions as put forth by the Children’s Amendment Bill, with special reference to the abolishment of the common law (Vermeulen & Hemstreet, 2016: 1)

The Freedom of Religion SA (2016), a less known and established group than SACC differed stating,

this well-established Church in Cape Town is supported in its position by religious leaders representing an overwhelming 12 million people in South Africa (including The Evangelical Alliance of South Africa (TEASA) who in itself represents 4 million Christians in South Africa, the Jewish Board of Deputies and the Muslim Judicial Council).

If we look at these two examples, one may argue that in both instances human rights violation is evident. Yet, corporal punishment and homosexuality remain contentious issues, even though the Bill of Rights guarantees equality to all. There may be various reasons: (1) the dominant position elites enjoy, thus undermining equality of marginalised communities like the LGBTI community (as explained by de Vos) (2) societies attitudes that hold conservative value systems which may further marginalise vulnerable people, like the LGBTI community, (3) the church’s position with regards to morality, which may be conservative and creates further marginalisation of vulnerable people, and, (4) intentional trends that shape policy rationale with regard to morality and human rights. To date there are no public records of discussions
and statements endorsing homosexual preachers. With regards to corporal punishment, the state is progressive in its approach as evident in the Children Act, 2005 Amendment Bill.

3.3.3.5 Discriminatory statements and actions against the Church

Internationally human rights law dictates that religion cannot be used as a legitimate ground for limiting fundamental rights such as freedom of speech and expression (Temperman, 2010: 244). Freedom of speech and expression is only limited in that it is unlawful to engage in hate speech and incite violence. One may also not openly discriminate on the basis of religious beliefs (Temperman, 2010: 244). Certain states, notably Islamic states, criminalise blasphemy; while in many western states, mocking religion is tolerated. The Charlie Hebdo cartoon, depicting Prophet Mohammed and the reaction serves as a relevant example in this instance. Charlie Hebdo, a French satire magazine drew several derogatory cartoons of the Prophet Mohamed (Taibi 2015). Tabi (2015) also notes that the satire magazine has in the past mocked other religions. The Islamic community condemned it, with the French Council for Muslim Faith, suing the magazine, but the French Courts dismissed the suit. There was a terrorist attack at the magazine’s offices under the guise of avenging the Prophet Mohammed as it is forbidden to depict the Prophet in the Islamic faith. The Independent, commenting on the court case stated: “just because Muslims refuse to portray the prophet, there’s no reason why non-Muslims should feel compelled by the same restrictions and fear retribution if they go ahead with picturing Islam’s founder” (Silva 2015). In 2012, Charlie Hebdo’s former director Stephanie Charbonnier held similar views saying that it is “not really fuelling the fire but rather using its freedom of expression to comment (on) the news in a satirical way” (Silva 2015). She was commenting on the perception that Charlie Hebdo was creating diplomatic complications with France and other Islamic states. The contrast is best explained by examining the legal and cultural attitudes towards religion within states.

In the West there is a greater acceptance and appreciation for free speech, perhaps because there may be a stronger foundation for a democratic political culture. The World Value Survey (2016) notes, “the strongest emphasis on traditional values and survival values is found in the Islamic societies of the Middle East. By contrast, the strongest emphasis on secular-rational values and self-expression values is found in the Protestant societies of Northern Europe”. Thus, traditional values emphasise the importance of religion while self-expression in an individualistic, liberal tradition place stronger emphasis on secular values.
Legally the South African Constitution is similar to most secular states, and acts of acts of blasphemy and ridicule of religion are not criminalised, but protected under freedom of speech and expression.

The World Value Survey, led by Kotze and Harris (2007: 3) found that 70% of South Africans regarded religion as important. The state has not been hostile towards the Christian faith. However, there is a perception that pluralism and the move towards secularism ideals are an attack on the Church. The Public Holiday’s Act in relation to religious holidays and performing Christian ceremonies at public schools which has recently come into question and the Hates Crime Bill creates a sense that the Church is being discriminated against.

The Organisasie Vir Godsdienste Onderrig en Demokrasie (OGOD) filed court papers against six state schools who advertised that they were Christian institutions, and that singing Christian hymn, singing only Christian school songs, and having Christian logos was part of the institutional pedagogy (Child 2016). OGOD argued that the Constitution and the National School Religion Policy does not permit for single dominant religion in public institutions like schools (Child, 2016). The outcome of the court case will set a precedent as to how religion and singularity of religion will be managed in the future in schools. This is consistent with the secularism, which advocate for religious plurality and emphasises religious practice in personal spaces, such as personal residences (see Glasner 1977).

The school have argued that Section 15 of the Constitution does permit for expression of religion in the public sphere, as long as its voluntary (Child, 2016). Their argument also rests on the notion that Christians are the majority in many of the schools and hence Christian rites are practiced. A number of clergypersons and Christian religious leaders have appealed to the Church register their dissatisfaction with this court case (Child 2016).

The state had, on previous occasions, ruled on religious practices in schools. Corporal punishment on the premise of religious conviction is not permitted. In addition to this, codes of conduct at schools needed to be adjusted in order for ordinances of the Rastafari religion (Mestry, 2006: 58). In these cases, the state ruled against the dominant principles that inform Christian religion, as well as upheld the right of equality in religion guaranteed by the Bill of Rights.

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42 This translates into the Organisation for Religious Education and Democracy.  
43 Baambreker and Garsfontein primary schools and Linden High School – situated in Gauteng – and two Oudtshoorn schools, Oudtshoorn High School and Lagenhoven Gymnasium (Child, 2016).
The Hate Crimes Bill, set to be tabled parliament in 2017, prohibits individuals and organisations from engaging in discriminatory statements and actions against homosexual individuals. Indeed, the Constitutional Court had already made a ruling on homosexual appointments and dismissals at Churches, but this confirmed that the Courts would not get involved. If the Hate Crimes Bill is passed into law, the Church may be prohibited from dismissing a minister on the basis of their sexual orientation. This contradicts Christian beliefs of morality, especially the condoning of homosexuality. The Hate Crimes Bill reads,

hate crime is an offence recognised under any law, the commission of which by a person is motivated on the basis of that person’s prejudice, bias or intolerance towards the victim of the hate crime in question because of one or more of the following characteristics or perceived characteristics of the victim or his or her family member… (f) which includes sexual orientation (Department of Justice and constitutional Development, 2016: 6)

This bill will put the church in precarious position in constructing morality in that there is now a delicate balance between religious conviction and legal obligations.

### 3.4 Defining a secular state in relation to the South African context

In the previous section, the state’s reaction in relation to religious plurality in society was discussed. This is a key to understanding the make-up of secular state. However, one needs to explore how a secular state operates and South Africa’s unique version of secularity. Termperman’s, (2010: 111-112) definition of a secular state serves as a useful reference:

a state declares that it will not be bound by religious laws or principles. In establishing itself as non-religious and non-denominational state, the state denies any form of positive identification with religion… the state does not wish to invoke religion as a justification for its authority, actions and decisions.

‘Positive identification’ entails the state aligning itself with a particular religion. This will most likely find expression in a country’s constitution. The apartheid constitution paid reverence to the Christianity, confirming accountability to God (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1983: 1) The Swazi constitution states that, “the official religion of Swaziland is Christianity, while the constitution of Saudi Arabia clearly outlines that it is a Muslim state… the kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a sovereign Arab Islamic state, with Islam as its religion” (Termperman, 2010: 33, 23). States who do not have positive identification with a particular religion or denomination are considered ‘non-positive identification’ states.
An alternative way to phrase the concept ‘non-positive identification’ is state neutrality or the non-establishment clause. For instance, the Slovakian constitution notes that, “The Slovak Republic is a sovereign, democratic and law governed state, it is not linked to any religious belief,” while the Albanian constitution reads, “The state shall remain neutral in question of belief and conscience” (Termperman, 2010: 115). Non-establishment states are considered secular in so far as they promise to remain impartial with respect to the different religious communities. The USA’s clause for example reads as follows “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibition of free exercise thereof” (Termperman, 2010: 115).

South Africa does not have a non-establishment clause or a state neutrality clause, but the constitution makes it clear that the state has the highest authority, thus indicative of a form of a non-establishment state. The South African constitution is the highest form of judicial authority, therefore that God is not chief authority and his biblical law is not the basis of the state’s legislation. In other words, the religious text is not the source of inspiration in the creation and or amendment of legislation.

At the end of the preamble of the Constitution, reference is made to God asking for a blessing for the South African nation. The term ‘God’ is not thoroughly explained and defined or designated to a particular deity.

South Africa, like other secular states, propagates separation between state and religion. Temperman (2010: 121) states,

The principle can be defined as the legal-political endeavour which aims at internalising and consistently preserving a regime in which the state apparatus and religious institutions function independently from religious affairs whilst, religious institutions are not to get involved in state affairs.

The Constitution does not have a definitive clause which stipulates separation between Church and state. However, constitutional provisions clearly specify that the Constitution holds the highest authority, and not another entity, which includes the Church.

This, of course, does not mean that entities are unable to exercise informal influence in the realm of the state. An entity, including the Church, may have informal influence, and, while
this influence is difficult to quantify, it may have negative or positive consequences. This would entail a form of state capture, where

the actions of individuals, groups, or firms both in the public and private sectors to influence the formation of laws, regulations, decrees, and other government policies to their own advantage as a result of the illicit and non-transparent provision of private benefits to public officials (Sutch, 2014:01).

In a South African context, to date the church has not been actively involved in attempting to shape or influence state activities and business. However, the Church has recently spoken out against the state in relation to corruption and state capture (see Freedom of Religion South Africa, 2016; SACC, 2016).

The Church, like any other civil society group, may hold protests and comment on public documents such as government policies and bills. The Church and, more notably, the South African Council of Churches (SACC), has a long standing relationship with the ANC, the current governing party. The organisation has in the past used their influence to meet with ANC’s executive members and the president, especially when they perceived that the governing party had failed to fulfilled their duties (Whittles, 2016; SACC, 2016).

The South African Charter of Religious Rights drawn up by ninety-one individuals, including religious leaders, academics, human rights activists, and media organisations in South Africa, as well international advisers, outlines what religious freedom and by extension the conceptualisation of separation from the religious sector (Coertzen, 2014: 130). Amongst others they include,

9.2 Every religious institution is recognised and protected as an institution that has authority over its own affairs, and towards which the state, through its governing institutions, is responsible for just, constructive and impartial government in the interest of everybody.
9.3 The state, including the judiciary, must respect the authority of every religious institution over its own affairs, and may not regulate or prescribe matters of doctrine and ordinances.
9.4 The confidentiality of the internal affairs and communications of a religious institution must be respected. The privileged nature of any religious communication that has been made with an expectation of confidentiality must be respected insofar as the interest of justice permits.
9.5 Every religious institution is subject to the law of the land A religious institution must be able to justify any non-observance of a law resulting from the exercise of the rights in this Charter (The South African Charter of Religious Rights and Freedoms, 2010: 3)
The Charter was publically endorsed by South Africa’s Deputy Chief Justice and the CRL was given the directive to oversee the process of the Charter to be enacted into law (Coertzen, 2014: 133). The charter, if passed into law, will give a clearer legal definition for the state’s authority over the Church. It must be noted that the judiciary has acted with caution when rescinding over court cases with religious institutions as seen in the de Lange verses the Methodist case.

3.5 Moral Construction of South Africans and Moral regeneration

Historically, the Church played a key role in influencing legislation, especially in legitimising apartheid laws. Indeed, some apartheid legislation was formulated at the backdrop of the Christian doctrine. The post-apartheid South African Constitutions, however, points to a more liberal approach in constructing morality. In liberal societies issues such as homosexuality and abortion are not regarded as taboo, but within a narrative of individual choice and rights. This is contradictory to conservative and religious societies, where the narrative around homosexuality and abortion is one of immorality. Liberal democracy thus enshrines individual rights in their constitutions and, and South Africa has embraced this liberal tradition in the ambit of its Constitution.

It is however difficult to deconstruct how the state interprets morality. The South African Government’s Moral Regeneration Programme gives us a glimpse into its rationale surrounding morality. The MRP’s (2016), vision, mission goals are outlined as follows:

To initiate, facilitate and coordinate societal networks and programmes to regenerate and preserve our nation’s moral fiber.

To be a just, tolerant and moral society for the common good.
1. Responsibility and Accountability
2. Honesty and Integrity
3. Equity and Equality
4. Respect and Tolerance
5. Environmental Awareness

44 This includes the Immorality Act, which prohibited individuals from engaging in homosexual activities as well as purchase, distribute and create pornographic material; the Witchcraft Suppression Act 3 of 1957, which prohibited the practice witchcraft; the The Liquor Act 27 of 1987, which prohibited the sale of alcohol on Sundays.
The MRP’s moral rationale is underpinned by liberal democratic principles consistent with South African Constitution, and is not necessarily guided by religious conviction. The MRP’s place importance on all religions roles in moral regeneration. MRP’s also does not focus on conservative approaches to issues around abortion and homosexuality.

Theoretically, one may hypothesise that South Africans will espouse to democratic norms such as tolerance and the respect for diversity. Yet, South Africans may have not embraced liberal values such as diversity and still hold conservative and Christian values.

Lesnick (2010:177) observes, “the foundations of the Christian moral doctrine are being tested as never before. (Although) the moral norms whose very possibility (as truths) is now disputed are not morality’s fundamental principles.” The statements serve as a confirmation that the Church no longer holds a monopoly on the construction of morality within the state. ‘Controversial’ issues such as abortion, homosexual relationships, civil unions, and the use of marijuana are no longer seen only from the dominant Christian spectrum.

There are two types of morality that one needs to consider in the current debate of which one are Biblical laws, which are synonymous to lifestyle in relation to certain standards. For example, it is a generally accepted that the Church does not support abortion as the embryo as seen as human being (Lesnick, 2010: 281-320). Another sphere of morality is the concepts of ethics and integrity or in the biblical sense ‘righteousness.’ It showcases the Church’s voice as moral and one with authoritative integrity. The term ‘moral voice’ often comes to play and the Church sees itself as this ‘moral voice’ in society (See SACC, 2016; Lodge, 2002).

The author will focus on the first characteristic of morality, that is lifestyle preferences. Conservative values endorse what is constructed as a godly lifestyle. This would entail not engaging in pre-marital sexual activity, heterosexual relationships as the norm, not committing adultery, an anti-abortion stance, or refraining from using contraceptives and drugs. Kotzé & Harris, (2007:10), through the World Value Survey found that South Africans share conservative values. Despite the drive towards greater tolerance, it seems that many South Africans are intolerant and hold conservative views with regard to ‘moral’ issues. The World Values Survey asked, on a scale of 1 to 10 (where 1 means never justifiable and 10 means always justifiable), to what extent homosexuality, prostitution, abortion, divorce, euthanasia and suicide are acceptable in society. All of these issues identified by the World Values Survey received a score of less than 5. This indicates that South Africans may still hold deeply conservative views regarding morality at the time of the survey, which was thirteen years into the democracy in 2007.
While South Africans hold conservative views on morality, this does not entail a causal relationship between morality and religion. In fact, there is no empirical research to investigate how South Africans construct morality and the influence of religion on societal values. One may suggest that there is a correlation between the scores and religious conviction given that approximately 80% of South African self-identify as Christians.

The Pew Research Centre’s 2013 Global Attitudes survey asked 40,117 respondents in 40 countries what they thought about eight topics often associated with morality. Figure 3 presents the findings from South Africa.

**Figure 3: South African perceptions on the acceptability of ‘moral issues’**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISSUE</th>
<th>UNACCEPTABLE</th>
<th>ACCEPTABLE</th>
<th>NOT A MORAL ISSUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extramarital Affairs</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homosexuality</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abortion</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premarital Sex</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gambling</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorce</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol Use</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contraception Use</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One may compare the findings of both the World Values Survey and the Pew Research Centre study. Homosexuality was not accepted by most South Africans both in 2007 and 2013, and likewise, abortion was viewed as an unacceptable, even though both abortion and homosexuality are protected by the South African Constitution.
The results for South Africa on perceptions with regard to the morality of homosexuality is consistent with most African countries as seen in Figure 4. According to Kutch (2013) thirty-eight African states criminalised homosexuality. In the most extreme cases, like in Sudan and Mauritania, one may receive capital punishment if found guilty of engaging in homosexual practice (Kutch, 2013). The Ugandan Anti-Homosexuality Bill sought to impose the death penalty on individuals who engaged in ‘aggravated homosexual relations’ (Amnesty International 2013). Kutch, (2013) further reveals that religion and the belief that it is unnatural is the motivation behind anti-homosexual legislation. In many cases there is a correlation between legislation and social attitudes and actions towards individuals who are homosexual. According to an Amnesty International (2013) report it was not uncommon for individuals from the LGBTI community to face discriminated at both a legal and social level. In totality, the report provides an analysis of the legal environment and wider context of human rights violations against (LGBTI) individuals in sub-Saharan Africa. The report suggests that in South Africa there is a gap between legislation and the live reality of LGBTI. On a contrast longer established democracies are more accepting of homosexual lifestyle.
South Africa’s conservative position on moral issues is comparable to other countries (as demonstrated with figure 5). South Africa scores relatively high compared to other African counterparts. The countries surveyed did not have more than eight per cent approval for homosexuality. The survey also found where religion does not play a dominant role in society, countries scored higher levels of acceptance of ‘moral issues’ like homosexuality. Countries like Australia (79%), Philippines (73%) Germany (87%), Spain (88%) and France (77%) were among the most accepting of homosexuality. The Pew Research Centre (2013: 4) thus correlates a relationship between religion and anti-homosexual attitudes.

### 3.6 Concluding remarks

This chapter focused on the constitutional and societal construction of the role of the Church and by extension the Clergy. Societal views and the state’s approach to religion impacts on the of role Clergy, as leaders of religious groups, in the political process.

The chapter began with an analysis of the historical backdrop of the role of the church during the apartheid years. It was important to begin the discussion at that juncture because some apartheid legislation was motivated by the Christian principles, which also seeped into the democratic South Africa. Indeed, this would provide a litmus test of some sort into the state’s process towards secularity. The repeal of some of these Acts provide some evidence that the

45 See Morality section, Figure 4 reveals attitudes towards homosexual behaviour.
state, at least in legislative context, have moved towards secularity. However, there was societal backlash when the state repealed certain pieces of legislation, which includes the Public Holidays Act and, in the name of religious equality, giving equal status to holy days of other religions in South Africa. Also, the Children’s Act Amendment Bill which proposes that corporal punishment should no longer be permitted in the home is also open to debate.

The concept of secular in relation to government, the state and society was also discussed. The author conducted the analysis by emphasising the difference between secularization, secularism, and secular principles in government. Secularisation is a sociological concept and seeks to explain societies eventual progression to a non-religious society. This will directly impact on the role of Clergy in the political process because if religious is seen as obsolete so too will the Clergy’s ability to influence society. The author discussed the degree of secularity in the South African culture and the South African state and also explored morality and moral regeneration. Does the Church still hold a moral gound in South Africa? Indeed, the can conclude that although South Africa is a secular government, the Church still exerts influence on the construction of morality and moral standards in the country.

Secularism is a concept that describes how states manage religious diversity. Although most South Africans are Christians, there are a number of other minority religious groupings in the country. The apartheid government ensured the elevation of the Christian religion in society through an endorsement of Christian religious education in public schools, for example. The state is in the process of determine how to manage religious diversity in schools. Tempmen demonstrated that all states have various manifestations of secularity. Although South Africa can be seen as a secular state, there is no legislation that outlines secularity and its principles in the country. Secular governments tend to legislate the separation of Church and state. While some states have separation and non-establishment clauses in their constitutions, South Africa does not. However, there is a clause stipulating that the South African Constitution is the highest authority in the land. Furthermore, the South African Charter of Religious Rights provides guidance on the nature of the separation between state and Church.
Chapter 4
The perception of the role of the Clergy in post-apartheid South Africa: The Clergy’s views

4.1 Introduction

The chapter seeks to establish how the Christian Clergy perceive their role in post-apartheid political life. The primary method of data collection was in-depth interviews with the Clergy. From the outset the researcher ensured that the Clergy interviewed represented a diverse group of pastors and influential Christian religious leaders.

The analysis is separated in two sections. First the researcher unpacks how the Clergy perceive their role in political life in a post-apartheid context, using NMBM as the research nucleus. The study reveals that clergy in the NMBM, in some instances, are already active in political life and its associated processes. The Transformation Christian Network (TCN), a network created to link Clergy in the NMBM for the betterment of the community, is the primary vehicle for political involvement of the Clergy. They have a well-established network and have been working with local government for several years. Clergy perceive their role in the political process as follows:

1. conflict manager and peacekeeper,

2. the community leader,

3. watchdog,

4. prophetic voice, and

5. moral compass.

The second part deconstructs recurrent and dominant themes that surfaced during the interviews. These were primarily related to the perceived socio-political issues and general role of the Clergy in political life. There was unanimous support for the idea of non-partisan political involvement. In other words, most Clergy interviewed not aligned with any political party. They believed that a united approach, transcending theological, racial, and cultural barriers are important to make an impact in political life. Some of the societal issues highlighted by clergy
included issues of racism, inequality, education, and health. Finally, there seems to be relatively sound understanding of the role of the Church and Clergy in a secular state.

4.2 Profile of the Interviewees

Ethical research practice guided the interviews. This included guaranteeing anonymity if asked, and making interviewees aware that they may withdraw at any time from the interview. Interviewees were also informed that the study received ethics clearance from the NMMU Research Ethics Committee.

In total, eight pastors and two Christian leaders (who are both perform leading roles in pastor’s fraternity) were interviewed. Three of the interviewees were from the Uitenhage area and the rest from Port Elizabeth. One of the ministers’ congregation is in a low income area and is considered a former ‘coloured area,’ one leads a congregation in a one in a lower middle class area, and two are of middle class areas. The others are presiding bishops and do not preach at specific Churches. In terms of racial demographics, two black pastors, four coloured pastors and two white pastors were interviewed. Both Christian religious leaders were white.

Most of the interviewees hold relatively high positons within their congregation at local, provincial and national level. Only one of the pastors serves at an entry level leadership position as a senior pastor of the Church. Seven of the interviewees form part of the TCN. Four of the interviewees serve in senior capacities in this network and are part of the ‘Bishop’s Breakfast’. This is a quarterly breakfast meeting between senior denominational leaders in NMBM to discuss challenges and issues within the broader municipality (Transformation Christian Network 2016).

Five of the interviewees come from traditionally Pentecostal background, two interviewees are Anglicans, one interviewee was Catholic, and one interviewee is from the ‘Grace Movement’. One pastor from the DRC was also interviewed.

Most of the interviewees have led their congregations for a number of years, including during the apartheid era. The least experience has pastors has five years’ experience, while the most experienced has forty years.

To ensure reliability of the data, the researcher ensured that experienced individuals formed the bulk of the sample. The majority of interviewees are seen as experts and leaders, thus making them key informants for this study. The researcher remained cognisant that social realities are constructed, and thus sought to determine whether there are multiple realities in deconstructing the role of the Clergy in post-apartheid South African political life (Neumann 2011: 109).
4.3 In-depth Interviews Data Analysis Methods

The method used was a structured in-depth interviews. The interviewees were each asked a total of eight questions (see appendix C). As the questions were open ended, discussion was permitted and follow up questions were also asked during the interviews so as to gain a deeper understanding of what was being said and gauge perceptions of the interviewees.

McCracken (1988: 28) points out that is important to self-reflect before conducting the interview so as to listen more intently and to avoid latent bias. He labelled it, the ’review of cultural categories.’ In other words, it is important to examine the associations, experiences, incidents and assumption with the topic. The researcher has worked in the Church environment for more than ten years, both formally and informally. While listening to the interview the author at best remained neutral and intentionally engaged questions from the perspective of a novice.

McCracken’s (1988: 26) analytic method presumes that the researcher has used one or more theoretical frameworks to guide development of the research questions and subsequent data analysis. The researcher employed an interpretivist framework. The questions generally provided a historical or contextual background in order to gauge the construction of reality as narrated by the interviewee. Neumann (2011: 71) states,

The goal of other researchers is to provide a very exciting depiction of events or a setting. They analyse specific events or settings to gain insight into the larger dynamics of a society. Still other researchers apply an existing theory to analyse specific settings to gain insight into the large dynamics of a society. Still other resources apply an existing theory to analyse specific settings that they have placed in the macro-level historic context. They show connections among micro-level events and between micro-level situations and larger social forces for the purpose of reconstructing the theory and informing social action.

The Clergy were actively involved in political life during the apartheid years. This formed an important consideration in analysing the contextual background when analysing the perceptions of the Clergy in post-apartheid political life. The interviewer used ’existing theory’ in analysing but the questions were not set to incorporate ideologies.

The data was analysed using the thematic analysis technique. Marshall and Rossman (1999:150) suggests that data analysis is the process of, “bringing order, structure and
interpretation to the mass of collected data. … It is the search for general statements about relationships among categories of data … it is the search among data to identify content.”

Collected data is organised into thematic categories in order to generate a clear understanding of the perceptions that inform the construction of reality. As this study unpacks the perceptions of the role of Clergy in political life in a post-apartheid context, a thematic analysis was the best suited method of data analysis. In addition to sifting out the perceptions, the researcher drew out statements and convictions that have been repeated by clergy.

Interviewees interchanged between the concept ‘the Church’ and ‘Clergy’ when speaking of their perceived role. It seems that the clergy in some instances equates the mandate of the Church to their own. In other words, when they say it is the Church’s duty to perform a particular function they include themselves in this obligation. It may be regarded as a two dimensional matrix. Marshall & Rossman, (1999:12) points out that the two dimensional matrix categories intersect and are often used to describe the same function. In this case the use of the terms Church and Clergy intersect.

Clergy identify the concept of politics at two different levels 1) government, and 2) socio-political environment. For example, the issue of racism is a socio-political issue outside the primary domain of government. One of the Transformation Christian Network (TCN) leaders noted that the Church (in general) is not racially integrated and, consequently, they now have to address the issue through various programmes including, ‘whites talking to whites.’ This is an initiative where whites are educating whites about their privilege. The interviewer questioned an interviewee on racism within the Church and society in general to which he responded:

It’s not all gone away but it was quite interesting that the black fellow on the task team46 turned around to me as a white guy and said you deal with racism, reconciliation, and healing. The black fellows as you most probably read, they are sick and tired of white guys saying, “listen what must we do about race.” The black fellows are now turning around and saying, “listen stop asking us to solve your problem. You go sort yourself out.” That’s why you come here with this programme “whites need to talk to whites and say, “listen boet47 you’ve got it all wrong, you’ve got it horribly wrong.” So now all worried about how we must put, must I put it in a nice way so you don’t get upset and that’s quite difficult by not calling a spade a spade. They haven’t got a clue. So they don’t share an understanding of history. So black and white people can’t, even talk to each other yet, because they going to argue about the past, about the land, about what happened. Was it

46 A TCN task team dealing with reconciliation.
47 And Afrikaans slang word, loosely translated means brother or friend
taken away or you didn’t have the land because you were other side the fish river. You haven’t got a clue what you talking about because they got books only written by whites (TJ).

4.4 From the Pastor’s perspective: perceived and actual roles

Clergy may have well informed roles as well as perceived socio-political roles. Some clergy are already actively involved in socio-political life in NMBM, most notably through the TCN.

The Clergy unanimously stated they were inspired by God and the Bible to construct the rationale for their socio-political purpose. When queried about the dominance of the ANC in democratic South Africa, and the possible role Clergy played in facilitating this dominance, one interviewee stated that he does not serve any political party but solely God. He has not entered into any political space to serve a political party but as inspired by God:

I’m engaging in this conversation as a theologian, for me, priesthood is a vocation, that’s where I should begin … I take my God given space in the community to live out my vocation to take seriously … my purpose is not to serve any political party, but to serve God (ADT).

Another pastor stated that the involvement in the political process was mandated from God:

He (the pastor) has a mandate from God or her, let’s not call it gendersist [sic]. First of all, to proclaim the gospel, when you proclaim the word, the word proclaims from the Greek word, means herald from the king that means you don’t speak you on behalf, you represent the kingdom of God (PD).

He made use of the general concept of being a herald for God. The herald is primarily centred on preaching the gospel, but it also entails being God’s voice in all aspects of societal life, including the political context.

The term active citizens may be used as an umbrella concept to describe the role clergy perceive and play within the Nelson Mandela Bay as presented in figure 6.
Many of the leading pastors in the NMBM signed the document declaring and promoting the notion of active citizenship. This document provides the official construction of the role of the Clergy in relation to the idea of active citizenship. Firstly, they pinpoint the location in which they will be active, Port Elizabeth. The activity is therefore focused in the local and community context which they serve. Thus, active citizenship is at a community level and cognisant of the
context, as opposed to a national focus. Furthermore, the Clergy encourages the general Christian populace to be actively involved in community building.\textsuperscript{48}

Their inspiration is not drawn from secular ideology, but rather from a Biblical conviction, although active citizenry is a key concept in literature on participatory democracy. Although the Clergy’s inspiration is drawn from the Bible and God, the TCN do apply some of the ‘secular principles’ in their construction of active citizenry. For instance, they state that they ‘will engage city leadership to honour the [electoral] mandate.’ The term ‘engage’ is central. It suggests a participatory tone, but also highlights an obligation on the Clergy to approach elected leaders if the Clergy believe that they are not fulfilling their duty. The phase, ‘labour alongside fellow citizens’ indicate a sense of community and broader inclusion. The TCN does not prefix the term citizen by placing a particular religious label, for example, ‘labour alongside fellow Christian citizens.’ They promote the view that all citizens, regardless of religious affiliation, must work together for the betterment of society.

4.4.1 NMB Church Unity Structure

As seen in figure 7 there are five arms of the TCN, namely South African Council of Churches, Bishop’s Breakfast, Missions and Evangelism, the prayer network and the Nelson Mandela Bay Council of Churches. It is brought together by the Unity task team, while the TCN is its implementing agency.

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{church_structure.png}
\caption{Diagrammatical representation of the Church structure in Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{48} This notion is further unpacked and demonstrated in the ‘community leader and encouraging the church to be engaged in the community’ section.
These various bodies that conduct a number of united projects in the Nelson Mandela Bay, focusing on socio-economic empowerment, relationship building with Churches and Clergy and the relationship with government, empowering and encouraging its congregants to get involved in community projects, and community empowerment.

They have named the project, the Nehemiah Vision. The Nehemiah Vision is based on the Biblical narrative in the book of Nehemiah.

According to this narrative, Nehemiah believes he is tasked with rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem after returning from exile (Barker, 2008: 695-714). In a similar manner the TCN, through its various projects, had requested the Church as collective to ‘rebuild the walls’ of the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality. The focus areas are 1) Education and Youth Development 2) Poverty, Inequality and Unemployment 3) Health and Wellness 4) Healing and Reconciliation (ethnicity, sexism and racism) 5) Restoring Values 6) Healing and Reconciliation. Figure 8 reveals the leaders of those of the various focus areas.

Figure 8: Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality Societal Impact Focus Area
4.4.2 Conflict manager, Peacekeeper and Reconciliator: negotiator, mediator and facilitator

“Blessed are the peace makers for they shall be called sons of God” (Matthew 5: 9).

Interviewees cited at least three occasions where they were involved in the conflict management/ peace and unity processes\(^{49}\). This was in addition to other processes noted by the interviewer in the media. For example, Pastor Neville Goldman,\(^{50}\) quoted by Mphande, a leading clergyman, stated the following concerning the factional conflict in the regional ANC, “Each time when two elephants fight it’s the grass that suffers. When there is division within the ruling party, the Church has a role to play and reconcile the affected parties.”

The impact of conflict and lack of service delivery directly impacts on the overall wellbeing of the community. This view forms a key motivation why Clergy engage in mediation work. This aligns with the ‘Unity Pledge for Active Citizenry’ document which stresses holding local government to account through active engagement. Douglas-Henry (2012)\(^{51}\) reveals that Bishop Ka Siboto was nominated to speak on behalf of the Church\(^{52}\) and offered to mediate between former ANC Regional Chairperson Nceba Faku and former Mayor Zanuxolo Wayile to help resolve the political crisis in Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality that brought service delivery and governance to a standstill due to factional infighting in the ANC (see Steyn-Kotze and Ralo, 2014):

“The Church leaders had decided to be proactive about the ANC division in the city. Bishop Ka Siboto was therefore asked to remind the city leaders of their God given duty as stated in Romans 13:1-7. They were told that each one of them has a duty before God, and that in humility before God they are responsible and accountable to the people of the Metro, the rest of the council, and the country, but most of all, to God Almighty. Bishop Ka Siboto delivered the challenge, and also shared that the situation in the metro was completely unacceptable.

In this particular example, Clergy forms part of a neutral third party to seek to resolve a conflict that had a negative impact on the wellbeing of the community. One interviewee gave another example to demonstrate the notion that peacekeeping as a God given mandate:

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\(^{49}\) This was between the ANC regional leadership and the mayor’s office during the Wayile Administration community protests and the provincial education department when parents closed down schools due to teacher shortages, and the higher education crisis and the Fees Must Fall protest at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU).

\(^{50}\) Neville Goldman is also a member of the TCN

\(^{51}\) Patrick Douglas-Henry is a regional leader of the Apostolic Faith Mission and also forms part of the Transformation Christian Network in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality

\(^{52}\) Various church bodies in leaders in the NMBM nominated him to speak.
Earlier this year where we had a situation. I would call it a hot meeting in the Northern areas where violence was about to break out and the parents were furious with the government, education department not doing its service delivery and they want to burn down some schools. Some people were obviously taking advantage of that context, for their own political things before the elections and Bishop (anon.) – stood up and he said listen we (clergy) already have a process in place, we are already engaging in this matter, we are doing what we need to do and anything you still want to say we can say but we not going to do it the wrong way at which point somebody confronted him and asked “who are you” and he said I’m (anon.), and they asked him and ‘who gave you a mandate’- and he just said “God did” and they couldn’t argue with that and it’s on that basis we stand, that we do have a mandate (PD).

In both these examples emphasis falls on the community. In other words, if conflict in any way affects the local community, the Clergy and, specifically the TCN, seeks to actively get involved in the peacekeeping process. This too, is in line with the ‘Unity Pledge for Active Citizenry’ which emphasizes the importance of the community vis-à-vis their wellbeing.

This also shows that the Church is revered in the community. This may be as one interviewee suggested that, most South Africans still prescribe to Christian beliefs and values:

Fortunately, we still have the situation where most of the people, are still church bound. Although the percentage is dropping at the moment. I believe that there is a reasonable percentage of people that are connect to the Church (ND).

One may also argue that Church commands a moral higher ground and, hence, may find it easier to facilitate negotiation and mediation between hostile parties. It is also interesting to note that Clergy demand traditional authority, to use the Weberian (1919) construction of authority. Traditional authority rests on an established belief that leaders have a traditional and legitimate right to exercise authority, where different traditional circumstances enable and legitimise those in command to exercise authority (Webber, 1919). The traditional authority is prominent in patrimonial systems e.g. patriarchal and feudalistic systems and societies. However, the systems are dependent upon the followers' acceptance of this authority, and that the followers see this type of authority as legitimate. It also encompasses elements of a divine right to rule, albeit, this is associated with monarchies. In the case of the Clergy, however, by the mandate of God, Clergy is able to get involved in mediation and reconciliatory processes.

There are several other examples where the Church and Clergy’s authority is respected. Local government on several occasions requested the Church to get involved in socio-political issues, most notably issues of gangsterism in Port Elizabeth’s Northern Areas (a traditional ‘coloured’ community) (see Viljoen, 2013). The NMMU also requested Clergy to assist in the mediation
process with regard to the 2016 Fees Must Fall protest (Chutu 2016), and at a mass meeting, members of the Clergy acted as facilitators.

The Bishop Breakfast53 Minutes dated, 31 August 2016 shows a leading Clergy had been meeting with the two leading political parties to discuss cooperation for the fulfilment of the Nehemiah Vision. The extract below is from minutes of the meeting:

Neville Goldman to set up formal meetings with both ANC and DA leadership to discussion our Nehemiah Vision and how we can all work together. Neville would request meetings with political leaders during week of 26 to 30/9/2016.

In this particular context, there is not an actual conflict between two opposing groups, but rather the Clergy taking active steps to secure cooperation and facilitate support for a programme of action for the betterment of the community.

4.4.3 The community leader and encouraging the Church to be engaged in the community

Every Church forms part of a community. One pastor notes, “when I speak of the church I speak of the community (ND)”. In other words, one cannot divorce the community from the Church and visa versa. The notion behind being a community leader manifests in various forms, including as spokesperson, activist, and mobilising congregants to become involved in the political process. Clergypersons unanimously agreed that the Church and Clergy must form part community engagement, involved in societal upliftment as part of their role in political life. One pastor notes,

Just to deal with the needs and to make a difference in our community. My role would be to, I want to practice what I preach - social justice issues, like education, going in to the community that are less fortunate, starting up projects where we can assist schools with literacy - kids that struggle to read and write, source teachers to help kids, also skills development, embarking on skills development - helping those who are maybe struggling to find employment and HIV/ AIDS is also an issue and we are blessed in our congregation that there are people that have their own NPO’s that they have started addressing inequalities (HO).

In the same manner, the TCN reaffirms that Church and the Clergy strategy in community upliftment include skills development and employment for youth. The Unity Pledge for Active Citizenry commits Clergy to be involved in the community.

53 The Bishop’s Breakfast is linked with the TCN and the form part of the Unity Task team as demonstrated in Appendix A.
Conversely, Clergy believe that they should not only focus on ‘spiritual matters.’ Most concluded that being active in the community is an essential component to ‘spiritual matters.’ In other words, community involvement is spiritual and a mandate from God. One pastor states, “you know spiritual upliftment, is not only teaching people about the bible, and scriptures and all that. It has to do with, it’s a holistic thing” (ND). Another affirmed the belief by stating the following,

We see this from the desired mandate of God because of Isaiah 61, Luke 4, ‘the spirit of the Lord is upon me to free the oppressed, to heal the broken hearted’, that is part of the Christian mandate that Jesus had so we have to do that, so whatever we for the least to these my brothers, that dimension yes.

Clergy voiced the concerns around government failures, but most notably, being actively involved in when governments failed in political life. Clergy in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, in open letter signed by Arch-Deacon Zweli Tom on behalf of the several Church leaders, noted,

Additional to issues you have raised in your correspondence to us, we would like to discuss with you further synergistic relations that this Municipality can forge with the Church and a joint programmatic focus we can generate. In essence we would like to provide space and platform for the Church to fundamentally re-assert its role in society. We are of a very firm view that the Church can help champion many issues where Government is in dire need of social partners (Viljoen, 2013)

Another leader gave an example of how they acted as spokesperson,

we said to the department of education, we still saying to the department of education what you doing is not acceptable the church is going to change this. We going to have a huge summit in the next six weeks in the city. Brining everybody together (ND).

Another interviewee also revealed how they were able to influence the Department of Education in the province, “the clergy in this area, had a meeting with people from Bisho, to put up temporary structures for Jubilee Park, school is falling apart” (RA).

A statement by the TCN also demonstrates how they are acting in capacity of community spokesperson. It was made in relation to the perceived negative effect that political instability had on the community (Transformation Christian Network as quoted by Mphanedi, 2012)

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54 Tom is the secretary of the secretary of the SA Council of Churches (Viljoen, 2013)
We the Church leaders are deeply aware of our own need for the grace of God. We call upon each of you to resolve the crisis in which this city finds itself. This crisis is affecting the poor and helpless people of the city and thus we have to speak out to address this matter. Our Clergy have had to intervene to deal with extremely angry communities, and we cannot remain silent while we know the root causes are corruption and division (Transformation Church Network as quoted by Mphande, 2012).

The Nehemiah Vision plays a critical role regarding the empowering of congregants i.e. the Church as a collective to become active in community upliftment. A leader of the Nehemiah Vision pointed out that one of the objectives are as follows, “appoint church coordinators for each municipal ward to liaise with Municipal Ward Councilor. Encourage churches to appoint people to promote participation in all domains i.e. education, health, prayer etc. refer Nehemiah pamphlet” (TJ). This resembles the strategies employed by Latin American clergy in the mid-twentieth century in the liberation theology tradition. Christian leaders in this sense need to play the role of the vanguard of societal interests. In this theological tradition, the people must pursue their economic emancipation, and the Clergy act as the empowerer of the people through spiritual guidance and community involvement. Like liberation theologians, clergy in the Nehemiah Vision are to encourage and power the Church to speak up and represent their community. One TCN leader revealed the following concerning the ward system employed by the Nehemiah Vision

We (TCN) went on to a socio-political analysis on every ward in the city done by a sociologist, he’d come to the pastors and say, right these are all the wards in the city. Here’s the socio-economic analysis of ward 1, what does that say? How many people stay there, whose got matric, who’s got a university degree, how many toilets, how much this how much that. So the Church was able to say that this how your ward actually looks like mister municipal councillor and that’s all part of the IDP - integrated development plan. So now you can understand where we took this Church. We built up this body of expertise, so when the guy says we need this and we need that. Sorry I’ve got a copy of the socio-economic profile of this thing by Stats South Africa. You telling me this is what your people need. People need toilets, people need this people need that, people need electricity, people need water (TJ).

The TCN educated the Church and their leaders specifically on the conditions of the community. One interviewee also revealed that the newly elected ward councillors of the 2016 Local Government Elections would be invited to have breakfast with TCN ward representatives. It coincides with the notion of active citizenry and the ideals the TCN aspires

55 See chapter two, Liberation theology: the role of clergy in the political process.
too. The following open letter sent to former mayor Danny Jordaan reaffirmed the Clergy’s position on promoting active citizenry. The open letter was signed by influential clergy in the NMBM,

As both citizens and as the Church, we have remained on the sidelines for too long while our elected leaders lost their way. Our call to our congregants is to become active citizens – to do what is within their means to bring peace and development to our homes (Transformation Christian Network, 2014).

Many of the Clergy in the interviews expressed their support for the idea that Clergy should encourage their congregants to assist in community empowerment programmes. One pastor stated, “a motivation of taking up good citizenship. To talk to large communities of people, to be able to encourage them to participate in civil society” (GG). Another pastor noted, “however, my role as a leader is to sensitize people to bring about social justice, in the NMB area and to address inequalities but to reach the people” (HO).

The reemergence for active involvement in political life was due a perceived decline of service of delivery as a result of factional battles within the ANC in NMBM. This emerged when Clergy were asked why they believed the Church was silent for long period in democratic South Africa, but seemed to become political active only recently again.

4.4.4 Watchdog Role of the Clergy

Watchdogs are integral components of any well-functioning democracy as it holds governments accountable and advocate for openness and transparency (Corruption Watch, 2016). In the South African context there are a number of state and non-governmental watchdog agencies. This includes the Office of the Public Protector and Corruption Watch, among others. Phil Rabinowitz (2014) defines the role of the watchdog as follows,

A watchdog is an individual or group (generally non-profit) that keeps an eye on a particular entity or a particular element of community concern, and warns members of the community when potential or actual problems arise. Watchdogs may be concerned with anything from the actions of a single individual to the policies of several national governments. They may monitor one issue or many; their concerns may be local or global...or both.

56 Bishop Lunga ka Siboto, Bishop Behelem Nopece, Pastor Neville Goldman, Reverend Danie Mouton, Archdeacon Zweli Tom, Pastor Patrick Douglas-Henry, Pastor Mvusi Gwam- all these leaders form part of the Bishop’s Breakfast
Pastors were asked to reflect on the following questions. What is your philosophy of activism? What or whom are they watching? What are their concerns? What are the issues they are concerned about? Who are they representing?

One pastor notes,

I *somma*[^57] tell the mayor I’m not here to open up a meeting and open it up a prayer, I’m here to determine if the integrated plan works, if your budget speaks to that plan. If is going to be implemented and if it is being implemented and who are the people that are going to implement it” (NG).

In other words, he does not only perceive his role as a ceremonial one where he prays for Council. He continues, stating that local government leadership at one particular period tried to neutralise them by grouping them up in the ‘moral regeneration role’ or the ceremonial role.

If it comes to Church, they should actually just be here to deal with moral regeneration. That is there job in government, they should never be speaking about the housing, people speaking about stealing, about people lying (…)” (NG).

Another interviewee concurred, but clarified, stating that Nceba Faku’s administration was less sympathetic towards them as opposed to the other administrations,

Oh yes- sorry- you should have said ‘Oom Ben.’ (former NMBM mayor Ben Fihla) this was, it started in Mayor Faku. He would acknowledge the Church, but he would not really believe in the power of the Church. He felt that the Church should pray and burry people and then go home, open the Council meeting and then leave to get on with the business (Former mayor) Wayile was very sympathetic - you see every Tuesday at 8 o-clock, the Church prayed at the mayor. So, when you get a guy like Wayile he prayed. Faku wouldn’t pray. The next came up the deputy Oom Ben and them, Now Athol Trollip has arrived in the city I believe. Now people go and pray for him (TJ).

The context to the discussions was the perceived silence by the Clergy and the re-emergence of their activism recently. There are two important aspects that stand out. First, Nceba Faku’s administration believed that the Church and Clergy should only focus on ‘spiritual matters’ like praying. The Clergy (especially from the TCN), however, believed that their political role goes beyond ‘spiritual matters’. Clergy may also argue that role is not merely as pastors but as

[^57]: Colloquial term
members of civil society. One interviewee alluded to the fact they played a leading role in the CSC in the NMBM. This coalition was also able to influence Mr Zuma’s and the ANC decision to disband the regional leadership and deploy Danny Jordan as Mayor. Note the statement of a member from CSC, who also represents TCN: “got instance, if you look at their corporate governance and stuff like corruption. We were very instrumental with the civil society coalition playing a key role in that getting Danny Jordan here as an administrator (TJ).”

Who do clergy represent? One may make the immediate assumption that clergy represent their Church or afflicted Church bodies such as the TCN or SACC. Clergy believe that they represent the community by virtue of the Church being part of the community. One pastor noted, “When I speak of the church I speak of the community.” (ND) Similarly, another interviewee stated, “The role that the church even today seen themselves as doing of serving the community, not of ruling and bossing the politicians around because Jesus said we have to be servants so the idea is we already serving people.” In this statement the Clergy respects the principle of separation of powers but will get involved (as a collective).

Their philosophy is based on representing God. One pastor alluded to the fact that although they represented the community, the call fundamentally came from God,

But I wouldn’t say respond to a community but rather from a call of God to love the community that we find ourselves in. (PD)” He continued, “We see this from the desired mandate of God because of Isaiah 61, Luke 4, “the spirit of the Lord is upon me to free the oppressed, to heal the broken hearted,” that is part of the Christian mandate that Jesus had so we have to do that, so whatever we for the least to these my brothers, that dimension yes (PD).

Their concerns are primarily vested in two areas, service delivery and local government corruption. Clergy were more concerned with the local government matters as opposed to national government: “You know service delivery is important, fix the streets, build houses etc. and I feel that’s important aspect of leadership is serving” (HO). When asked about the role of the Clergy in political life, one interviewee stated,

I think important for the Church to take up a role up in every ward, the ward system in our country is the part of the big of the whole that makes the whole come together that would mean that if Church is to play an integral role going forward because it doesn’t matter who is in government really. It’s about what happens to the quality of life of that child in that ward. So, instead of thinking about the whole city, we thinking about how many wards are there and what is the percentage of those wards we can really say are prioritized as poverty wards. (ND)

Clergy also see themselves as playing an active role in dealing with corruption through the NMBM Civil Society Coalition (CSC).
The Nelson Mandela Bay Civil Society Coalition\(^{58}\) where we played a major role and we still the key players. All the businessmen are nervous now. They looking to the Church you see - (...) will be able to say. Here is the eight important things electricity, water infrastructure, moral, HR (human resources) what kind of stuff you have in the municipality and then corruption, they give tough ones like HR and corruption to the Church because they to ‘bang’ (scared) to handle it. Because they know the Church is not frightened to handle those things. (TJ)

Generally, Clergy perceived their main focus to be on the local government context, however, in terms of broader societal issues like racism and corruption, the focus would also then fall on the national government. Some members of the TCN also stated that they are educating themselves on the technicalities of local government processes and issues.

### 4.4.5 The Prophetic Voice

The term, prophetic voice has a number of manifestations, but may be equated in secular terminology as to the moral voice and in certain cases, the advisor. One pastor explains the prophetic voice in this manner, “prophecy in the language of Jesus, is to constantly read the signs of the time and discern your role in each moment” (ADT). The role of the prophet is contextual and Clergy may perform this role when needed. One pastor alluded to the fact that the Church often had to redefine itself in the various eras of South Africa, from being the freedom fighter to the peacemaker during the TRC and a renewed role as a political activist.

Another clergyman suggests that prophet/prophetic voice has the ability to read the current situation and predict the future path. He notes, “the Church has a role to see, from the information we get in, if this is not addressed in an appropriate way, how is this going to turn out in 2030” (NA). This idea is derived from the Hebrew word, ‘hozeh’ which means to see or seer (Mclain, 1985:37). In the biblical text, Joseph played the role of the seer to those governing by interpreting Pharaoh’s dreams. He also advised Pharaoh. In practical terms one pastor argues that the Church is powerful pulse reader of the community. Leaders are intimately aware of community needs because they are at the proverbial frontlines,

People on the ground are telling politicians you are not on the ground enough and we see it, we (the clergy) see what’s on the ground you need to take note. We are on the ground helping people that have problems when we add all those things together we paint a very good picture of what’s taking place. It would serve any local government well to find out from its local Churches what they are encountering in their counselling rooms, in their prayer lines in their mercy requests…

\(^{58}\) The Church here plays a role as an active civil society member through active engagement. In this sense, the Church sees itself as part of society, and not an entity removed from society.
Thus, the Church, through understanding the community’s condition, is able to guide and advise government on community issues. Another leader explains, that every government wants the Church to be the prophetic voice. He cited the DRC vis-à-vis the National Party as example. However, he lamented the Church should not be a prophet to government, but rather a prophet representing God. The leader explains the difference as follows,

But we know from the Bible each ruling party, like the National Party with the DRC as it was the case of the ANC and it’s still the case after 1994 would love to have its prophet, but the wisdom for the clergypersons to reframe to be the prophets of any political party but be the prophets of God. (ADT)

In the biblical text, most notably the Old Testament, the monarch and Israel had a prophet in the form of a prophetic voice assigned to them. The term prophet derives from of the three Hebrew words, *navi* (McLain, 1985: 36). McLain further states that the term *navi* also means spokesperson and speaker. On whose behalf is he/she speaking? The interviewee holds a strong conviction that, ‘the prophet’ speaks on behalf of God. She/he is God’s spokesperson. Complin (1972: 20) confirms that the prophet is "a speaker, a mouthpiece or a spokesman for a superior ... a speaker who declared the word that God revealed to him.” In this particular context, the clergyperson is the spokesperson of God to government. Moses vis-à-vis Pharaoh is a Biblical example of a prophet being God’s spokesperson to a government (see Bible, Exodus). According to the Biblical Narrative God calls Moses to express his demands to Pharaoh, to free Israel’s people whom he had enslaved (Exodus). In the same manner, the interviewee points out that the role of the prophet is not to be spokesperson for government, but for God.

The Church and Clergy must be as independent from the state or a political party as noted by the interviewee. It is suggested that one of the reasons that ruling parties want Churches to act as prophets is to legitimise government action. In the Bible prophets who did not prophesy positively were often executed by leaders or perished in a mob killing. In some instances, leaders would contract prophets to prophesy favourably for the king. In these instances, the prophets did not have to directly legitimise the regime, but had to have a positive declaration from God. In a similar manner, the modern day prophet to government has to speak positively about government as though God is speaking positively of government. The gospels record

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59 See the section on the non-partisan approach of the Church. In that section the clergy clearly states that they will not act as a mouthpiece for any political party. Likewise, the pastor in the above text warns Church’s and Cergy not be ‘prophets of the state’

60 See non-partisan approach section.
Jesus alluding to this phenomenon, “and you say, ‘if we had lived in the days of our forefathers, we shedding the blood of the prophets’… Therefore, I am sending you prophets and wise men and teachers. Some of them you will kill and crucify…” (Matthew 23: 30 – 34).

Thus, one interviewee noted, “if you get into bed with government you lose your prophetic edge” (NG). The prophetic edge may be understood as follows, “if you stand up for a particular standard, if you violate that standard just by a compromise you have lost the power to speak into the particular quality management system” (NG). According to this perspective if one is in alliance with a political party, your neutral voice has been compromised which may result in the tainting your voice.

4.4.6 Pastor as Intercessor

The intercessor forms part of the more ‘spiritual’ aspects of the role of Clergy. This may also be seen as an extension of the prophetic role (Complin, 1972:38) In NMBM, the TCN plays an imperative role in leading prayer meetings or intercessory meetings for the local administration. The two main activities are the ‘Bishop’s prayer meeting and the praying at the mayor’s office. One clergyperson explains how the function of the Bishop’s prayer meeting,

In 2002 we started what is today called the Bishop’s prayer meeting with seven leaders… then we formed this and we meeting and we are still meeting every second Thursday of the month. That is where we look at the city as the voice is geared into the governance of the city and of course we are praying blessing over the city (BB).

The prayer meeting takes place every Tuesday morning at the mayor’s office. Members who participate indicate that all the mayors have been receptive to it.

Clergy are often called to open prayer proceedings at government events such as the opening of the Council. It extends to political parties as well, and some have also requested the Church and Clergy to pray at political party events.

This indicates that political actors have regard for religion in the South African society. One does not know how and why prayer and intersession has been requested. It may be purely as a ceremonial act, as a sign of respect for the religious institution or because those requesting it to believe in the power of prayer. This confirms that South African society in not completely secularised.

4.4.4.7 The Clergy as the Moral Compass

Clergy and the Church have often been given the ceremonial task of providing the moral compass and by extension the moral voice. One Clergyperson stated, “they fear the Church
because the Church is their conscious, because they are looting in the government” (BB). The statement was made in relation to president Zuma and ANC chairperson, Baleka Mbete who stated that Church must adhere to ‘pastoral’ aspects and leave government to complete their business (Msimang 2015).

The Clergyperson’s assertion reveals the perceived relationship with the ANC. For him, the Church provides the moral voice *vis-à-vis* its conscience. The conscience, in this regard is related to ethical leadership or lack of ethical leadership displayed by governing officials. For the clergyperson, issues such as corruption and by extension mal-administration is the focus as opposed to a religious centred notions of morality.

The Clergyperson suggests, the ANC’s moral voice is founded within a Christian religious context. As will be demonstrated in chapter five, the Chaplain General’s office in the ANC ascertains that its role comprises of providing a revolutionary moral conscience for the party (Mehana, 2013).

‘Conscience’ or moral conscience is a contested concept, often defined according to ideological, philosophical and religious perspectives (Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy: 2016). The underlying manifestation of conscience relates to a particular moral outlook. Similarly, morality and what constitutes morality is also a contested term. Strohm (2011: 120) highlights that

> conscience has what might be called an “identity problem” that it possesses no fixed or inherited content of its own, and that it can be hailed and mobilized in defence of one position or equally in defence of its rival.

Within the conservative tradition it may be morally erroneous to perform an abortion, but in a liberal tradition, it would be morally inconceivable to deny a woman the right to choose to have an abortion. Lesnick (2010: 31) differentiates between religious and liberation determination of morality: “Taken together, the assertion is that religiously grounded morality rests on the firm foundation, but philosophically grounded secular morality cannot.” The Bible is the foundation of morality for the Clergy and the Church. In a context of secularity within the realm of the state, however, liberal values inform morality. Consider the following: Biblical text provides a moral standard on individual sexuality whereas for liberals, sexuality is an individual choice.

In the interviews ‘preferential moral issues’ were not discussed and were not brought up by Clergy, however morality is a conversation at national level and facilitated by the SACC. The SACC commented on the then Civil Union’s Bill of 2004. Homosexual marriage was included.
in the Bill. The SACC did not reject it outright, but stated that it was a constitutional imperative, (South African Council of Churches, 2006).\textsuperscript{61}

It is important to remember that although the church uses the bible as its philosophical underpinning there are various viewpoints in certain moral issues. For instance, the idea that homo-sexuality is a sin has become a contested matter in church theological debates.

In the Nelson Mandela Bay clergy have opted to whether purposefully or not- the data does not suggest either- to focus on ethical governance. In other words, clergy had become watchdogs.

4.5 Other themes

A number of other themes also emerged in the interviews. These include unity, non-partisanship, education and health, and racism.

4.5.1 Unity

Clerical unity in relation to a political role is manifest on two levels: engaging and responding to government, thus at an institutional level, and racism at a socio-political level. In constructing the role of the Clergy in facilitating unity, the TCN (quoted by Viljoen, 2013) emphasises unity for peace:

\begin{quote}
The desire of the Church for the Bay is peace and stability – Jeremiah 29 verses 7\textsuperscript{62} we want to see NMB flourish as the Gateway City to Africa. As the people of God, we need to come in the opposite spirit – a true spirit of unity – and pray for peace and a solution to this crisis.
\end{quote}

Activities in advancing peace through unity included prayer meetings, petitions to government, and constant engagement between leadership through forums like the ‘Bishops Breakfast.’

The TCN members felt that unity among the Churches was not adequately expressed at a ground level: “as far as the leaders no. However, you might have people in Churches who hasn’t crossed those [racial] barriers” (PD).

Another interviewee suggested that the Nehemiah Vision was established out of a need to unite Church leaders for a common cause conceptualised as ‘rebuilding the walls of the city.’ He highlights that,

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{61} See Chapter 3
\textsuperscript{62} “Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper ” (Barker, 2008:1182)
We had to address the silence of 1994, the division of churches building their own kingdoms and the plight of the people in the Nelson Mandela Bay. So we sat down and said guys, the clergymen who became active, we understand the scenarios (NG).

The availability of resources is a major factor that contributes to racial disunity. One participant highlighted,

So what happened is we hit bit of a hiccup in that the black fellows in the Church started saying “no it’s like you doing your thing and you have got all the resources and you’ve got all the background and you’ve got all the where with all do these things and you continue to lead the process” and we haven’t got the resources and we still such an imbalanced society and whites are still doing their thing and blacks are still feeling like they feeling (TJ).

This demonstrates that racialised inequality also permeates into the unity within the Church. ‘White privilege’ seems to reinforce informal hierarchies where black leaders feel a sense of undermining within their broader due to a lack of resources The notion of white privilege, one may argue is a construct of a South African structural racial problem. One pastor highlighted,

Yes: And there’s still a perception from different race groups that they regard themselves more esteemed then others as if they in a higher class, despite the fact that you will have your fraternal, despite the fact that you have your gatherings you can still pick it up that there’s is still a hierarchy. They think they are better and so on(ND).

This interviewee expressed that issue of white supremacy is still felt, but added that there was also a ‘black African’ supremacy because of the perceived close relation to a black government. He notes,

Although when you look at it from another perspective, you will also find that, I’m not referring to colour but you will also feel that people you feel that their people are in government there also have that hierarchy. Unfortunately for some races they’ll always find themselves in between, that’s the unfortunate situation, that’s because of numbers. Obviously the race with the highest numbers I would say a firmer role in convincing the government to listen to them (ND).

Apartheid institutionalised racism and white supremacy at a societal and economic level, which is reflected in the patterns of racialised poverty and inequality. Therefore, these patterns of racialised inequality may also permeate into the Clergy perceptions with regard to access to resources, creating the idea that access to resources are easier for the “white Church” in white communities as opposed to the “black Church” in black communities. DeCuir and Dixon (2004: 36) in reflecting on race in the United states of America presents an argument for what they
construct as “a realist view [which] requires realising the dominant role that racism has played and continues to play in American society, this can be both conscious and an unconscious act.” One may thus find the continued unconscious construction of race and its various realities in the South African post-apartheid context. Biko (2012) addressed this issue in his letter to black Clergy. He encouraged them to take leadership roles within their denominations partly because they are the majority, but also to break down racial inferiority the apartheid state sought to establish in legitimising white rule.

Racial barriers also impact the ability of the Church to address the government in once voice. One interviewee stated, “I would say, from my point of view that division, although people don’t try to make it so obvious.... division is still there” (ND). As a generalisation those who did not believe that there was a united voice did not form part of the Transformation Christian Network.

4.5.2 Non-partisan approach

Leaders agreed that it is of utmost importance for Clergy and the Church to remain non-partisan. Clergy bemoaned the fact that Dutch Reformed Church was “captured” by the apartheid state. For them, it set a bad precedent on the Church can be absorbed and manipulated when in coalition in the with the state. One leader specially made mention of the idea that the DRC was a state church, explaining “if a Church aligns itself with to any political party, it becomes the state Church. And, therefore, we cannot align ourselves because that was the problem in the previous regime.”

One interviewee stressed that due to the role of the DRC during the apartheid years, the Church in post-apartheid South Africa must maintain political neutrality through not openly supporting any political parties. There are, however, questions related to whether or not the ANC’s dominance is partly related to the Church’s endorsement, but this view assumes that some within the Church has indeed openly endorsed the ANC:

I think there is a different kind of influence in the post-apartheid than what we experienced previously. And the reason why I say that, the apartheid era government drew, philosophical, theological, ideological inspiration from the interpretation of the Bible as given by the Dutch Reformed Church at the time and so it justified itself religiously…We don’t really have that case in the post-apartheid era. In other words, no political party accept the specifically religious parties like the ACDP63 are looking to the Church for a direction on ideology, theology even philosophy and humanities. We are not being sort out to justify or depend a position, nobody is saying explain BEE from a Biblical point of view… (GG)

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63 African Christian Democratic Party
The Transformation Christian Network (2014) in an open letter to the local explained their neutrality.

As the Church we will not be hijacked by any political party. We will not support any action leading to the loss of life or destruction of property. We support the idea that our people have the power to change their situation through the ballot box. The balance of power given by the majority needs to move leaders towards serving the people instead of ruling the people. We will discourage our people from supporting a corrupt system.

Firstly, the network clearly stipulates its neutrality with regard to political party support. The letter stresses the centrality of adhering to fundamental democratic principles like exercising political choice through the vote. But, the Church as a whole remains a politically non-aligned entity. Thus, the TCN leaders indirectly encourages its people to participate politically, thus building on the idea of active citizenship the TCN advocates. Malone (2011:73) concedes that civil society performs an important task in creating and sustaining a democratic culture. The TCN thus seem to support democratic consolidation through advocating for active citizenry that participates politically, not just in elections, but in broader political life.

Nationally the Church's support for the ANC has decreased. For example, in 2014 the Methodist Church removed pastors from serving as chaplains in the ANC (Qaanitah and Mmanaledi 2014). The South African Council of Churches (SACC) have several times requested the President Jacob Zuma to step down from his position (Quinta 2016). Acting General Secretary of SACC noted that the relationship with the ANC was always “critical solidarity” (Quinta 2016). In other words, while there may be support for democratic principles the ANC may advocate, there cannot be blind endorsement. Importantly, however, support for democratic principles will not translate into openly campaigning for a specific political party. SACC, as an organisation, had a close relationship with ANC during the liberation struggle in opposing the apartheid regime. Their current vice-president whom also served as general secretary, Frank Chikane, also worked as a Director-General in the Mbeki presidency.

One interviewee explained that to be non-partisan the Church need to approach the government officials, and not party leaders:

If you say, for example, this is the government, you see I don’t see a DA mayor neither an ANC mayor, I see the mayor of the city, the head of the city. So I go to him, but a lot of people misunderstand it. So people misunderstand it, they think you go to align yourself, is this Church ANC; is this Church DA? No it is none of that because the Church has to respect authority’s levels and if you don’t influence them how are we going to basically change the environment for our

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64 This is discussed further in chapter five.
65 This would include an entity like the TCN as a civil society actor.
people. Like I said to the new mayor, I said to him we going to be here all the time. I said to him we’ll be here every time we have a mayor we not just going to go away You see the day you get in bed with government is the day you lose your prophetic edge. So we try to say okay can the South African Council of Churches (NG).

Another interviewee flagged that pastors are able to influence their congregants to vote in a particular way given the position of moral authority they hold:

As the Church we play a pivotal role in the outcome of any election. And people in the Church will more easily incline with their leader, what perhaps he is advocating so people will listen to their leader, although leaders should not never, I would never proclaim to be a member of a political party (ND).

Clergymen also believed that it was important for pastors to remain non-partisan because their congregants have different political views and ideologies. One pastor notes, “we’ve been coached to be a-political, not to be to political, to be sensitive to people’s different backgrounds’ etc.” (HO).

One interviewee conceded that there was good relationship with the ANC pre-1994 by virtue of the combined role of SACC and the ANC in the liberation struggle. With the dawn of democracy in South Africa in 1994, however, the Church reverted to a non-partisan position:

Most Clergy, especially Black Clergy, aligned themselves to the ANC during the struggle, and especially during the time of United Democratic Front, with the ANC, as a liberation movement, and, of course, the United Democratic Front was a particular wing of the ANC in the struggle beyond the borders but it was ANC, so to say within the borders of South Africa. Yes, because talking about myself and other Clergy… we did align ourselves but low and behold during the time of Archi-Bishop Desmond Tutu we were told to return the cards [the membership cards]. Of course, ever since then my attitude changed so far as political parties were concerned. So yes, Clergy and the Church generally and particularly the SACC, because of the struggle then everyone aligned themselves with the struggle and therefore then TRC which was led by clergy in the person of Desmond Tutu, Alex Borane, then we aligned ourselves. But also then in the current moment, No! Because, I believe the Church is busy beginning to redefine herself, the what is our prophetic role (BB).

One pastor suggests that the partisan approach may further entrench division within the Church as it may create an impression that they are being used in same manner that the DRC was used by the NP.
However, the Church has continued to try stay neutral potentially, because we are very committed because we are not going to be captured by anybody especially like we were in the past where we polarized where these guy (PD).

One interviewee suggests that the Church provides an excellent platform for people from different political persuasions to address issues through a united and community voice. He explains,

I think in the environment of perception, that politics is corrupt, local communities are not sure how to collate itself big enough to be able to make or lodge an objection of make some protests. You can do it through a political party, but, of course, that alone is toxic. So in the sense that I may want to support several political parties on a particular issue, we all want to stand together on a particular issue and make our voices heard. The Church creates a safe place for people of many political parties to stand together on a particular issue. For example, when you talk about types of corruption, or you talk about the teacher dilemma… It’s something that everybody can share a frustration about and you don’t have to make political party voice heard, you can do it as a community (GG).

4.5.3 Education and Health

Education and health are critical for societal wellbeing and development. Several interviewees stressed education and health as well. The Clergy engages local and provincial government in dealing with education and health challenges that negatively affect the community. One interviewee praised Neville Goldman’s role in dealing with the education crisis in the NMMB. He notes, “Neville Goldman is a fantastic example, He rallied not only on certain issues, but he rallied significant support on teaching and teachers, the need for teachers in classrooms, particularly in the Northern Areas” (GG). Goldman and other clergymen were invited by the Northern Areas Education Forum (NAEF) to form part of and lead a task team to pressurise the Premier of the Easter Province to employ additional teachers in Port Elizabeth’s Northern Areas (Viljoen 2016). Indeed, a few interviewees noted,

What are the issues? The issue is education. If we don’t solve education there is no future. From where I am to the poorest of the poor. There’s going to be no future for us. So we started saying, we are no longer accepting the status quo. We went to the Department of Education. We are not accepting what’s happening. What happened was the premier of the province came and he formed a committee that’s still in the mayor’s office with Danny.66 So we said to the Department of Education, we still saying to the Department of Education what you doing is not acceptable. The

66 Danny Jordaan, former mayor of the NMBM
Church is going to change this. We are going to have a huge summit in the next six weeks in the city. Bringing everybody together (TJ).

I feel that education is the problem here…I feel the Church can assist in education, can assist in addressing educational issues. And I think that is where our government, if we really honest about it there’s two areas where our government has failed terribly education and health. Those are the two areas. I feel education is at the top of the list and I think we want instant success we must go speak to these people, let’s be honest. What are the people struggling the most, is it with education? Those kids end up in the street, some kids can’t afford to have school shoes, they end up on the street, they can’t afford to pay their school fees, they end up in the street. There’s no place for them at schools, they end up in the street, there’s not enough teachers, so I say- so yes partially- 75% it is the responsibility of our local government here in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality to look after that, sector education, but I feel that as the Church we can indirectly get involved with education and assisting them in the educational setup to enhance our future because it starts in education. Our kids spend most of their lives, the fist twelve years of their lives, not twelve years but eighteen years of their lives in education facilities and that’s where impact them and that’s where we build a nation. So I feel, we need to get to the root causes not deal with fruit causes of what’s happening (HO).

Here we see Clergy setting out to lobby government for more teachers in the Northern Areas, purchasing school uniform and shoes etc. were of primary concern as oppose to actual curriculum formulation and influence. The TCN prioritises health and education is part of its focuses areas. It is here that the Clergy mobilises in order to deal with defects in education and health provision. A leader within the TCN stressed

When it comes to health we are saying we can’t accept that all the health things are just falling down dead. You know the clinics are looking so pathetic and they not being maintained and the government is spending all their money the wrong way, is unacceptable(TJ).

4.5.4 Racism

All interviewees felt that racism remains a major issue. All agreed that racism needs to be addressed and that the Church has a central role to play in breaking down racism. Although, one interview stated,

The Church does not address, for example, racism. That thing is now going to show up big time…Guys, there is another ethnic group that is basically being discriminated against by blacks, coloureds, white called Khio-San people. So, I say, if we don’t address social evils publically, we leave it because we are not so sure if they all agree on it. But that is because why should the Church be involved in government? [Rhetorical question] (PD).
The researcher got a sense during the interviews that the Clergy did not know how to deal with issue and as such, issues of racism simmered. In reflecting on the political role of the Clergy, one interviewee stated:

My role really as a spiritual leader is that everybody would just accept one another no matter where they are and view each other’s as co-heirs with Christ and co-heirs to the kingdom of God. God does not judge them by the outward appearance but by whom they are (HO).

The Clergy, however, have developed strategies to combat racism. The TCN embarked on a project, *Whites speaking to White*. The initiative aims to educate white South Africans about racism and white privilege.

**4.6 Clergy’s understanding of their role in the political process in a secular state**

The interviews provided rich data in evaluating the perceived political role of the clergy within a constitutional democracy. Generally, interviewees understood and respect the role of an elected government and, in most cases did not aspire, to be in government. One clergyperson, however, entertained the possibly of the Church contesting Local Government Elections as a community or civic organisation.

An open letter from the TCN clearly stated they respect the use of the ballot box and democratic principles. The Clergy generally felt that part of their political role was to encourage the congregation to vote, but simultaneously, they did not and could not lobby for any political party. They embraced the idea of active citizenry, thus moving away from the belief that the Church should not get involved in political life.

Pastors were all aware of size of their constituency, and as such, the reach of their influence. Because of this, political parties, notably the ANC, have often approached Churches to close political processes like elections in prayer. Note the observation of the one pastor,

I would say lately the ANC realised the importance of getting the Clergy on board. In my experience, I would say that they realised it a little bit too late. In a sense that just before the Local Government Elections, they called us for several meetings to get input from the Clergy. I had attended a couple of meetings, taking into consideration, what they have to offer for the Church, as the Church has quite a few governmental problems, but they actually called us to get the feeling of the Clergy, what the needs of the community must be and to base there.
Local Clergy were more focused on local political issues that impact their communities as opposed to broader national political issues. The TCN has created a sophisticated strategy to hold ward councillors and local government accountable but scarcely spoke into the national issues. Figure 9 reveals the TCN strategy through the Nehemiah Vision.

Figure 9: Nehemiah Vision and Government Accountability

NEHEMIAH VISION: Roll out Plan

1. Build PRAYER NETWORK in each ward, church, school, business, police station, hospital, health clinic, government department.

2. Appoint CHURCH WARD COORDINATORS for each municipal Ward to liaise with Municipal Ward Councillor. Encourage churches to appoint people to promote participation in all domains i.e. education, health, prayer etc. Refer Nehemiah pamphlet.

3. Establish a MISSIONS & EVANGELISM liaison person in every Ward and local church.

4. Encourage wards and local churches to appoint congregants to become liaison persons in different domains in the NEHEMIAH VISION i.e. education, health, crime, environment, sport etc.

5. Rotate monthly BISHOPS’ BREAKFAST venues to different municipal clusters, invite municipal Ward Councillors, business and government leaders to attend the applicable cluster breakfast. (In order to influence and play a proactive transformative role in the city, Church Leaders must have a visible presence in the city and interact with other city leaders in government, business, education, NGO sector and other civil society on a regular basis).

6. Nehemiah Vision can be seen as MANAGEMENT GRID placed over NM Bay. Linking all the Churches in NM Bay will create a SUPPLY CHAIN to “serve” and bring the hope of the gospel to furthest parts of our city. Unity must be the electricity that keeps the grid afloat (John 17:21).

7. Encourage every Christian in NM Bay to reach out to SERVE others (JUST1HR).

8. The Church UNITY TASK TEAM focus on supporting and motivating all networks in NM Bay.

Clergy cited that local government corruption mobilised their political involvement noting that there was uncertainty with regard to the political role of the Church in post-apartheid South Africa. Furthermore, they also suggested that the Church realised that other socio-political issues were not being addressed with dire consequences for their communities and broader society. This includes issues of racism and inequality. Their role was divinely inspired by God and was rooted in the helping the people. One pastor suggests the true visionaries “…are born when they hear the cry of the people”.

4.7 Concluding remarks

The chapter addressed the perceived role of clergy in the political process. Data was collected in the form of in-depth interviews from eight Christian Clergy, seven of them who were pastors and one leader of the Transformation Christian Network. In addition, news media platforms,
open letters minutes and strategic document of the TCN were consulted to construct the role of the Clergy in a post-apartheid South Africa.

Clergypersons generally believed that they do have a political role to play. They generally understood their role in the context of constitutional democratic state, focusing on local government and their direct community. They believed their role stretched beyond interaction to government, but extended into social ills like poverty alleviation, peace keeping and reconciliation, and combating racism.

Clergy see themselves as conflict manager, watchdog, the prophetic voice, the intercessor, and a moral compass for society. These role overlap at times, and were divinely inspired by God. Pastors all believed that these roles were divinely inspired by God.

According to Clergy, the root for conflict in society was racism, inequality and government corruption. Pastors were often called by governing authorities to assist in peacekeeping and at times took it upon themselves to be the peacekeepers. It must be noted that the Church still has authority and is well respected as an institution.

Pastors perceive their political role as one of the ‘watchdog’. The Clergy focused on local government and was often asked by other organisations to assist in this process, proving once again that it does have authority in South Africa. The prophetic voice aligns the watchdog role. In this sense the act as adviser. Although the term was often used in the interviews no clear and unified understanding of the term was relayed. Pastors noted that they are not the prophets of government but rather the prophet of God. Clergy are often called to pray for government, which can also be seen as a continuation of the prophetic role.

Clergy provide the moral societal compass. Pastors did not venture into personal moral issues such sexuality and abortion, but rather focussed on issues of governance such as good governance, ethical leadership and fulfilling of promises. In this case they also acted as watchdogs.
Chapter 5
The role of the Christian religious leader in the political process: From the perspective of political parties and NMBM

5.1 Introduction

The second objective of this study is to investigate how political parties and government view the role of the Clergy in political life in post-apartheid South Africa. This study focused on the three major parties in South Africa: the African National Congress, the Democratic Alliance, and the Economic Freedom Fighters. These parties were selected on account of their performance at the 2016 local government elections (See Independent Electoral Commission, 2016). These parties also have national prominence as the three largest parties represent in the South African parliament.

Primary and secondary data was gathered in the form of interviews with the EFF and local government’s Religious Unit, and media statements and policy documents. It is important to mention that the term, ‘Christian religious leader’, ‘Church’, ‘Christian’, and ‘religion’ are used as interchangeably by the interviewees.

This chapter first presents an examination of the relationship between political parties and the Church and Clergy. The DA does not have a public relationship with Clergy, and there is no evidence that animosity exists. The ANC has a historical bond with Clergy, especially those who were actively involved in the liberation struggle against the apartheid regime. Currently, the ANC’s relationship with the Clergy seems strained due to perceived corruption and lack of political efficacy in service delivery as evident in the calls for president Zuma to step down by

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67 DA won 46.75 %; ANC: 40.34 and EFF: 5.21% (Independent Electoral Commission, 2016).
68 ANC won 62.15%; DA :22.23 and EFF 6.35% (Independent Electoral Commission, 2016)
various Clergypersons and religious organisations such as the SACC (See SACC, 2016 and Hogg, 2016). The EFF believes that they do not have a strong relationship with Clergy because of its perceived anarchical approach to politics, something that most Clergy do not want to be associated with and because many of the EFF’s constituency base do not frequent Church. The EFF’s representative stated the following.

I think it is what it is at the moment because we so new, because people are still trying to understand what exactly the EFF is about. The media has played a role in that its depicting us in sort of hooligans, we not pro-older people [sic]. So that also plays a role in that we attract more of your youth, your younger generation, which really some of them don’t go to Church. Some of them are involved in other things, not the Church. So that’s where you’ll see that is probably a separation between, our constituency is not actively going to Church, it’s not actively involved in Church (EFFR).

This chapter also explores the ideological and policy viewpoint on the role of religion and Clergy in political life. The greatest difficulty is that there is not an actual document clearly stipulating the envisaged role of Clergy and religion in political life, nor their relationship with the parties. The author will therefore use documents such, the DA’s Value Charter and Vision, the ANC’s policy documents and its National Development Plan, the EFF’s cardinal pillars and their manifestoes to draw out their ideological standpoint and match them with that particular ideologies perspective on the role of Clergy and religion in political life. Indeed, context is important, consequently the author will employ discretion and interpretation within the given party context, remembering that every political party has their unique ideological mix.

The researcher also investigates party statements made by leaders at various local and national events. Lastly, the researcher discusses the municipality’s perception. This reflection also includes a review of Christian political parties, the relevance of them in South Africa and the concept of a pastor-politician; and individuals who serve as both as a clergyperson and politician.

5.2 Profile of the participants

The original intent was to interview representatives of the local leadership of the DA, the ANC and the EFF. Unfortunately, only a representative from EFF was available for a very short interview. To compensate for the unavailability of the other political parties to participate in this study, the author accessed secondary data found in online media database SA media, Press Reader and The Herald (Port Elizabeth).
In securing an interview with the local government on the role of the Clergy in political life, the researcher was referred to the ‘Religious Unit’ of the municipality located in the Office of the Speaker in Council. However, the interview was again very short, and as such, had to be supplemented with secondary data. It must be noted that the individuals who were interviewed did not speak in their own capacity but rather the political organisations and the municipality represented.

5.3 Political parties’ relationship with the Clergy and the church in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality and South Africa

5.3.1 The views of the DA

It has already been stated, that the DA does not have a public relationship with any Clergy or Christian religious leader in the NMBM. The only recorded relationship with the Church is through the office of the mayor, who has called for the city pray for water and have received prayers by members of the TCN (Simpson, 2016).

Nationally, there is also no record of any relationship. There is no evidence to suggest that DA actively campaigned at churches. However, Mmusi Maimane, the Leader of the Democratic Alliance and former campus pastor of Liberty Church was quizzed about how he was able to exercise his duties as a pastor and still uphold the constitution, especially when there are contradicting aspects of between the Christian faith and the Constitution. The most noble contradiction is, of course, homosexuality. Traditionally the Church does not endorse homosexual activity while the Constitution enables full rights regardless of sexual orientation. Maimane noted,

When I was sworn in as a Member of Parliament, I swore before God to uphold and defend the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and the Bill of Rights. In matters of my personal decision making, the Constitution protects my right and the right of millions of other South Africans to hold beliefs based on our respective and varied faiths...that does not negate our right as Christians or Muslims or Buddhists or Jews to believe in a higher law for the conduct of our own lives — so long as we do not attempt to impose those views on others (as quoted by van Onselen, 2015).

The sentiment draws on the notions of the secular doctrine. In swearing to uphold the constitution and the Bill of Rights, he and any public official must uphold, protect and further the rights of all individuals, even society’s marginalised.
5.3.2 The views of the ANC

The ANC has a long history with Clergy and the Churches both in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality and nationally. In relation to Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, several Churches and Clergy have permitted the ANC to speak at their Churches, while some have openly supported the political party (Gqiran, 2016).

The relationship with certain Clergy, most notably those linked to the TCN, had become strenuous because of the perceived corruption and arrogance as well as a lack of political efficacy, especially after the president and local leadership had ignored several requests for a meeting from a collective of Clergy in the NMBM (Viljoen, 2013).

The relationship with the South African Council of Churches and number of mainstream Churches is also strained (Hunter & Mataboge, 2014). Gwede Mantashe (as quoted by Hunter and Matobage, 2014), in his report to the party’s national executive committee, stated

The SACC is of the view that the ANC is more comfortable with wealth religion and those who are not critical of the ANC… Considering the somewhat distant relations we have had with the SACC; this was a difficult meeting. Many issues were touched on without delving into it. This debate was deferred to a later date, as it was clear that there is [a] need to first clear the air.

According to Mantashe’s analysis the party’s strained relationship with the country’s largest denominational affiliated group is tense because the ANC’s inability to accept rebuke and corruption. However, the party has recently, through the office of its Secretary-General, extended an olive branch to the Church, requesting that relationships be strengthened (SABC, 2015).

The Methodist Church of South Africa has arguably the longest relationship with the ANC. The relationship dates back to the beginning of the movement, when the ANC NEC, in 2012 employed a Methodist Minister, Rev. Dr. EJ Mqoboli DD as its inaugural chaplain (The Methodist Church of South Africa, 2013). The relationship under the Zuma presidency has also become strained. The Methodist Church asked the president to resign, after the Constitutional Court ordered him to reimburse the state for the undue benefits incurred in the Nkandla. The Church issued the following statement: “these events call for President Zuma to do the

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69 President Zuma was found to have unduly benefited from his upgrades to his private residence. Initially he refused to reimburse the state, which led to several court cases. The Constitutional Court, South Africa’s highest court, found him guilty of not adhering to the Public Protector remedial action. In this regard he violated the “oath of office”.
honourable thing and resign to save himself, the ANC and the nation as a whole from further embarrassment and ruin” (as cited by Raborife, 2016). The ANC, although a professed secular party has chaplains at national and provincial level. It is mandated by the party’s constitution (ANC Constitution, 2012).

5.3.3 The views of the EFF

The EFF in the NMBM has a public relationship with Reverend Tengo who openly supported the party the 2016 Local Government Elections. (De Kock, 2016). De Kock (2016) points out that Tengo joined the party because he held the belief that it was fighting corruption (De Kock, 2016). Tengo addressed supporters and sang a hymn at an EFF rally in Motherwell, Port Elizabeth (Charter, 2016). The EFF interviewee, stated that the Tnego was the only Clergy that openly supported them during the 2016 elections by donating motor vehicles, chairs for campaigns, money, and his time. She believes that many do not openly support the EFF because many pastors have an affinity with the ANC. She explains,

Well we do have a relationship lately we’ve had relationships with clergy but it’s not as in-depth as you would find with the ANC because you would find that most of the clergy are old school. They still hold onto you know, what would Nelson Mandela say, what would your Oliver Tambo say (EFFR).

She also adds that many do not have a relationship with the EFF because of its perceived anarchical approach to politics. Furthermore, the interviewee supposes that the party’s constituency base, many of whom are young, do not necessarily belong or regularly attend church service. Nationally, EFF leader Julius Malema was invited to receive prayers for the 2016 Local Government Elections at the Christian Revival Church where he affirmed that “[I]t is important that politicians keep a close relationship with the Church” (Malema as quoted by Pijoos, 2016). The EFF interviewee also alluded to the fact that their candidates were encouraged by their national leadership to ask for prayers by the respective Churches, the eve before the elections for safe and fair elections. This demonstrates that while the EFF may subscribe to an idea of secularism, it also seeks blessings through spiritual intervention on their behalf through the Clergy.
5.4 Ideological backdrop of the DA, ANC and the EFF in relation to religion.

5.4.1 The views of the DA

The DA found its roots in the Progressive Party (PP), who broke away from the United Party in 1959. The Progressive Party was considered a liberal political party (Democratic Alliance, 2016). By 1989 the PP was renamed the Democratic Party (DP) and in 2001, the DP, merged with the New National Party (NNP) and the Federal Alliance to form the DA. The DA also merged with Independent Democrats in 2010 in preparation for the 2011 Local Government Elections.

The DA still constructs itself as a liberal party, but the researcher noted traces of African Social Democracy. Its latest value charter, for instance, places importance on both individual liberties such as freedom to choose sexual orientation whilst advocating for strong family values regardless of its manifestation as bedrock to a strong society (Democratic Alliance Values Charter, 2015:2). On the other hand, Liberal parties tend to focus on individual rights through a stance constructed as individualism, while African socialism takes a stronger focus on community and collectivism through the family. Conversely, the promotion of a strong family institute is deeply embedded in both African and Christian traditions (Vermeer, 2014: 403). The traditional Christian family structure is heterosexual, based on Genesis. In the same manner, the traditional African family value is based on heterosexual nature, but additionally they permit polygamy (Tembo, n.d.).

The DA is also a full member of the Liberal International (LI). LI is “a network for promoting liberalism, strengthening liberal parties and for the promotion of liberal democracy around the world” (Liberal International, 2016). Full membership is only afforded to parties that adhere to its manifesto. In relation to religion, LI’s manifesto, albeit not mentioned explicitly, provides some helpful statements to deduce what their viewpoint on religion and the role Clergy in political life is. Its latest manifesto reaffirms the importance freedom of association and, by extension, freedom to associate with a particular religion (Liberal International, 2016). They also advocate for a strong civil society as an imperative for political order. The Church forms part of this civil society.

The DA’s slogan ‘Freedom, Fairness and Equality’ derives from the liberal foundation, freedom, equality and fraternity. Although, the DA’s campaigns are centred around

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71 Genesis is the first book of the Bible. The creation narrative is revealed in this book. Traditional Christian doctrine dictates that God created Adam and out of his rib God formed Eve, his family female companion and wife.
employment and the economy, the slogan also bares relevance to religion i.e. freedom to belong and choose one’s religious affiliation, thus individual human rights.

One can conclude that the DA carries a strong liberal ideological influence, but one also notes traces of collectivism and communalism in its Value Charter.

As liberal ideological roots are found in the Age of Enlightenment, the role of the Clergy is not really emphasised. Certain liberal views on religion regard it merely as superstition and devoid of rationale (Ahdar and Leigh, 2005: 41). Some argue that religious practice should be relegated to one’s private life outside of the public realm. Others, however, believe that there is a crucial link between religion and fostering of important civic virtues including law abidingness, honesty, and self-restraint (Adhar and Leigh 2005:85). This view is constructed on the assumption that religion promotes high moral standards akin to the standard law abiding citizen. However, the motivation for obeying the law may not necessarily be linked to a religious conviction. Individuals, may obey the law because of the fear of punishment, or the belief that the law is legitimate, and that the authority is legitimate. Of course modern liberals argue against the moral singularity and sovereignty of religion. For example, liberals approach the term ‘good/moral life’ with neutrality:

Government must be natural on what might be called the question of the good life… political decisions must be, so far as is possible, independent of any particular conception of the good life, of what gives value to life, Since the citizens of a society differ in their conceptions, the government does not treat them as equals as if its prefers one conception to another, either because the officials believe that one intrinsically superior, or because one is held by numerous or more powerful group (Ronald Dworkib 2009: 5).

Liberals in this instance argue that Church and Clergy as representatives as the sole voice of morality. Individuals must be free to choose religion, but also to choose not to subscribe to any religion. (see Liberal International 2016 and Kastning, 2013). Liberals typically locate the case for religious liberty within a more general concern for personal autonomy. The notion of freedom of choice is advocated by liberals as an essential human right. John Locke (as quoted by Simmons, 200: 175) argues that humans have the right to choose simply because they are human. Furthermore, the ‘harm principle,’ an important component of the human rights theory, states that one should be able that the individuals must be permitted to do any task, in so far that it does not harm another individual (Dworkib, 2009: 3). In relation to the study an individual is permitted to form part of any religious group and perform any religious rite in as far it does not harm another individual. Similarly, persons have the right to belong to a religion and an individual should be discriminated against on the basis of their religious belief. All religious groups should be given equal preference and no religion should be promoted over
another one. Finally, liberals hold firm to the belief that the state and the Church should be separate entities.

There is no real indication to what liberals believe Clergy’s role to be in political life. Clergy however, as seen in chapter four, view their role instinctually linked with the Church where “when we speak of the Clergy we speak of the Church” (ND). By employing that rationale if Clergy represent the church as opposed to their individual capacity, then they should understand that they do not hold the moral high ground, that all religion is equal and that every religious movement is equal. Liberals in many instances do not think it is improper for a pastor to be a politician. The DA’s current leader for example was a pastor. It must be noted once he assumed the office of leader, he vacated his position as pastor.

5.4.2 The views of the ANC

Clergy and the ANC have a historical relationship dating back to its birth. Many of its leaders were also ‘men of the cloth’. That being said, there is no empirical evidence to suggest that the Church shaped its ideological backdrop. The ANC has often called itself a ‘broad church’ in relation to its broad ideological makeup (Calland, 2013:159).

The ANC was formed in 1912, a by black middle class who had a moderate ideological approach. By its own admission it states that the Church was part of its formation (African National Congress, 2016). The stance however changed in the 1960s with the establishment of the Youth League and the call for more radical action to fight the apartheid system.

The ANC, like the DA, to a liberal view regarding freedom of choice in religion and freedom of association. This is evident in the Freedom Charter that demands “the law shall guarantee to all their right to speak, to organise, to meet together, to publish, to preach, to worship and to educate their children” (Freedom Charter, 1955:2).

The National Development Plan (NDP), the ANC’s developmental plan for South Africa, places no significant value on religion, other than briefly reaffirming that individuals should be free to worship (National Development Plan, 2012).

Communists do not have positive identification with religion, as Marx and Engels believed that religion was used by the bourgeoisie to indoctrinate the proletariat (Marx and Engles as quoted by Blaisedell, 2003:154). The SACP, a partner of the ANC within the broader Tripartite Alliance, has taken a less antagonistic perspective on religion. Consider the following press release issued by the SACP in Gauteng with regards to the EFF’s actions on the burning of a Church tent from a pastor who allegedly fed his congregants snakes and rats as a religious act.
We condemn these bizarre superstitious practices and religious fantasies by both the fascist EFF and the barbaric pastor. They both aid the justification of exploitation of working families in a capitalist society and they assist with the dominating influence of the ruling bourgeois class. They are equally in serious violation of the constitutional entitlement for citizens to exercise freedom of religion, and both should be investigated by the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC). Rather than patiently educate the working class and liberate them from religious fantasies and superstitious outlook through revolutionary consciousness, the demagogic EFF went on a violent rampage, disrupted the Church proceedings, sent the pastor packing and burnt the prefabricated tent belonging to the Church (SACP Gauteng province, 2015).

In this instance, they perceive religion within a capitalistic framework using traditional Marxist class analysis where the bourgeoisie exploit and profit from the working class and employs religion as means to maintain this status quo. The assumption is that the pastor collects donations through the Christian sacrament, tithes and offerings. It is perceived as exploiting because of the dehumanising activity of feeding his congregants snakes and rats. The SACP also supports the notions of exercising one’s religion freely, however, they do hold the position that this form of religious practice can and should only be diminished through revolutionary education for consciousness.

The SACP’s 10th Congress document, entitled Our Marxism explains their perspective on Christianity, Clergypersons and religion in political life:

There are no reasons why religious believers should not (and in practice many do) contribute actively to a dialectical and historical materialist approach to these matters. This, as far as we are concerned, is what defines communists…In practice, in the SACP, there have always been comrades of religious persuasion (including many religious ministers), but their involvement has tended to be seen as an anomaly. The truth, however, is that these comrades were attracted to our Party not despite their religious beliefs and values – but because of them. And, it is because of their religious views that many were, and are, outstanding communists. Sadly, many thousands of other South Africans have been attracted by the moral and political message of communism, only to feel excluded by the “atheism” of our Party. The SACP reaffirms its commitment to the right of anyone to hold (or not hold) religious beliefs. The SACP is not defined by being either a Party of atheists or believers (South African Communist Party, 1998: 67-68).

The SACP welcomes religious leaders to be part of the political process in so far that they play a role in emancipating the working class and not as tool to oppress them. This view is aligned with liberation theological theory. Liberation theological thought as demonstrated in chapter two, is a combination of Marxism and Christianity with the primary objective to empower the
working class to pursue their own liberation, but using Christian doctrine of the emancipation of the oppressed.

African nationalism is characterised by uniting African/indigenous peoples for a common cause of emancipation of its people from an oppressive system (See Heywood, 2013). Furthermore, black consciousness endorses redefining of black values, the promotion self-image, and their entire outlook of themselves (See Biko, 2012). It is important to remember that the pseudo-scientific proclamation Social Darwinism placed black South Africans in an inferior ‘less developed’ people group. Sophisticated political systems, which filtered into society were created around this notion. Apartheid and the British Policy of segregation were among the political and social systems. Black Consciousness is the anti-thesis of black inferiority.

Religion and clergypersons have been used to advance nationalist ideas as demonstrated in chapter two with the National Party and the Dutch Reformed Church. The NP had a religious ideological backdrop vis-à-vis its nationalism, while the ANC’s is not religious in nature. However, black liberation theology and pro-black theology Clergy provided de facto pro-African nationalist theology, as demonstrated in Chapter 2. Alan Boesak (2009:50), a prominent anti-apartheid Clergyperson and proponent of black theology, highlighted the following:

> Out of this struggle, more than two centuries old, emerged the black Church, a broad movement of black Christian, joined in a black solidarity that transcends all barriers of denomination and ethnicity. It shares the same black experience, the same understanding of suffering and oppression, and the same goal from all forms of oppression.

Black theological thought is nationalist in that, it works to unite under the banner of blackness and black oppression to advance a cause of political, economic, and psychological emancipation. Unlike the NP, the ANC did not have a ‘party church’, but rather were part of the broader collective that shared the same goal of freedom of black South Africans.

Clergy who profess to a black theological notion are to play an important role in redefining the mind-set of black South Africans concerning the inferior position in South Africa. Black Clergy are therefore to play a role in breaking the inferiority mindset imposed on black South Africans by the apartheid government with its white supremacist undertones. One merely has to look at apartheid South African legislation, especially in education and job reservation, to see this. Bantu Education (Later referred to as black education) curriculum was specifically created to limit Black South Africans to menial and low skilled labour (see Davenport, 1988). On this basis, Biko suggests they should redefine the concept of sin:
In a country teeming with injustice and fanatically committed to the practice of oppression, intolerance and blatant cruelty because of racial bigotry; in a country where all black people are made to feel the unwanted stepchildren of a God whose presence they cannot feel; in a country where father and son, mother and daughter alike develop daily into neurotics through sheer inability to relate the present to the future because of a completely engulfing sense of destitution, the Church further adds to their insecurity by its inward-directed definition of the concept of sin and its encouragement of the “mea culpa” attitude. Stern-faced ministers stand on pulpits every Sunday to heap loads of guilt. No-one ever attempts to relate all these vices to poverty, unemployment, overcrowding, lack of schooling and migratory labour. No one wants to completely condone abhorrent behaviour, but it frequently is necessary for us to analyse situations a little bit deeper than the surface suggests. Because the white missionary described black people as thieves, lazy, sex-hungry etc., and because he equated all that was valuable with whiteness, our Churches through our ministers see all these vices I have mentioned above not as manifestations of the cruelty and injustice which we are subjected to by the white man but inevitable proof that after all the white man was right when he described us as savages (Biko, 2012: 56-57).

He challenges Black Clergy to focus on institutional sin as opposed to individual sin. In this sense, for Biko, the institution which sins against black people is far worse than the individual sin black people commit. Furthermore, white culture, as in other areas of apartheid South Africa society also dominated the Church culture. Biko (2012:60) explains,

> Whereas Christianity had gone through rigorous cultural adaption from Judea through Rome, through London through Brussels and Lisbon, somehow when it landed in the Cape, it, was made look to fairly rigid. Christianity was made the central point of a culture which brought with it new rules of clothing, new customs, new forms of etiquette, new medical approach and perhaps new armaments. The people amongst whom Christianity was spread had to cast away their customs, their beliefs which were all describes as being pagan and barbaric… the difference in clothing between these two groups made what otherwise could have been merely a religious difference actually became at times internecine warfare.

Christianity needs to be inclusive. Black customs and culture also need to be present. According to the text above at the introduction of the Christianity in Southern Africa also brought in the introduction of Western customs at the expense of African culture and practice. Religion was therefore used as a tool of Western hegemony and domination.
5.4.3 The views of the EFF

The political ideological position is arguably the clearest among the organisations in discussion. According to its founding manifesto, the EFF draws inspiration from “the broad Marxist-Leninist tradition and Fanonian schools of thought in their analyses of the state, imperialism, culture and class contradictions in every society” (Economic Freedom Fighters, 2013.) Its constitution clearly states that it is a socialist political party (Economic Freedom Fighters Constitution, 2014: 2). Similar to the other parties, there is no official policy position on religion and Clergy available as well.

The text below outlines Fanon’s (as quoted by David, 2000) view on the Christian faith as follows,

I speak of the Christian religion, and no one need be astonished. The Church in the colonies is the white people's Church, the foreigner's Church. She does not call the native to God's ways but to the ways of the white man, of the master, of the oppressor. And as we know, in this matter many are called but few chosen.

For Fanon, Christianity was a cultural assimilatory tool used by the colonialists. By extension pastors were used to colonise the indigenous people. Their role, according to this narrative, was to be part of a broader colonial expansion project. A previously noted statement by Elizabeth Elborne (2003: 3) exemplifies the following regarding Khoisan conversation to Christianity. She states,

Khoisan converts were attracted by the missionary promise that God would intervene on the side of the oppressed. Conversion was also used by the Khoisan both as a tool for the reintegration of a shattered society and as a means of gaining access to power which had been kept on the Christian side of a "heathen"/ "Christian" divide; at the same time, it accelerated the destruction of "traditional" culture. With the political failure of the early Bethelsdorp model in the 1810s, Khoisan converts attempted more consciously to mould themselves to a hardening British model of ‘civilization’ and to act as loyal colonial citizens.

This demonstrates the political significance and influence religion can have. The introduction of Christianity reinvented culture and custom for, in this instance, the Khoisan. They were defeated politically and militarily by colonialists, yet, the Khoisan knew gaining power and acceptance was through adopting the Christian religion at the cost of their customs and culture.
Marx and Engels employ the similar rationale as Fanon. Marx and Engels (1947:39) notes that the ruling class also owns the “means of mental production.” The means of mental production is defined as,

The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it. The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas.

Thus, the ruling class dictates what the popular discourse of the period is. Religion, education and media are powerful tools to disseminate the ideas of the ruling elite. In chapter three the author established the role of religion and the education system with the examples of the DRC and CNE and how it supported apartheid.

Fanon’s scholarship looks at how religion was used to indoctrinate the indigenous peoples to submit to colonial powers. The EFF argues that the black oppression, in the form of economic exclusion still persists in post-apartheid South Africa. For them it is an inheritance of the previous systems. The EFF’s entire political lens is focused on the economic emancipation of black people. It is an important facet to remember when analysing their position on religion and the role of clergy in the political process. By employing the EFF’s rationale, religion must not be used as a tool for indoctrinating the black majority to continue their subservient economic position.

Settler (2009:3) in his thesis, entitled, ‘religion in the work of Frantz Fanon’ concluded that Fanon saw religion as obsolete and useless in the fight against oppression. He further explains that, “Fanon regarded religion as essentially pre-modern and, as such, he assumed that the onset of modernity marked the decline of religion. He argued that religion, whether through established faith communities or indigenous would undermine the struggle against oppression.”

Fanon’s modernisation draws inspiration from the French liberal ideologies. Fanon himself was a product of French educational system. He spent his formative years and was educated in the former French Colonial Island, Martinique (Macey, 2000: 109). The notion of secularisation is strongly emphasised is his rationale. Fanon and other modernisation theorists of his time underestimated the influence and power of religion. Although religion no longer has an influence in many western counties, it still features strongly within the South African context. Fanon’s assertions that religion played a role in undermining the struggle against oppression is
not completely true as well. SACC and other anti-apartheid Christian movements and leaders have demonstrated it already.

How does the EFF, a pro-Fanonian and Marxist organisation, reconcile with religion? As demonstrated their ideological underpinning in the form of Fanon and Marx-Lenin, identify it as superstation, perceive it as a tool of oppression and find it useless in the struggle against oppression. South African as a statistical fact are religious (Stats SA, 2011). The national discourse of religion has not been shaped or transformed into Fanon and Marxist-Leninist leanings. The EFF has not condemned or undermined religion and the role of Clergy in the political process though its documents. Thus, one may conclude that the EFF’s is aligned with Black and Liberation theological doctrines.

5.5 The Role of the clergy in political life: Views from Political Parties

5.5.1 The views of the DA

The DA maintains a utilitarian view of religion. For them, Churches are potential partners that can help fight various societal ills, like alcohol abuse, and can help to reintegrate criminals back into society and participating in policing forums (Democratic Alliance, Values Charter, 2015).

The DA emphasises the value of the constitution as a “manual” on the nature and scope of the role of religion, and by default, Christianity and the Clergy, in political life. The party also took a hard stance against the views expressed by Pastor Anderson, an American pastor, who allegedly called for the murder of LBGTI community in South Africa (BBC News, 2016). Their response in parliament regarding the pastor assertions were,

According to Section 29 (1) of the Immigration Act, 2002, certain persons can be denied a port of entry visa. Such a person includes: “a member of or adherent to an association or organization advocating the practice of racial hatred and social violence.” We stand opposed to all forms of bigotry, including racism, homophobia, sexism and xenophobia. owed to hold diverse views as enshrined in the constitution (Democratic Alliance, 2016).

For the DA, thus, views by pastors cannot supersede other fundamental human rights, especially when they incite violence. Mmusi Maimane (2016), leader of the DA, in an interview regarding his Church’s views on homosexuality, highlighted:
What we mustn’t do is assume if someone wants to hold a different view, someone wants to say from their own biblical religious rights. That they entitled to believe that is maybe not consistent with their beliefs, they entitled to have that. Surely the Constitution guarantees the right for people to have their own views. So if our Church wants to take a stance then they are entitled to do that. It’s the fundamentals of the law.

The Party advocates that the Clergy, together with other civil society bodies, must play a role in reconciliation. Maimane (2016) in a speech on the DA’s views of racism stated,

I announced my plan to initiate a series of dialogues on race and identity entitled Stand Up, Speak Out, involving South Africans from all walks of life. The intention behind these dialogues is to create a space in which South Africans, including civil society organisations, community leaders and religious organisations, can engage in open and frank discussion about race – sharing their experiences, challenges and obstacles. This week I officially begun the process and have requested meetings with, amongst others, the following civil society organisations: The South African Council of Churches (SACC), an inter-denominational forum of religious organisations, committed to the promotion of justice, dignity, and national reconciliation.

Maimane (2015) in an interview on a Christian television programme, Watchman on the Wall was quizzed about his opinion on the role of Christian religious leaders and the Church in political life. His response was,

Look I always say the Church must participate in constitutional democracy. There are many laws and legislation that have an impact on the Church and often the voice of the Church is silent in that space. Participation is also saying that we must encourage people to vote. Because it’s not good enough that our voter turnout becomes less and less because that undermines democracy, but part of the Church’s participation is being able to identity young people who feel are called to government for them to go serve there. That’s not less important then perhaps them serving in the Church. That we must be able to encourage them to get involved in that. But I think also the Church has a role of ‘Nathan to David’, that there is a prophetic voice that say you hold leaders to account. You speak to them, you direct them and I think that voice has often been lacking, especially in subjects around corruption. I’m always amazed that the Church isn’t more vocal about ‘you cannot steal resources at the expense of the poor, at the expense of widow, at the expense of the orphan’, and the Church must have a legitimised outrage to it. Furthermore, there is no doubt that the ultimate role that the Church must play must be to pray. I think its scriptural. There’s an invitation that says pray for your leaders must be that. And I’d like to see more and more Churches willing to say, look can we pray here in parliament, can we pray, because they must be entitled to. It’s not to the detriment to any other religion, but it is about at least a mandate that the Church must have. Pray, to hold leaders to account … and I
would like to invite more Churches to play an active role about what happens in South Africa (Maimane, 2015).

Maimane’s perception on the role of clergy may be summarised as follows, 1) watchdog and prophetic voice 2) voter education 3) praying for leaders/spiritual matters. The role, however is underpinned by the constitutional provisions of religion.

5.5.2 The views of the ANC

The ANC, because of the ‘broad church’ backdrop, has multiple perceptions on the role Clergy should play in the political process. However, there are some consistent threads. The party in most cases pays homage to the role clergy and the Church has played in the founding of the organisation and their/its positive role it performed in the liberation of the people of South Africa from apartheid.

A suitable starting point for analysis is the study of the role of the Chaplain General. Currently the position is vacant. The ANC’s constitution (2012:10) states that the National Executive Committee “Have the power to appoint a National Chaplaincy on an interfaith basis to provide spiritual guidance”, while the provincial chaplain is appointed in the same manner and reason.

Rev Dr Vukile Mehana former chaplain general of the ANC expand on the role both historically and currently (as quoted by The Methodist Church of South Africa, 2013)

(1) Firstly, they were requested to pray for the presence of God, to support the leadership and those embarking on the struggle for freedom and democracy to be successful. This included the development of their spirituality in order have unshakeable faith in God.

(2) Secondly, they were asked to always safeguard, and be the custodians of “Revolutionary Morality” central to this, to be the constant reminders of the Comrades that they should conduct themselves with discipline and dignity so that the struggle could always be taken seriously by the World.

(3) Thirdly, their task was to provide pastoral care to the Comrades, their families and those who were to be the victims of brutal and harsh treatment by representatives of the system of oppression they were fighting.
(4) Advocacy work especially around religious policies, including policies, programmes and practices that promote social renewal, social cohesion and nation building.

(5) Additionally, the current Chaplaincy does research work around theologies and doctrines at National as well as International levels, relevant to the ongoing liberation of the people of South Africa in terms of their socio-economic spheres of their lives. This is to be done by promoting good relations with the faith-based Organization.

(6) The Chaplaincy also co-ordinates the inter-faith and inter-denominational opening prayers at the start of National gatherings and events. As well as offering, from time-to-time, specific pastoral care services such as counselling, funeral services, weddings and other ministries as required by the members of the ANC at various structural levels of the Movement.

In summary, the historical role of chaplain entails 1) prayer 2) ‘revolutionary morality’ which in essence is the prophetic voice and the moral yardstick of the organisation 3) Pastoral care. Currently the role of the Chaplain General, is to 1) work on programmes aligning to social cohesion 2) research on socio-economic theologies 3) conducting inter-faith prayer and 4) pastoral care.

The ANC now has a defunct Commission on Religious affairs, who expresses its sentiments as on the role religion and clergy as follows:

Faith and politics are like sides of a coin. Solving the problems of poverty and greed, violence and corruption, is a deeply spiritual challenge. If political and economic practices are to serve the nation, they must be based on justice not charity, honesty not deceit, transparency not corruption. The ANC believes that through the democratic interplay of different forces a way forward can be found and followed. All sectors have a role to play: government and opposition, privileged and unprivileged, State and Religion. Lively religion is not a watch-dog barking round the boundary fences, but a full participant on the factory floor of building a new nation (ANC’s Commission on Religious Affairs, 2001). According to the Commission, clergy are to be active in the nation building process, a voice against corruption and assist government in combating poverty.

The ANC’s North West Chairperson, Supra Mahumapelo (2014) reaffirmed his predecessors in his speech delivered to the Methodist Church Youth Brigade:
We recognise that the Church remains a significant institution in the South African context and we will harness its increased importance in addressing the moral fiber of South African public life, including, using the ANC Chaplaincy as a vehicle to ensure sustainability with the ANC. We will do so, working side by side with government established agencies such as the Moral Regeneration Movement (MRM), and all South Africans who remain committed to ensure that we together move South Africa forward. The Church has an important role to play in communities and that indeed it cannot be divorced from the suffering of the people it serves… Key among these challenges is unemployment, poverty and inequality. Crime, corruption, gender based violence and the abuse of women and children. I also ask of you to work with us as we promote national healing, social cohesion and nation building; all of which are critical in ensuring sustainable development. The programme will assist us to work together to build a society where there is respect, equality and human dignity for all; a society that places a high premium on the rule of law and democracy; a society with sound family and community values; that upholds honesty, integrity and loyalty; shows respect and concern for all people; strives for justice, fairness and peaceful coexistence (Mashatile, 2013).

Both the commission and the Mashatile believes that Church has a critical role in society. For them the Church and Clergy must assist government in poverty alleviation, contribute to the maintenance of the moral fibre of society, be proactive in nation building, participate in democratic process and hold the government accountable.

President Zuma has a dim view on the role of Clergy in political life, contrary to his party’s viewpoints. He argues that Clergy should not get involved in politics. For him, the primary role of the clergy is to pray for their leaders:

It is sad to see the Church and Church leaders getting mired into matters of politics instead of praying for leaders. I urge the Church to pray for us as leaders, pray for our people to stop the hatred. I urge you to assist us to build a stable nation built on love (Zuma,2016 as quoted by Olifant).

Several clergypersons have been critical against the president’s leadership. Thus, one may conclude that President Zuma’s sentiments on the role of clergy in political life is a result of the Church’s criticising voice. In addition, civil society leaders have actively spoken against Zuma as well (see ENCA,2015 & Daily Maverick, 2016).

5.5.3 The views of the EFF

The EFF in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality does not have an official position on the role of Christian religious and Clergy in political life,
We don’t have an official position as EFF so basically we are saying we are the party of the people and like I say we are not specifically targeting into the Church. We are not specifically targeting certain religious sectors, we are basically targeting the ground, man to man - your ordinary man on the street. So we have not really gone deeper in terms of influencing the Church. Why don’t you preach what we stand for, why don’t you advocate for what we stand for, which is trying to get our people’s mind out of that state that which thinks that it okay for them to be in this situation or living in this situation that most of them are living in, so many years after democracy (EFFR).

Nationally, The EFF whispers about the importance of the Church. Julius Malema bemoaned the fact that prayer was no longer offered at many schools. His expressions were that “these days some schools started without prayer, not like the old days when prayer was important.” At the same meeting Malema told congregants that if the party were to win the elections in Mangaung, the Church would play an integral role, though he did not stipulate what that role would be. He also added the Church should pray for peace for the local elections.

5.6 The role of the Christian religious leader as perceived by the NMBM

The NMBM religious unit, considers the role of clergy to be three fold 1) active citizens in the process of decision making 2) spokespersons of the community 3) custodian of morality in the capacity of the ‘prophetic voice’ 4) spiritual i.e. praying for the leaders. The Religious Unit highlighted that

We are now in the era of the developmental local government, which emphasise the maximum participation of civil society or communities and public in the decision making process of the municipality. That is in terms of the relevant pieces of legislation which regulate the operational and functionality of local government. Through the ‘Religious Unit’ the municipality takes an initiative to engage the religious sector so that they can participate in the decision making process. The religious leaders are expected to inform the municipality of the relevant needs of the civil society… In order for council to take relevant decisions in relation to service delivery communities need to the municipality through their representative bodies

Churches are seen to be the custodian of moral values in society. Therefore, in order for government to operate optimally in holding the moral standards, a healthy and relationship with the religious sector is necessary. The religious sector when necessary can council the municipality, particularly in decision making, but, also rebuke government when it is necessary.
5.6 Christian Political Parties and Pastor Politicians in South Africa

South Africa have Christian political parties and the pastor-politicians. This section will discuss the legality and the operational facets of it.

5.6.1 Christian Political Parties

The South African Constitution does not prohibit religio-centered political parties. In a number of other secular states religious political parties are not permitted (Temperman, 2010, 128). It must be noted that some of these states have had either negative, divisive and oppressive experiences with religion. For example, in Nigeria, where the two major religions are Christianity and Islam, religious divisions were a major contributor to conflict and the civil war. The prohibition of religio-centred political parties in these states must not be confused with negative identification of religion and Christianity by the state. Negative identification is characterised by the rejection of religion by the state either constitutionally or in discourse and propaganda (Ahdar & Leigh, 2005:25). Rather, it can be seen as a measure to restrict space for religious conflict to escalate.

Christian/ religious political parties are defined as:

Parties defined by religion are special forms of parties that are characterised by their social-political objectives. Worldwide, a vast number of parties are more or less strongly based on religious convictions. There are Christian or Christian democratic, Islamic and Hindu parties that establish their programmes on the values and standards of their religion or confession. This can lead to considerable differences in the political programmes and political objectives of such parties, depending on how individual parties consider their respective religion’s stand with regard to individual human rights and individual freedom or to political democracy. The European Christian Democratic parties, for instance, are committed to individual Freedom, social solidarity and justice, self-responsibility of the citizens and a discrete role for the state under the supervision of economic and social actors (Grabow & Hofmeister, 2011: 23).

72 Republic of Congo, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kyrgyz, Republic, Liberia, Mexico, Mozambique, Nigeria an, Portugal, Rwanda, Senegal (Temperman, 2010: 128)
Christian parties are characterised by the values system. One may identify a Christian party, by its confessional status, openly stating that it is a Christian party and proclamations that its values are defined by Christian doctrine. Christian Parties generally its name and its emblem and logo based on Christian symbols. In most cases they espouse to democratic values as well. It is important to note that a party may espouse to Christian values not necessarily be defined as Christian political parties. The FF Plus for example invites anybody to member of its party who subscribe to Christian values (Freedom Front Plus, 2016) In essence the party is a conservative party often seen as advocating or the right of the Afrikaner. It mission is defined as follows:

The Freedom Front Plus is irrevocably committed to the realisation of communities', in particular the Afrikaner's, internationally recognised right to self-determination, territorial or otherwise; the maintenance, protection and promotion of their rights and interests, as well as the promotion of the right of self-determination of any other community, bound by a common language and cultural heritage in South Africa (Freedom Front Plus, 2016).

As seen in its mission, its primary focus is the Afrikaner community and ‘maintenance, protection and promotion of self-determination’ characteristics espoused by the former NP and apartheid regime. Grabow et.al, (2011:2) notes that conservative parties are “skeptical of innovations and changes, for instance, with regard to the perception and the role of the family, and alternative models of life (for example, same-sex marriages).” While not exclusively so, conservative values find legitimacy in Christian prescripts on living a good life.

In 2014 there were eight religious-centred parties that contested South Africa’s General Elections, four of which were Christian (Independent Electoral Commission, 2016). Table 1 presents their election results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political Party</th>
<th>Valid votes</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
<th>Number of seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACDP</td>
<td>104,039</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AL JAMA-AH</td>
<td>25,976</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 demonstrates that religious parties have not received overwhelming electoral support. The ACDP was the only party that won sufficient votes to get seats in parliament, having won three out of a possible four hundred seats. The religious parties combined only managed to accumulate 168,167 out of 18,402,497 of the votes that were cast. The Christian parties generally have not achieved major success in terms of electoral support in all four democratic elections. The ACDP, the most successful Christian party to date, achieved its highest result in 2004 with only 1.6% of the vote (Schulz-Hazenberg, 2014: 194).

It does seem unusual that the Christian parties do not have a great deal of support in South African political landscape. They are perhaps four reasons for this:

1) The dominant party system has made it difficult for most political parties to attain electoral success
2) The belief that the doctrine of secularity, that is the Church and by extension, Christian Parties should not be involved in politics,
3) The inability to market Christian political parties and the lack of resources
4) International trends, which demonstrate weakening support for Christian political parties in democracies.

The ANC has governed South Africa since its democratic dispensation. All parties, to date have not been able to defeat the ANC. It must be noted that although the ANC does not align itself to religion, it has public relationships with religious groups, especially in the Christian community. The ANC has on many occasions campaigned at Churches.

Ray McCauley, prominent minister, anti-apartheid activist and co-chair of the National Inter-Faith Council of South Africa is critical of what he perceives as the ACDP’s ambiguity. He explains as follows,

The ACDP is suffering from the same perplexing problem that plagues Christians when they enter the political domain and even more so when they bear the title ‘Christian’ and are driven by fundamentalist zeal. The ACDP has the basic problem of not knowing whether it wants to be a church or political power. In the process it crosses over into the territory of the church and tries
to be the church. The result is that it fails to main its political integrity and does not carry the weight of the church behind it when it makes so-called spiritual judgments in parliament (Ray McCauley adn Ron Steele, 1996:66).

The ACDP and the United Christian Democratic Party’s 2014 Election Manifesto are helpful in understanding the type of governance that Christian political parties espouse to. Of course, they are not identical in nature, but there are similarities. Firstly, they both advocate for democratic values. The UCDP’s (2014) preamble of its manifesto states that it will pursue a ‘non-racial, non-sexist” South Africa and respect for ‘diversity’ The ACDP (2014 as quoted by News24) stated that it “values unity and diversity” and is committed to protecting freedom of religion and family integrity. They both claimed a political stance for Christian values.

The UCDP election manifesto is similar to most secular parties’ manifests. The term religion is only mentioned once in its manifesto. It is used in relation to promoting religious music along with other cultural music and tradition (United Christian Democratic Party, 2014: 14). The researcher was not, however, able to discover uniquely Christian values such as the promotion of corporal punishment in the home and freedom of religious practice at school.

The ACDP takes a firm Christian position. In its opening paragraphs, it declares that it is a political party based “for Christian Democratic principles and recognises that vibrant, healthy families are the building blocks of a strong, value-based society” (African Christian Democratic Party, 2014). They explain Christian democratic principles as follows:

We are committed to seeing a genuine transformation and renewal in our country that is modelled on value-based norms such as integrity, justice, honesty and respect. Without these values, we will not see the restoration of the moral compass of our nation (African Christian Democratic Party, 2014)

Christian democratic values include integrity, justice, honesty and respect. These values also emphasise family. The term family is mentioned several times and gets special attention as one of the eight reasons why South Africans should vote for the ACDP (African Christian Democratic Party, 2014). The party’s Constitution clarifies the term family, which for them, is defined within the confines of the mainstream Christian faith i.e. heterosexual marriage (African Christian Democratic Party Constitution, 2007: 4).

Part of the ACDP’s constitutional aims is “provid(ing) strong Christian leadership and to defend, promote and uphold Biblical principles in legislation” (African Christian Democratic Party
Constitution, 2007: 4) The ACDP have pursued Christian agendas in within parliament. For instance, in March 2016, ACDP MP Cheryl Dudley, alerted the South African National Assembly about the widespread global persecution of Christians and pleaded with the South African government not to disregard and ignore the global issue or to downplay any discrimination against individuals and groups who profess to Christianity (Dudley 2016). The ACDP also bemoaned the Human Rights Commission’s interpretation of corporal punishment, arguing that, ‘spanking’ cannot be equated with physical abuse.

5.6.2 Pastor-Politician

Is it possible to serve as both pastor and politician? It may come across as an oxymoron if one views though the lens of the secular and Calvin’s two swords doctrine, which stresses for the separation between state and Church. The principles of secularization argue that it is inconceivable, while secularism model would argue that it is indeed possible. It is legally acceptable to act in the capacity of Clergyperson and a politician. The South African Constitution permits all law-abiding South African citizens to stand for political office. The term pastor-politician will be used to describe an individual who has or is simultaneously a pastor and politician. The phenomenon is not new in the South African context. Many NP leaders severed as Clergy persons, and liberation stalwarts like Dr Alan Boesak, Chief Albert Luthuli, Frank Chikane, Sol Plaatjie, Reverend Xuma, John Dube and Reverend Alan Hendrikse are but are few Clergy persons who have also served as politicians. Currently, the leader of South Africa’s official opposition party, the Democratic Alliance, Mmusi Maimane and Reverend Kenneth Meshoe are ordained and practiced as pastors, while President Zuma has been ceremonially ordained as a pastor (News24, 2007 and van Onslen, 2014).

One must however not confuse a pastor-politician and an activist-pastor. Arch-Bishop Emeritus, Desmond Tutu and Rev Baren Boney Pityana are examples of activist-pastors. These individuals were/are active in political life, challenging perceived or actual systems of oppression. While they may have held a political party membership card, neither have, public office or was deployed into political position within their respective political parties. Activist pastors may also progress to become pastor-politicians such the likes of Dr Allan Boesak and Rev Chikane.

In a democratic political system, politicians are individuals who assume public office, through being elected into public office from a ward councillor to the president of a country. Political leaders are also set a political agenda and make decisions based on that agenda. One of the
primary tasks of any political party and, by extension any politician and political leader, is to gain support.

The marriage of the two vocations can be seen as problematic at two different levels. Firstly, the popular notion that the two are different spectrums purely because of the perceived nature of politics and the Church. For instance, politicians and politics are often characterised by lust for power, evil, crudeness, backstabbing, lying, corruption and whole host of other negative connotations in the Machiavellian sense (see Grabow et. al, 2011: 73). Pastoring is perceived as a noble vocation, someone who is called by God and who emulates compassion towards people and who generally does not bear the tenacity for the politically heated environment branded. Bonino Liberation theologian (as quoted by Boesak, 2009: 8) in his attempt to reconcile the two vocations and the apparent opposite poles, stated “we must move into that arena, we decided crudely, ambiguous and dirty through it may be, to confess God form within the womb of politics, from within the heart of commitment”. The context here was one where Bonino and may of his colleagues became activist Clergy and not necessarily the pastor-politicians. In consideration of the foregoing, it may still be used to explain the difficult (at least symbolically) the task of pastor-politician.

From a purely theoretical perspective, the secularisation model cannot reconcile the two. Remember secularisation is defined as the “process whereby religious thinking, practice and institutions lose their social significance” (Glazner, 1977: 18). Pastor-politicians would be the anti-thesis of a secularised political environment especially made her/his ascension to political office based on religious rhetoric or by virtue of his clerical standing in his/ her religion. President Zuma, who is also layman stated the following, “I start from basic Christian principles. Christianity is part of what I am; in a way it was the foundation for all my political beliefs” (News 24, 2007). This is a confirmation of the anti-thesis theory of how religion may use to shape political thought. Maimane, before he was elected as leader of DA, in certain cases regarded ‘God’s law’ as more important and higher than the ‘earthly legal systems’

The ultimate authority here on the earth is God. That’s the ultimate authority. Cause I know many of you are thinking, ‘Well, you don’t get it, we have a government, we don’t know whether we should submit to this government’. And I simply say to you this: the ultimate authority is God. So if there are principles here on the earth that violate God’s word and God’s kingdom how many of you know that we submit to the highest authority? (Maimane as quoted by Van Onslen, 2014).

If one employ’s secularism theory and Webber’s essay on the ‘vocation of politics’, it is possible to argue for the pastor-politician. Bilgrami (2011:2) notes,
It should be possible to think that a devout Muslim or Christian or Hindu can be committed to keeping some aspects of the reach of his religion out of the polity, without altogether giving up on being a Muslim, Christian, or Hindu. And it seems natural today to express that thought by saying that such a person, for all his devoutness, is committed to secularism.

Secularism is not interested in abolishing religion in society, but in managing religious plurality. Therefore, a devout politician who is also Christian may still serve in public office. The only limitation is that he should not forcefully impose his religious belief on other individuals and especially in the organs of state. A Christian politician is devoted to secures if she in her practice and discourse expresses the welcoming of religious plurality.

5.7 Concluding Remarks

This chapter analysed the perceptions of the DA, ANC and EFF, as well as, local government in relation to the role Christian religious leaders should play in political life. The DA, both locally and nationally, do not have an open and public relationship with Christian Clergy. The ANC however, since the inception of the movement in 1912, have had strong ties with Clergy. The struggle against apartheid created both official and unofficial alliances between the party and the Clergy. The party has an Office of the chaplain. However, it does not have an official party Church or religion. The current party leadership’s relationship with the Clergy are strained due to increased corruption. The EFF in the NMBM has one active member of the Clergy in the party. The EFF highlights that their anarchical approach to politics and political agitation is the reason why Clergy may not be active or hold negative perceptions of the EFF. Furthermore, the EFF suggests that the its many within its constituency do not belong or attend Church on a regular basis. The ANC is thus the only party that has an established relationship with the Clergy. The DA hesitance to be in a public relationship with Clergy may be as result of its leader’s relatively senior status within the Church. The DA is primarily a liberal party built on the principles of separation of state and Church. An overt relationship with the Church may create an impression that its leader’s religious conviction is tainting the party’s standpoint. For the DA, clergy must play an important role in reconciliation. They strongly discourage religious bigotry, especially if it promotes violence, but simultaneously believe that pastors and religion may hold its personal views and conviction without state intervention. In short, the party argue that clergy must assist 1) reconciliation 2) hold government to account 3) pray for political leaders 4) encourage their congregants to partake in the voting process.
The ANC’s ideological possession, rests on African Nationalism, Communism, Chaterist and Constitutionalist. The interpretation of communism in relation to religion does not have a negative element, unlike the mainstream communist perspective. Contrary the ANC, through the SACP encourages clergy to be involved in the political process. Black and Liberation theology is arguably the closes link to the ANC ideological underpinning. The ANC believes that Clergy must engage in 1) prayer 2) prophetically speak to government and criticise where needs be 3) provide pastoral care for politicians 4) play a role in social cohesion 5) play an active role in democratic consolidation 6) assist in poverty alleviation. However, the leader of the ANC, Jacob Zuma believes the Clergy role is limited to prayers in matters of the political.

The EFF is a Fanonist and Socialist movement. Both ideologies have a negative view on religion, but the EFF does not necessarily share similar beliefs here. For example, the party encouraged its leaders to attend Church services the eve before the elections in order to receive prayers. The national leader, Julius Malema is also attended a prayer meeting in his honour the Sunday before the 2016 Local Government Elections.

The NMBM is the only municipality in South Africa that has a ‘Religious Desk’. The Religious Unit states that clergy 1) should be active citizens 2) spokesperson of the community, 3) Custodian of morality 4) pray for its leaders.

There are suggestions that the Clergy and Christian religion are powerful forces, and many political leaders either respect it or fear the influencing power of the Clergy. In summary, according to Clergy in the NMBM Religious Unit clergy must 1) Partake in democratic consolidation 2) pray for the leaders 3) assist the government in nation building and social cohesion 4) hold leaders to account 5) maintain the moral high standing.
Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

The chapter engages with the culmination of the question; what is the perceived role of the Christian religious leader in political life using Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality as the case study? The three main objectives of the study were:

1) Determine the role of the Clergy in political life as seen by the Clergy themselves,
2) Determine the role of the Clergy in political life according to political parties
3) Determine the role of the Clergy in political life according to local government.

The section will be structured as follows, 1) Summary of findings, 2) implications for existing theory 3) recommendations for implementation 4) summary of contributions 5) suggestions for future research. The summary of findings will be divided into three sections 1) a discussion into the role perceived by clergypersons 2) the role perceived by political parties and the local municipality and finally a comparative analysis between the two.

6.2 The perception of the role of the Christian religious leader in the political process: From the pastor’s perspective

6.2.1 Conflict manager, Peacekeeper and Reconciliator: negotiator, mediator and facilitator

Clergy viewed their role of peacekeeper as intrinsically part of their God given mandate. This is found in Biblical scripture: “Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called children of God” (Matthew 5:10) Clergy hold a holistic view on peace keeping. In other words, Clergy did not only limit their reconciliatory actions between government and the citizens, but rather at a broader societal level. For example, there were recorded instances where Clergy acted as the proverbial ‘middlepersons’ between the government departments and communities; between the institutions and members (or university and students), and between factional groups within political parties, most notably the ANC.

Clergy possess what Webber (1958) terms as ‘Traditional Authority. The authority is based on the notion that the type of authority rests on an established belief that leaders have a traditional
and legitimate right to exercise authority, where different traditional circumstances enable and legitimise those in command to exercise authority (Webber, 1958). In chapter three the author considered the public construction of the role of the Church as a religious institution in post-apartheid South Africa. The Church and the Christian religion still holds an important value in post-apartheid South Africa. It may be argued that Clergy is the voice of Christianity and generate authority because of the position of the Church in society.

6.2.2 The community leader and encouraging the church to be engaged in the community

Clergy are not only pastors in their Church, but care for their congregants. This is the unanimous standpoint of all the clergy interviewed. They believe that caring for the needs of the community is based on a spiritual mandate. The Bible records several scriptures that allude to the idea of serving and aiding the community.

The focus on the community is a factor that motivate pastors to become involved in political life. The case study of Nelson Mandela Bay showed that a lack of political efficacy and service delivery, perpetuated by factional battles between the then ANC leadership in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, mobilised Clergy to engage both government and political parties in the best interest of their communities. Clergy act as community spokespersons through 1) spokesperson of the community to local government 2) community upliftment projects and 3) empowering their Church members to be involved in community upliftment programmes.

6.2.3 Watchdog

Watchdogs that are able to keep government in line are an integral part of a well-functioning democracy. The Clergy in the Nelson Mandela Bay consider themselves as watchdogs. For them, this involves holding the local government to account, making sure that there is no corruption and that local government fulfil their elections promises and mandate. The task is often performed by official institutions such as the Public Protector and the professional bodies including Corruption Watch. The Clergy have no legal authority to hold government account, but by virtue of being part of civil society and building on their traditional authority and influence in community, they are able to do so. The clergy, once again revealed that they represent the community in their endeavour as a watch dog. They also reiterated that they represent God.
6.2.5 Prophetic Voice

The prophetic voice is characterised by two activities 1) the moral voice and 2) acting as advisor. As shown in chapter three, the moral voice has two major components, that is 1) lifestyle choices related to the Christian doctrine and 2) integrity and character. Clergy in the Nelson Mandela Bay were more focused on integrious and honourable leadership as opposed to questioning legislation pertaining one Christian perceived moral lifestyle. This may be due to the fact that central to the Clergies’ concern is service delivery for their communities, which cannot happen effectively if public corruption is rife.

The second aspect is the Clergy as advisors, that is, to help governing authorities make key decisions related to the communities they service. Pastors also maintain that they need to deliver the message from God to the politicians and what He reveals to them. The prophetic voice does entail blindly supporting and endorsing politicians and, in the same manner, it does not disprove of political authority. Rather, they perceive their task as similar to the Biblical account of Joseph and Pharaoh, where Joseph was an advisor to Pharaoh. The Clergy see themselves as de facto specialists in relation to understanding the community needs and therefore are in a better position to advise the political powers on the needs of the people.

6.2.4 Intercessor

The clergy believed they were called by the Christian God them to pray for politicians and for the peace and prosperity of the city and the nation. The spiritual act is supported by several scriptures that advocate for praying for the leaders and the country.74

6.3 The perception of the role of the Christian religious leader in the political process: as seen by political parties and local government

6.3.1 Active citizens in the political process

The political parties all agreed that Clergy must be active in political life. In other words, there role as Clergy in society went beyond merely leading religious rituals. Local government sees the Clergy’s role primarily as an activist within the community, especially in. community upliftment and in the decision making process of local government through advisory councils.

74 1 Timothy 2:1-4, Jeremiah 29:7
There are however a few themes that emerged in constructing the political role of the Clergy in society.

6.3.2 Promote democratic and constitutional values

The DA believes the Clergy must encourage its congregants to vote and participate in elections. The belief stems from the idea that, Christians are not of this world and therefore should not involve themselves in ‘worldly affairs.’ Electing governing officials are perceived as involving oneself in worldly affairs, while others argue that Christians should vote because of certain non-Christian values purported by leading political parties (See Biblical Voters Guide South Africa, 2016). Interestingly political parties did not mention the need to promote tolerance, a key teaching found in the Bible.

6.3.3 Nation Building

The political parties agreed that the Clergy and the Church must be involved in nation building. This includes social cohesion, national healing, and reconciliation. The political parties did not give an extensive breakdown to the role of the Church and Clergy as an institution. In many cases they grouped the Church and Clergy with other civil society organisations. Racism was a key theme both at a broader societal level and within the Church body itself.

6.3.4 Watchdog

The political parties see the Clergy and the Church as playing a watchdog role, especially in relation to corruption. Although they do not have any legal power, the ‘moral voice’ of the Clergy, according to the political parties, is especially important in this regard. However, the president of the ANC, Jacob Zuma believes that Clergy must not involve themselves in political matters, but one also has to be cognisant of the number of corruption allegations against him. President Zuma has received a great deal of criticism by the religious fraternity because of this perceived corruption.

6.3.5 Moral voice

The political parties regard Clergy as having a moral voice within broader society. Morality is a contested concept as demonstrated in chapter three, especially in a liberal society. One would expect the political parties in a liberal democracy, would be apprehensive about affording the label of a moral voice to a religious body and representatives of the body. Morality as constructed by the political parties advocate values such as integrity, respect for all people
especially the elderly, children and women, promotion of human dignity, justice fairness, and loyalty. According to the political parties the Church and Clergy must use their voice to speak against immoral action of South Africans, including crime, corruption, and violence.

Political parties naturally did not mention ‘lifestyle morality’ subjects such as one’s sexual preference and abortion in relation to the moral voice of the Clergy.

6.3. 6 Poverty alleviation

Poverty, unemployment and inequality are among the major issues facing South African government (Marais, 2010). The ANC in particular requested that the Clergy assist them in alleviating this “triple challenge”. There was not a set directive as to the task the Church and Clergy must perform.

6.3.7 Adviser to government

Mmusi Maimane, DA leader advocates that the Clergy must act in the capacity of an adviser to government. He did not mention in what capacity and in relation to what issues though.

6.3.8 Intercessor

The Constitution grants governing authorities the power to permit religious rites such as prayer services. The EFF was also concerned that prayer was no longer offered at many government schools.

Both Clergy and political parties construct a similar role for the Church in post-apartheid South Africa. The most pertinent difference is the execution of those roles. As demonstrated the political parties and local government do not have an exact strategy on the actual operational roles that clergy must perform in the political process. The Clergy, however in most cases have a deeper acute understanding of their role and the broader need they fulfil in their communities.

6.4 A mature understating of secularism and secular government from all participating groups

The state, Clergy and political parties have a relatively firm understating of secularism and the separation of powers doctrine. In chapter three various forms of secularity in relation to the South African, state and political culture were discussed. The state’s and public response to secularity may inheritably reflect the role of Clergy in political life. For instance, to what extent
does the state legally and politically permit religious involvement and what value does society place on religious institutions.

The secular doctrine stresses the diminishing importance of religion in society. In a completely secularised state religion will have little to no value. The term secularisation is used to study the progression of a secular society. ‘Negative identification’ does not only view religion as nonsensical but forbids it in political life. China, the former USSR and South Korea are examples of these. Negative identification is often characterised by the state control of religion.

Both secularisation and negative identification is often birthed from an oppressive role religion played in the political process. For example, the French Revolution and the Age of Enlightenment were revolutions against the political establishment endorsed by the Church. These ideologies and political practises were the result of a negative experience with religion. It finds relevance in the South African case because the apartheid government used Christianity, notably through the Dutch Reformed Church, to legitimise their regime. The expectation was thus that in the post-apartheid era one would find negative identification with Christianity. This was not the case however. The EFF who by its own admission, is a Marxist- Leninist and Fanonist party does not have a negative connotation with religion as well.

Positive identification places a high value on religion and religious leaders. In particular religion, God is often mentioned in the Constitution and legislation is shaped by the particular religious convictions. The South African apartheid government provides an excellent example of this. The apartheid constitution, on several occasions, paid homage to God, and many of its laws were constructed according to their interpretation of the Christian doctrine. For example, the Immorality Act among other things disallowed homosexual unions because it is against mainstream protestant doctrine. By contrast it is permitted in democratic South Africa.

There are several avenues that South Africa’s ‘state of secularity’ or ‘non-secularity’ for that matter may have ventured. For instance, the DRC’s influence on the National Party dominance may have caused the ANC led government to adopt a negative approach. But, the close relationship between the ANC and Clergy involved in the liberation struggle, notably the Methodist Church and the SACC, may have facilitated the positive identification. In addition, most South Africans identify as Christian.

6.4.1 The constitutional and legislative framework

The South African Constitution provides the backdrop for explaining the countries legislative framework that guide secularity. The Constitution bears the highest authority, unlike the
apartheid constitution, which gave pre-eminence to God. The democratic constitution, in line with international practice, entrenches freedom of choice in religion and worship (see Lesnick, 2010). Furthermore, it allows for religious ceremonies at state institutions, but with sanction from institutional authority. However, it does not have a non-establishment clause. The non-establishment clause provides clear legislative distinction on the terms of secularity.

The democratic Constitution also makes reference to God. The term is more ceremonial than literal, and does not give homage to a specific religious deity. A number of laws have also been amended or annulled that brings South Africa more in line with a secular state. These include the Liquor Act, the Civil Unions Act, and the Children's Act Amendment Bill.

The Hate Crimes Bill of 2016 in its current form may create problematic issues if passed. The Bill bans discriminatory speech against individuals who practice homosexuality. The Church broadly speaking disapproves of homosexuality. If they do so publically, they may be either forced to withdraw their statement (and by default denounce a key belief) or face punishment. For the Church this would entail not being able to preach against homosexuality.

6.4.2 Non-interference in church activities by political parties

The political parties held the belief that the state must not interfere with the activities and beliefs of the Church, on the condition that the Church does not violate basic human rights contained in the Bill of Rights. It is demonstrated by Maimane who claimed that Church has the right to believe in its doctrine and principles, even its against secular and liberal principles.

Jacob Zuma also stated that the Church must not get involved in politics. However, his statements may be interpreted as a reactionary claim because many Clergy have criticized his leadership.

The EFF in interviews also reiterated the importance of separate but cordial relationships with the Clergy and Church.

6.4.3 Non-partisan approach by pastors and respect for governing authorities

The interviews provided rich data in evaluating the political maturity and understanding of the political role of the Church in post-apartheid South Africa. Generally, pastors understand and respect the role of an elected government and, in most cases, do not aspire to be in government. One pastor entertained the possibility of the Church running in local government elections as a community or civic organisation. An open letter from the TCN clearly stated they respect the use of the ballot box and democratic practices. Pastors generally agreed that part of their role is to encourage the congregation to vote, but they did not lobby for any political party. They
also embraced the idea of active citizenry, thus moving away from the belief that the Church should be inactive politically.

All leaders agreed that non-partisanship is of utmost importance for the Church. In South Africa the Church through the Dutch Reformed Church played a pivotal political role. The Clergy bemoaned the fact that Dutch Reformed was “captured by the state”, as for them it set a bad example on how the Church can be absorbed and neutralised when in coalition in the with an oppressive state. One leader specially referred to the DRC as a state church. Clergy added that it dented the Church’s image as it was a co-conspirator with the apartheid regime.

One leader explained that it was important to be non-partisan as they approach government and not individual parties with the concerns of the community.

Clergy acknowledged that they can influence their congregation to vote in a particular manner, but this is subject to further empirical research. One may speculate that influence can be exerted due to a form of tradition authority the Clergy hold in the community. Given this, Clergy highlighted that it is their moral obligation to remain non-partisan with regard to political party support.

6.4.4 The State: Local government and national government and the judiciary

The Supreme Court judgement that ruled on the Methodist Verses De Lange case serves as an interesting case when constitutional prescripts and religious conviction collide. As discussed in chapter three, the Methodist Church dismissed De lange as a Church minister because she publically proclaimed to be a lesbian. The Supreme Court chose not interfere with the Church’s decision to dismiss De lange in line as state and Church are separate entities and the court highlighted that this was a matter within the broader Church.

There are however, growing concerns that the CRL, who has summoned a number of pastors to appear before a tribunal, to account for financial records and perceived human rights violations.

Local government authorities have also not interfered with the working of the Church. Most state institutions have permitted ceremonial religious activities such as prayers, but this is not limited to the Christian religion only.

75 See Chapter Three
6.5 Ideological and theoretical direction of the Clergy

Ideologically the Clergy, political parties and local municipality were by and large inclined to liberal-nationalist orientation. Interviewees often made use of terms and concepts related to liberal rationale when explaining the role of Clergy in political life. Active citizenry, democracy, respect for the rule of law, watchdog, social cohesion, non-partisanship and freedom of association were recurring themes. Separation between Church and state was also emphasised.

The Clergy also adopted a reconciliatory approach in deconstructing their political role in contemporary South Africa. They must form part of or play a leading role in advancing reconciliation. Especially, as some interviewees highlighted that racism caused division within the Church, akin to what is seen in broader contemporary South African society.

Some Clergy in the Nelson Mandela Bay highlighted the necessity of repentance, especially from the white South Africans. For example, it was demonstrated through the TCN 2016 ‘Day of Reconciliation Initiative.’ White South Africans washed the feet of their black and coloured counterparts at the South End Museum as gesture of repentance for atrocities of apartheid (Jennings, 2016). Furthermore, Jennings reports that two individuals publically repented on behalf of the regime.

Lastly, there was a hint of black theology. A few within the Clergy still recognise that they experience white supremacy within the Church.

6.6 Current local clerical involvement in the political process

The study shows that the Clergy’s involvement in political life is still relevant, albeit constructed in a broader sense of civic engagement and activism. The Transformation Christian Network serves as an example of this activism. Church leaders pray at the mayor’s office every Tuesday; they conduct surveys on the socio-economic situation within their communities; and they engage in reconciliation projects including, ‘Whites-Whites’ dialogue and the South End reconciliatory event. Furthermore, they actively engage in conflict situations as mediators, most notably through engaging different factions within a political party, and more broadly, in finding a resolution to the #FeesMustFall impasse in 2016. We thus see the Clergy playing a role as an active civil society actor in, among others, poverty alleviation efforts, fighting public corruption, combatting racism, and advancing democratic principles.
6.7 Concluding remarks

From the outset the researcher sought to deconstruct the perceived role of the Christian Church in post-apartheid political life. The apartheid state used the Church to mandate an oppressive and racist political society. Post-apartheid South Africa provides a different context in that formally the state is considered a democracy. Thus, the role of the Church needed to reflect this political reality through a separation between Church and state.

Countries have various methods to facilitate the separation of Church and state. But context matters and also the historical role Churches played in either facilitating oppression or advancing social change. The Church still yields influence in post-apartheid South Africa.

In light of this influence, there are a few suggestions for future research. Firstly, the model of the TCN may be used as a case study to see to what extent civic activism of the Church impacts the lives of the communities they serve, both in terms of political and social needs. The TCN may also provide a rich case study for creating bridges to reconcile racial division within the Church.

This study focussed on Christian Clergy and the Church. There is a need to determine the influence and constructed role of other religions and their leaders in post-apartheid South Africa.
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Appendix A:

Cover Letter to Participants

Masters Student
Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
42 Ross Gradwell, Levyvale
Cell: 060 611 553
For attention:

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT INDEPTH INTERVIEW

To whom it may concern,

My name is Thomas Terblanche, and I am a masters: political studies student at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University in Port Elizabeth. The research I wish to conduct for my Master’s dissertation involves the role clergy should play in the political process as perceived by them, local government and selected political parties, with a specific focus on clergy and political parties in the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan region. This project will be conducted under the supervision of Professor Joleen Steyn-Kotze (NMMU, South Africa).

I am hereby seeking your consent to give you or an individual within your organisation an in-depth interview concerning the above mentioned research. I also include a copy of my dissertation proposal and a list of tentative interview questions. Also, upon completion of the study, I undertake to provide you or your organisation with a bound copy of the full research report.
I require a formal letter from you indicating that you grant me permission to come and interview representatives from your organisation. This letter needs to be on an official letterhead, if possible.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on my cellular phone: 060 611 5530, home telephone: 041 966 2018 or email: frankterblanche@gmail.com.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours sincerely
Thomas F Terblanche
Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
**Appendix B**

Interview Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction: the introduction will include the interviewer thanking the interviewee for taking time to do the interview, introduce himself and state the why the interview will be conducted.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thank you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your name: Thomas Terblanche</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose- Why the interview is being conducted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidentiality- ensure the interviewee that it will be confidential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration- 1hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How interview will be conducted- Notification that it will be and in-depth discussion based interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity for questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signature of consent- a letter given to the interviewee that he/ she has given permission to interviewed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C

Questions for the Clergypersons

Question 1:

The Dutch Reformed Church was known in some circles as the National Party of prayer because of its close relationship with the National Party. As you may know the DRC provided legitimacy for the regime and to large degree a constituency for the NP. This constituency voted them into power after each election. The NP and ANC have one thing in common they both were/ are Dominant political parties.

*Do you think that clergymen have some sort of influence into the ANC’s dominance nationally and more specifically in the NMBM? Please elaborate and give examples how if you believe so.*

Question 2:

Religious leaders were extremely vocal during the Apartheid even in the NMBM e.g. the late Rev. Alan Hendrikse. There is a perception that the post-Apartheid voice of religious leaders around socio-political issues have been silent until recently (the last four years or so) when the voice was ‘resurrected’ again, when prominent leaders such Pastor Neville Goldman spoke against the current political leadership in the NMBM.

*In your opinion, why has the religious voice on political issues been so quiet in the post - Apartheid era, and why do you think certain clergymen have become active again?*

Question 3:

Former mayors Ben Fihla Danny Jordaan urged the Church and Church leaders to get involved in assisting the NMBMs municipal leadership in social upliftment of the Bay area e.g. assisting the government tackle the drug issue in the Northern areas.

*What is your opinion of the mayor’s statement? And do you think clergymen should be assisting government or is it governments responsibility and clergymen’s responsibility to focus on ‘spiritual matters’? (perhaps as President Zuma once alluded to)*

Question 4:

A group of influential religious leaders had the following to say,
“We have attempted to engage the municipal authorities and the president of the land in the past to no avail, and continue to observe a growing discontent among our communities about the state of our country. We are determined to retrieve lost power and to use it to the benefit of our society as a whole. As the church we will not be hijacked by any political party. We support the ideal that our people have the power to change their situation through the ballot box. The balance of power given by the majority needs to move leaders towards serving the people instead of ruling the people”

In your opinion, what caused the leaders to react in such a way and do you support them? Yes, or no. please elaborate

**Question 5**

During Apartheid Church leadership did not have a unified position with regards to Apartheid, in many cases due to racial and theological divide

*Do you think that divide still exists in democratic south Africa about the current government and why?*

**Question 6**

In your opinion, what is the role of the religious leader in the broader socio-political context both in NMBM and South Africa?

**Question 7**

What role have you played in the past regime as clergymen (that’s if you were in ministry then. How is it different to what role you play now? If it is why is that the case?

**Question 8**

Has your congregation/ constituency and the area you minister socio-political issues influenced your outlook towards the political process? If so, how? Please elaborate
Appendix D

Questions for the political leaders

Question 1

The Dutch Reformed Church was known in some circles as the National Party of prayer because of its close relationship with the National Party. As you may know the DRC provided legitimacy for the regime and to large degree a constituency for the NP. This constituency voted them into power after each election. The NP and ANC have one thing in common they both were/ are Dominant political parties.

Do you think that clergymen have some sought of influence for the ANC’s dominance nationally and more specifically in the NMBM? Please elaborate and give examples how if you believe so.

Do you as opposition parties have a relationship with clergy? (only for opposition parties)

Question 2

What is your party’s official position on the role of clergy in the NMBM political process?

Questions 3

Has your political party ever campaigned at churches in the NMBM? If yes, why did you and if no why have you abstained from it?
Appendix E

Questions for the Religious Unit at the NMBM

**Question 1:**

Former Mayors’ Ben Fihla and Dany Jordaan has urged the Church and Church leaders to get involved in assisting the NMBMs leadership in social upliftment of the Bay area e.g. assisting the government tackle the drug issue in the Northern areas.

*What is the official position of the mayor office on the role of clergymen in the NMBM?*

**Question 2**

Statements sent out by certain clergymen in the NMBM has shown a breakdown in relationship in the former local government administration.

*How is the relationship with the clergy during the current municipal administration? Has it improved and are you working with clergymen. If so how are you working together?*