

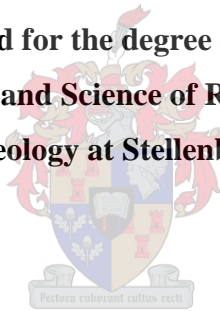
“Ethnic-religious Conflict and ‘People-to-People’ Dialogue in Sudan: A Theological evaluation of Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church’s Mission of Reconciliation”

Empirical case study

By

Aida N. Weran

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(Missiology and Science of Religion) in the
Faculty of Theology at Stellenbosch University**



Supervisor: Prof D.X. Simon

March 2017

DECLARATION

By submitting this dissertation electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the authorship owner thereof (unless to the extent explicitly otherwise stated) and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

March 2017

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ABSTRACT

This study takes place within the context of Sudan, and aims to understand peace and reconciliation, and what it means to be reconciled to God as constructed daily within ethnic and religious identity frameworks of ‘mission as ministry by the whole people of God’. The research was launched from the perspective of ‘people-to-people’ dialogue with grassroots community movements and investigations into the practices of faith-based organizations. The aim is to find ways of understanding communities, their contribution and application of programmes in the ministry of mediating and communicating peace and reconciliation in Sudan’s diverse context. In multi-ethnic states civil war has affected and devastated political stability and national unity, which has contributed to the loss of lives and human suffering, destruction of the infrastructure of the country and erosion of its economic and socio-cultural resources. The struggle for identity, peace and justice remains a permanent challenge to all believers at various levels of ministry.

The main objective of this study is to assess the impact of the Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church’s (SPEC) mission and ministry of peace and reconciliation on the ethnic and religious conflict in Sudan. Additionally, the dissertation seeks to investigate, analyse and evaluate the role of leadership and responses of SPEC members to the ethnic and religious challenges of these conflicts. This is primarily an empirical qualitative study, of an institutional case study comprising of literary research and interviews, comprised of interviews and a case study. It was guided by an exploratory research question which was reworked in an open-ended question of semi-structured schedule and review of relevant literature for the individual and focus group interviews. The missiological value lies, amongst others in applying a social scientific methodology to understand and evaluate the ethnic-cultural and religious identity of the groups or communities in order to inform the church as it proclaims Christ and serves these communities.

The study revealed that ethnicity and religiosity have a strong influence on the relations between communities in the states in Sudan, like in many other countries in Africa. This indicates the necessity of intervention by key church leaders and the role they play in accessing the spiritual life of people with the aim is to contribute in resolving the problems through human action, decision making and social interventions of securing stability and restoring social harmony. And actively engage in mediating of peace and reconciliation within

church institutions and beyond geo-boundaries. The research clearly demonstrates how SPEC is actively involved in supporting, promoting and facilitating peace at various levels. Their participation in peace dialogue initiatives and efforts toward peaceful co-existence is facilitated by enhancing equality and human dialogue. The development programme and activities intended to assist in many social life aspects and improvement of human well-being, including proficient expert roles that lead to grassroots peace-making and building.

The study concludes that understanding ‘people-to-people’ dialogue as a practice-based undertaking from the missiological, theological and sociological perspectives can enhance the form and content of the ministry SPEC in Sudan, and that such an exercise is critical in achieving reconciliation and lasting peace. Through inclusive ‘people-to-people’ dialogue ethnic and religious identities in Sudan can be remembered and contextualized. It is the dialogue that narrates and admits past experiences of injustice without creating new exclusive identities and promoting new injustices.

OPSOMMING

Spesifiek in Sudan word 'n begrip van vrede, versoening en wat dit beteken om met God versoen te wees, soos gekonstrueer op 'n daaglikse basis binne etniese en religieuse identiteitsraamwerke. Die navorsing neem as basis die perspektief van 'Aangesig-tot-aangesig'-dialoog met voetsoolvlak-gemeenskapsbewegings, en ondersoek die praktyke van geloofsgebaseerde organisasies. Die doel was om wyses te vind om gemeenskappe te begryp, en hulle bydrae tot en aanwending van bedieningsprogramme van mediasie en die kommunikasie van vrede en versoening in Sudan se diverse konteks, te evalueer. In multi-etniese state het burgeroorlog 'n verwoestende uitwerking op politieke stabiliteit en nasionale eenheid, wat lei tot lewensverlies en menslike lyding, vernietiging van die infrastruktuur in die land en erosie van ekonomiese en sosio-kulturele hulpbronne. Die stryd om identiteit, vrede en geregtigheid bly 'n permanente uitdaging vir alle gelowiges op verskeie vlakke van bediening.

Die hoofdoel van hierdie studie is om die impak van die Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church se sending en bediening van vrede en versoening op die etniese en religieuse konflik in Sudan, te assesser. Bykomend poog die dissertasie om die rol van leierskap en die reaksies van lede van die Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church op die etniese en religieuse uitdagings van hierdie konflikte, te ondersoek, empiries te toets, krities te analiseer en te evalueer. Die studie is primêr 'n empiriese kwalitatiewe teikengerigte gevallestudie, na aanleiding van 'n verkennende probleemstelling, en gebruik van 'n ongestruktureerde vraelys saam met 'n oorsig van beskikbare literatuur, vir individuele en fokusgroep-onderhoude. Die missiologiese waarde hiervan lê in die toepassing van 'n sosiaalwetenskaplike metodologie op die verstaan en evaluering van die etnies-kulturele en religieuse identiteit van groepe of gemeenskappe, met die oog daarop om aan die kerk riglyne te verskaf in haar roeping om Christus te verkondig en hierdie gemeenskappe te bedien.

Die studie het aangetoon dat etnisiteit en godsdienstigheid sterk invloed uitoefen op die verhoudings tussen gemeenskappe in Sudan, soos ook in vele ander Afrika-lande. Dit beklemtoon die wenslikheid van intervensie deur sleutelleiersfigure in die kerk en hulle rol in toegang tot mense se geestelike lewe, met die doel om konflik op te los en aktief te medieer vir vrede en versoening binne kerkinstitusies en oor geografiese grense. Daar is gevind dat die

SPEC aktief betrokke is in ondersteuning, bevordering en fasilitering vir vrede op verskeie vlakke. Hulle aandeel in vredesdialooginisiatiewe en pogings om vreedsame naasbestaan te fasiliteer vloei voort uit die uitbou van gelykheid en menslike dialoog, ontwikkelingsprogramme en aktiwiteite wat beoog om in verskeie lewensomstandighede te help en menslike welwees te verbeter, en doeltreffend eksperimente op 'n voetsoolvlak aan te wend vir vredevestiging en -uitbouing.

Die studie bevestig dat 'aangesig-tot-aangesig'-dialoog as 'n praktykgebaseerde onderneming vanuit missiologiese, teologiese en sosiologiese perspektiewe die vorm en inhoud van SPEC se bediening aan die kerk in Sudan kan bevorder, en dat so 'n onderneming kritiek is ter bereiking van versoening en blywende vrede. Deur orale, sosiale en organisasionele geskiedenisoorlewering, en deur inklusiewe 'aangesig-tot-aangesig'-dialoog, kan etniese en religieuse identiteite in Sudan onthou en gekontekstualiseer word. Dit is die dialoog wat ervarings van ongeregtigheid van die verlede vertel en erken, sonder om nuwe eksklusiewe identiteite te skep en nuwe ongeregtighede te laat ontstaan.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to:

Our sons:

Emma and Ezra

&

Our parents:

Nasser and Sawsan

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AM	American Mission
ATLAS.ti	Archiv für Technik, Lebenswelt, AlltagsSprache
ATR	African Traditional Religion
AU	African Union
ABC	Angelical Bishop Council
AIC	Africa Inland Church
AACC	All African Council of Churches
ALARM	Africa Leadership And Reconciliation Ministries
AUHIP	African Union High level Implementation Panel
AULOS	African Union Liaison Office in Sudan
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CBC	Christian Brotherhood Church
CMS	Church Mission Society
CMM	Management and Mitigation
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CCPD	Commission on the Church's Participating Development
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CSO	civil societies Organizations
CIMO	Context International Mechanism Outcome
CCPD	Commission on the Church's' Participating Development
CEAS	Church Ecumenical Action on Sudan
CEAWAC	Committee for Eradication of Abduction of Women and Children
CEDAW	Convention on the Eliminating of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CWME	Conference of World Mission Evangelicals
DIS	Development and Intervention Strategy
DRC	Dutch Reform Church
D.I.R.E	Dialogue of Inter-Religious and peaceful co-Existence
DGEWP	Declaration towards a Global Ethics World Parliament of Religion
ECS	Episcopal Church of Sudan
E.R.I.D	Ethnic and Religious Identities crisis-Division and violation in Sudan
GOS	Government of Sudan
GOETHE	Institute is a Christian theological institute based in Accra

GDLRF	Guidance for Developing Logical and Results Framework
IMC	International Mission Conference
IPA	Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis
IPF	International People’s Friendship
IDP	Internal Displacement People
IGAD	Inter-Governmental authority Agency on Development
ICRD	International Centre for Religion and Diplomacy
JMC	Join Military Commission
JETS	Jordan Evangelical Theological Seminary
HRW	Human Right Watch
LCS	Lutheran Church of Sudan
NAE	National Alliance of Evangelical
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
NTC	Nile Theological College
NSCC	New Sudan Council of Churches
NHREC	National Health and Ethics Committee
PCR	Program of Combat Racism
PC-USA	Presbyterian Church –United States of America
PTP	‘People-To-People’
PPDD	‘People-to-People’ Development Dialogue
PPPD	‘People-to-People’ Prophetic Dialogue
PCOS	Presbyterian Church of Sudan
RCC	Roman Catholic Church
RCC	Religious and Co-existence Council
SCC	Sudanese Church of Christ
SCI	Christian Solidarity International
SIC	Sudan Interior Church
SRD	Society for Religious Dialogue
SIRC	Sudan Inter-religious Council
SPEC	Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church
SPLM/A	Sudan People Liberation Movement/ Army
SEOC	Sudan Emergency Operation Consortium
SWAN	Sudanese Women Association in Nairobi
SCBS	Sudan Central Bureau of Statistics

TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
U N	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nation International Children's and Education Fund
US-AID	United States-Aid
W V	World Vision
WCC	World Council of Churches

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Peace and reconciliation are popular concepts in Christian studies, as well as in other disciplines. Many in Sudan desire a peaceful environment and co-existence, but this is not the reality on the ground. For over six decades the Sudanese people have experienced many conflicts and crises; there has been little peace in their everyday existence. There are different types of conflict, i.e. conflict related to property, resources, and power imbalance. Ethnic and religious differences have torn the country apart, and most people have been treated unequally and unfairly. It is strenuous to live under these conditions; meanwhile, it is equally difficult to break the barriers created by different ethnic backgrounds and become truly united. The long civil war and many ethnic conflicts are major challenges to a peaceful co-existence. This is how people use language, and the role of power and inequality are issues that need to be addressed (Schreiter, 2013:109).

The main issue and key concern here is to uncover the role of language, power and inequality, and tension these cause and then explain how these give rise to conflict. Therefore, I will make use of relevant literature, expert opinion and integrate these with the views of scholars to explain the background of the research. I will also define important concepts and provide the motivation for this study. An important aspect is ‘people-to-people’ dialogue¹ against various conflicts in different contexts for the sake of peace-building. . This is also where Sudan Evangelical Presbyterian Church (SPEC) and the efforts of the early missionaries fits in. It is difficult to define peace, just as it is difficult to define concepts like happiness, justice, harmony, and many other theoretical terms (Barash and Webel, 2014:4). Making and sustaining peace and stability is not an easy task in such a long-standing conflict. It requires as much effort and energy as waging a war (Lutz and Folk, 1983:118).

Given the present situation, historical changes, current regime as well as political ideology, it is difficult to maintain the significant and unique picture of Sudan’s diversity and social texture. Ethnic and religious conflict from this point of view has historical, contextual, institutional and theological issues. Deng (1995:1) describes identity as the way in which

individuals or groups define themselves and are defined by others, i.e. on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, language and culture. The crucial issue is the identity of each group, respective of multi-cultural societies because respecting others goes beyond acknowledging differences and diversity. Social identity is the combination of racial and cultural traits that define a group of people (Beny and Hale, 2015:6).

The main focus is on the historical context of ‘people-to-people’ dialogue between individuals and groups and its challenge to intergroup relations, leadership roles and the ministry of reconciliation. In addition, this is a difficult challenge for the SPEC² in terms of structure, theology and programs. The idea is to share important perspectives as far as these issues are concerned. Alongside are my personal observations and experiences concerning the influence of the civil war, especially the years between 1983 and 2005, and beyond.

Concerning the programs, I ask what SPEC was actually doing while the missionaries were there? How did ‘people-to-people’ dialogue become a part of the missionary program in the conflict? How does the background of SPEC’s mission and how does ‘people-to-people’ contact and communication help deal with dialogue and respond to these kinds of ethnic and religious crises? These questions help formulate the main research problem. The word ‘mission’ has always been restricted to the mandate that Christians assume with regard to other people. It is no longer adequate to talk about or take the word ‘mission’ as it is. Instead, it is about the dynamic relationship between God and the world, in the sense of God sending Himself, His Son, and His church into the world, and those who become actively involved in the vision of His redemptive power to understand themselves as *sent* individuals or groups (Verstraelen et al., 1995:4).

In short, the research focuses on understanding and addressing these realities. Furthermore, I observed continuous tension within the society as well as within the church. By tension I mean deep division between people or groups with whom we are intimately related, including various locations within the country. These views and reflections all serve as a background to the society. The observed areas may be related to the academy and institutions as well. The research background and motivation thus leads to the problem statement, which ultimately contains issues that make up and explore the problem statement. Reconciliation is fundamental and is indeed needed to achieve peace.

However, from the interview schedules, the researcher picked up issues of language, power and inequality between rivalries and among the intergroup leaders related to aspects of power, even in dialogue. Though there is tension in the areas of collaboration, cooperation, sharing, partnerships and even issues not yet addressed. Bogotech and Shields (2014:223) argues that collaborative research that engages in mutual community problems can enhance the potential of the investigation and the analytical validity. Collaborating with communities with whom the research is most salient is more likely to make a difference and transform the lives of respondents in the area of injustice.

On the conflict side, Skaperdas and Syropoulos (1996) stated that conflict may arise as long as there is a possibility of future inequality. In the future this can in fact harm cooperation and intensify the conflict (Indranil and Ajit, 2014:259). This was evident even in their discussions, namely, ‘people-to-people’ dialogue programs and involvement in mission as a ministry of the SPEC. Despite the challenges one can only draw a line at first and place an emphasis on these areas and themes. A complex network connection between the conversation, leadership, communication, culture of collaboration and partnership is established, as far as dialogue is concerned (Ellinor and Gerard, 1998:11).

Henriot and others talked about the use of language when people choose to get involved or not, depending on the reality and their description of the situation. In Sudan’s civil war concerning the use of language, people usually tend not get involved, but when it comes to genocide, then at this point they are required to get involved. The battle of the power of language is the most important and effective tool to win. Thus, whoever controls the language is the one who is advantaged. The “power that is” takes control of the words, shamelessly inventing some and burying others (Wijsen, Henriot and Mejía, 2005:xi). It takes many to make the language sound good, especially when they seek their own achievement. This may sound cruel when they try to hide it and it can become total silence, even threatening the safety of others.

Similarly, we are confronted by a paradox, like by what is happening in places such as Syria and Darfur. There was total silence and selectivity when it became very difficult to avoid confrontation and replace injustice with justice (Wijsen, Henriot and Mejía, 2005:xii). Hypocrisy is among the many other forms of violence and injustice. For example, the way of

classifying the countries into a first, second, and third world, including developed and underdeveloped, privileged and underprivileged, are a challenge in the power of language and inequality.

This demonstrates the complex challenges and network of relationships between issues of power and inequality. On the one hand it is connected to intergroup relationships and leadership in missiological studies and mission. Ethnic and religious conflicts are rife in this long-standing civil war, and these need to be resolved. 'People-to-people' dialogue and reconciliation praxis on the other hand is crucial but a difficult challenge. In developing the praxis cycle from the view of "mission as praxis," Kritzinger (2009a:3) argues that it is not simply about "practice." As noted by Saayman (2009:19), it refers to the integration of theory and practice.

Fiske and Ladd (2004:96) describe 'equality' or 'equity' as the equal treatment of races, equal educational opportunities and educational adequacy. According to Motala (2006:79-94), equity is about sameness, and should encompass differential distribution to achieve social justice. In defining the term 'social justice,' Amster and Ndura-Ouedraogo (2010) note that it always embodies essential principles of equity and access to all opportunities in a society because the quest for social justice is a quest for transformation and action.

Power includes pleasure, forms of knowledge, and produces discourse. Power dynamics are more than just language or words; they are systems of representation that produce meaning itself (Death, 2010:14-15). For Foucault (1998:4), power is not only substance but contains all relationships between individuals everywhere as social interaction is conditioned and constitutes power. Whereas the term partnership is simply described as a way of working together to continue and support both equal and mutual relationships and positions; inequality mostly affects those on the margins.

Sadly, this has led to many of the injustices that have occurred, as well as tension and discrimination in our long struggle. This was elaborated on and expressed by the participants. Inequality and misuse of power by authorities may lead to more severe division and increased resistance. One of the most ruthless massacres committed by the Sudanese government forces was in Juba from 8-9 July 1965, where an estimated 1,400 people were killed. The total

number of southerners killed between the years 1963-1969 by the government forces was estimated to be more than 500,000. The acts of violence and racial discrimination towards the people of the South, however, increased dramatically in 1983 (Beny and Hale, 2015:71).

As a result, there is an increasing gap between the local society and political leaders with regards to ethnic-religious conflict. There are various reasons why inequality can be a source of discontent, depending on a number of factors. Disappointments and inappropriate land ownership or control of natural resources, namely, the civil war in the DR Congo was controlling the natural resources and the Maoist movement in Nepal. Due to the power imbalance, people experienced many severe crises in their everyday lives, as well as unfair treatment.

Contextual theology from this viewpoint explores the types of differences and the consequences of living together. It is aware that not all differences can be adjusted to be the same. Respecting differences moves beyond recognition, it requires struggling with the meaning of differences as well as incorporation and communication in many areas of conversation (Schreiter, 1997:95). Unlike many other countries in the world, Sudan desires for its people to overcome these differences. Although writing from an American context, Guder (1998:113) indicates that anyone who lives in a culture with a social understanding knows that culture is related to the power of customs, tradition and language identity, which can distinctly work negatively or positively. Therefore, Christians in Sudan, and in the SPEC in particular, are required to reflect in some depth on previous experiences to evaluate future mission, as well as seriously engage in and seek the expansion of the kingdom by encouraging fruitful and honest prophetic dialogue.

1.2 Background to the motivation of the study

In Sudan, the use of language, power and inequality are issues that cause tension and fuel the conflict. All of these can be used to explain the background of the study also form part of the motivation. For example, the issue of using language to identify where civil war and genocide cause conflict, by using current research to provide a background to the study, and defining what ethnicity is. However, to begin, multi-ethnicity and religiosity is a crucial social and political reality in Sudan today. Ethnicity, from this point of view is described as a

historical phenomenon that undergoes changes in accordance with historical conditions. We must have an adequate understanding of the nature of ethnicity if we wish to transform the present situation and develop the richness and capacity of indigenous groups and promote their ethnic liberation (Torres and Eagleson, 1981:59).

Ethnicity and religiosity has a strong influence on the relationships between communities, and between communities and the state, as indicated in the dictionary of Houghton Mittlin (2009). Sudan, like many other African countries, namely, Burundi, Rwanda, Algeria and Ethiopia, is a multi-ethnic state, which has been affected and devastated by many wars and civil conflicts, in which political stability and national unity is always under threat.

This motivation is based on an ethnic background; there seems to be a link between ethnicity and religiosity. Here, the researcher wants to share her own experience and describe the relationship between the religious and ethnic dimension to indicate how the theme of reconciliation is and has been in this context of peace-building. This seems to be a difficult and historical challenge in Sudan. These factors have all contributed to the researcher's interest to examine and investigate the conflict and threats of violence in the country.

However, the term ethnicity refers to a collective group consciousness defined by reference to a configuration of elements such as language, religion, homeland, values, and the need for identity to be permanent, as well as fulfilling the need to belong (Tschuy, 1997:156). Ethnicity could also be defined as the practice and tradition of an ethnic and racial group, which includes its language, as well as cultural and religious customs and practices. Taylor (2000:275) asserts that the Christian worldview of culture, ethnicity or race, economics, politics, and so forth, still needs to be fully developed by African churches. Religion is the key factor that shapes the identity and the character of many communities. Taylor (2000:37) views religion as becoming a slave in a more religious world. The following opening remark was stated by the chairperson at a conference at the Goethe Institute³ in Accra:

Many conflicts arise out of what a section of the citizenry perceives as unequal access to the power, or to the wealth and development programs in those countries. When unequal power relationship coincides with differences in religious faiths, religion becomes a convenient rallying point for intensifying the resentment that fans the conflict (Goethe, 2004:11).

Various religions have a lot to do with conflicts because many political leaders try to win support for their cause, as is happening in Sudan and in many other regions. This is precisely because factional leaders can easily exploit religion and ethnicity during conflict, where they tend to be more intense. When differences in religious faith coincide with ethnic differences, the conflict is aggravated even further, making resolution very difficult. In addition:

...irrational feeling about religion and ethnicity; such conflict becomes difficult to resolve, and when they are resolved. Resentment suspicions and losing trust between the factions in the conflict becomes very difficult to erase (Goethe, 2004:11).

Therefore, much effort has been directed at dividing people along ethnic and tribal lines. As a result of the separation, South Sudan was lost. Consequently, there is a growing gap between the local society, political leaders and ethnic-religious conflicts, which has influenced both states. This is also what I plan to display in this study, to assist the SPEC in their ministry and many others during the time of conflict and struggle. Firstly, the study seeks to introduce the background of SPEC's mission related to theology, and secondly, the issue of people dialogue in terms of SPEC's mission in the context of the long-standing conflict and how the church should respond to dialogue and differences. This includes a brief review of SPEC's mission history with attention focused on the contemporary theological and missiological perspectives of mission and the ministry of reconciliation (Bosch, 2011:428).

Furthermore, the impact of the absence of peace for such a long period of time resulted in an increase of violence and violations. The responses from the leaders and their followers as well as religious institutions reflect the activities of the society in the crisis. This is what this study intends to do, to understand and explore a new direction in the mission and ministry of the SPEC. In addition, it seeks to find ways to contribute to a more contextual grassroots and more peaceful co-existence, as well as reconciliation for the church and society. Despite the many peace initiatives and agreements, the situation is still fraught with difficulty and the people lack a sense of security, safety and stability. The reality of the 2011 referendum politically divided the country into two sovereign states: Republic of Sudan and South Sudan.

As highlighted in the discussion above, owing to the numerous causes of the multiple problems and renewed conflicts, finding a resolution to these complex realities is a difficult task and challenge for the church, society, and the research as well. Based on this

understanding of the background of the current research topic, the researcher's motivation is driven by a number of factors, as was mentioned earlier. The theological, missiological and historical motivation, as well as contextual relevance relates to the religious, theological, and missiological significance in the sense of how missionaries respond to it and if any others are part of the motivation. Civil war and the long conflict in Sudan is one of the recurring causes of the tragic loss of life and suffering of the Sudanese people. It has destroyed the infrastructure of the country eroding its economic and socio-cultural resources, adapted from the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) deal published by Peace Direct⁴. Basically, the research consists of multiple layers. Some of these aspects have already been discussed; others will be explored in more detail later on.

Moreover, the political dominance and violence is at its peak because of the lack of political will to find a solution to the unresolved and pending issues. In addition, military combat operations have assisted the tribal militias under different names, which has exacerbated the division and tension among the different regions of the country. Tribal militias carried out attacks mainly against farming groups who suffered economically and experienced various forms of marginalization. These violent responses resulted in a breakdown of the traditional reconciliation mechanisms, which caused significant ethnic tension.⁵

The Sudanese conflict can be defined along ethnic, cultural, religious or linguistic lines, though it has a broad background. 'People-to-people' dialogue and other peace-making activities in Sudan have focused on these local ethnic conflicts. Based on this context and the conflict, and depending on the people and definition that is applied, these conflicts are broadly defined. In order to achieve peace we are required to respond through 'people-to-people' dialogue because peace-making is one of many activities. In this context, several activities have been introduced during these long conflicts. Therefore, I opt for this because it is already present in our history.

People who are involved in dialogue have many activities, processes, and 'people-to-people' dialogue as common denominators. It is used in this context as a liberating inter-church practice and compared to one's own context it is an important instrument, possibly emerging and liberating practice or movement, which requires commitment to action, not just sound argument (Saayman, 2009:18). Reflecting on the accomplishment of the missionaries in

history, I am interested in knowing their responses. When we talk about missionaries it focuses on two different levels, namely: on churches, particularly the SPEC denomination; and the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC) as an umbrella for all the churches in Sudan. In the work and theology of the SPEC is the aspect of ‘people-to-people’ dialogue and their programs revolving around issues of peace dialogue. This will be helpful later to elaborate on and talk more about the leaders and their policies because of the policy documents. This is how they define ethnicity in conflict and how they use the historical context of ‘people-to-people’ dialogue as one of the activities. In a baseline study, Bradbury et al. (2006:19) describes the historical and current contexts, as well as issues in the conflict as follows:

There has been civil war in Sudan since 1955, the year before Independence, with only a decade-long interlude between the 1972 Addis Ababa Agreement, which ended the first war, and the 1983 Bor Mutiny, which marked the start of the second war.... The North-South peace process that culminated in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) of 2005 was preceded by the outbreak of war in Darfur. Although the war between the Government of Sudan (GOS) and Sudan People Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) was the dominant conflict in Sudan from (1983 to 2004).

The uprising in Darfur in (2003) underlines the fact that Sudan’s crisis is not limited to a war between the North and the South, or between the government and the SPLM/A, or between Muslims and Christians, or Arabs⁶ and non-Arabs. Sudan is today characterized by a ‘network of internal wars’ fought at national, regional and local levels (Johnson, 2003:127).

The on-going war over the past few decades (since independence in 1956) has caused considerable tension and violence in Darfur. The conflict was labelled as ‘genocide’ and was witnessed by the whole world. Others testify to unspeakable acts committed by their own and local people, who given the circumstances are capable of committing terrible and sadistic acts against their own neighbours (Ornstein, 2007:11). Taking place in Darfur is genocide, ethnic cleansing and hate crimes against humanity. Although there are divided opinions on what has happened in Darfur, what occurred in the south and many other regions of the north over the past few decades must be remembered, as it sheds light on the hidden intentions of the Arab-dominated government in Sudan to eradicate Africans from their traditional lands reserving it for Arab settlement (Beny and Hale, 2015:187, 276).

In December 2005, the capital city Greater Khartoum was declared as the capital of the ‘Arab culture’ in a festival by president Al-Bashir, after the 2005 CPA deal. This festival is a form of a new annual cultural festival held in many Arab countries. The government plans to maintain the so-called twin policies of Arabization ‘vision’ and Islamization ‘aspiration of Islam’ (Werner, Anderson and Wheeler, 2000:584)⁷. These controversial plans regard the Sudanese identity, according to the statements, as being a country with one official Arabic working language, one culture and one identity, namely, Islamic. Being aware of the missionary founder’s views and these controversial perspectives, the researcher rephrased or omitted some of the sensitive information.

On the 9th of July 2011, during the declaration of South Sudan as an independent and sovereign state, President Al-Bashir made another confirmation. He denied and ignored any consideration of the country’s multi-ethnic groups or religions in the remaining parts of Sudan. This led to the marginalization of religion and its multi-cultural nature and traditions, despite many languages being widely spoken there.

Both North and South Sudan claimed ownership of the Abyei region, the richest oil area located along the border. Secession was promised earlier in a referendum under the 2005 CPA. In addition, President Al-Bashir threatened to wage war in the South Kordofan state. The president claimed that Abyei “remains northern” if they opted for confrontation there (April 2011)⁸. After the cessation of South Sudan as a new sovereign state, another outbreak occurred in the two regions of South Kordofan and South Blue Nile, which bordered the area of the newly formed South Sudan. Beny and Hale (2015:24-25) explain that the ethnic and religious conflict took many forms and was earmarked by destroying everything of value and massive internal displacement, as well as atrocities against civilians with the clear intent of ethnic-cleansing. This outbreak was due to the failure to address the outstanding issues related to the Niavasha CPA protocols, especially in the areas of popular consultations (Deng, 2010:10-11).

The SPEC is a member of the SCC, and the ‘people-to-people’ dialogue program of the SCC is a response to the various conflicts that have been researched. But no theological study has investigated SPEC’s response, contribution and application of the program in its ministry of mediating peace and reconciliation in Sudan. Although previous studies have focused on

understanding the role of the leaders concerning Sudan's longest conflict, many other authors have written on public issues concerning peace and reconciliation. These researchers have focused on areas of conflict, reconstruction, reconciliation and public peace. Few studies provided empirical evidence or examined specific samples or groups of people in these areas. This can illuminate the epistemological and methodological differences between the main research approaches, and establish connections with the real world (Mouton, 2001:142).

SPEC's 'people-to-people' dialogue is an example of mission practice and theology, which is different from that of other mainline churches, for example, the Dutch Reform Church (in South Africa). Emerging issues, themes and different phases form part of the research background. For example, the theology of mission uses themes in a denomination and mission history, which could bring about many challenges of trust and truth telling, or research literature on the relation between 'people-to-people' dialogue in the SPEC context.

One of the most interesting areas that emerged could be the gap between the history and practice of the early church and missionaries. The SPEC context provides the opportunity to see to what extent these missionary motives have influenced and shaped the thinking of SPEC's role and identity (Bosch, 2011:291).

In reference to the mission of the Dutch Reform Church (DRC) in South Africa, Saayman's (2007) ideas and experiences in *Being Missionary, Being Human* related to the four waves of in DRC mission history, and their respective encounters. He proposed 'emerging dialogical and open participation' in post-apartheid South Africa as the nature of the encounters; these depend on the extent of 'people-to-people' dialogue. This raises an important question: "How should we understand and deal with expressions of 'people-to-people' dialogue as a context and instrument of reconciliation and justice, for example, in the mission of the DRC?" However, the focus of this research is on the SPEC in particular (chapter four).

Similarly, "Are there groups of Presbyterian missionaries involved in human rights cases in different denominational contexts?" This raises another question, "How does the involvement relate to the mission of SPEC?" The way of being engaged in cultural dialogue in mission and public space is a social justice issue because the specific context of social justice fosters cultural dialogue. This may be within and beyond daily conversation, and specifically, as an

intervention for leadership preparation (Bogotech and Shields, 2014:1145). It is a kind of advocacy in mission, which includes or departs from a prophetic dimension in ‘mission as humanization.’

According to Saayman (2007:vii), in the earlier waves of mission in the DRC context, there were no signs of cooperation or partnership from the congregants; it was only an expression of one power over another power. This is not open ended, but a demonstration of unequal power relations in praxis. According to my personal experience in the Sudanese context, that relationship has led to many divisions and formulations of other new churches. Furthermore, the idea of involving church leaders in political issues and holding political posts was not welcomed by many of the participants. This gap exists not only in terms of praxis, but also manifests itself in dialogue and other experiences in church history, as well as in mission theory and theology. In the process of change, the gap also affects the encounters and criticisms of practitioners who have played an influential role, especially those who left the ministry for the sake of government posts.

Knitter (1985:19) provided a summary of the change of Christianity from a Jewish to a Greco-Roman religion. Bosch (2011:430)⁹ described these processes as change and transformation, not only in the liturgical and sacramental life of the church but also in the structures of its organization, legislation and doctrines, that is, in the understanding of the revelation that had given birth to it. This was discovered through Greek religious and philosophical insights that had been revealed to them.

The doctrine of the Trinity and of the Divinity of Christ, for example, would not be what they are today if the church had not reassessed itself and its doctrines in the light of the new historical and cultural situation during the third to the sixth century (Bosch, 2011:195). An important and central place to start is with mission as ministry by the whole people of God; this is a significant element and a key issue in this study. My particular interest here is within ‘people-to-people’ dialogue and the participation and role of intergroup leadership, with mission policy and church issues as a point of departure. An important function of missiology is to answer *what* to do, *how* to do it and *why* is it necessary?

Therefore, I ask different exploratory questions such as: What would ‘people-to-people’s dialogue look like within mission as ministry by the whole people of God? Dialogue as an action by the whole people of God, is a crucial aspect (Burbank and Cooper, 2010:61). This is a fundamental position Bosch (2011:485-488) took in terms of who should do mission. Who should be involved in mission because this wasn’t known or very clear in church history? What went wrong in the fourth century during the Roman Empire? How did that play out within the different Catholic and Protestant traditions? Which one has manifested better than the other?

Therefore, what does religious participation in ‘people-to-people’ dialogue mean in light of the history of contemporary literature around this subject, form and context of the early church? The content of the problems of the early church, as well as institutional problems that tried to address this and the priesthood of all believers is the theological language that deals with these kinds of issues. What is the role of ‘people-to-people’ dialogue as a practice from this perspective? And if it is done from this perspective, how will it influence why it is used in terms of the above? This will be explored further in more detail.

These theological and missiological aspects are contextualized and additional questions are raised about the challenges and opportunities of the whole people of God. These are significant elements and key issues in the study of SPEC ministry and in the mediation of reconciliation. Who should be involved in and do mission? One of the focus areas is mission as a transformative dimension of mission, which includes reconciliation. How can we move from reconciliation to transformation? Elements of mission take place in many ways, modes and areas; for instance, there is mission as contextualization, justice, culture, and as prophetic dialogue. For example, Bosch, Schreiter, Bevans and Schroeder, to mention a few, view these as ways of contextualizing mission (Bosch, 2011:377).

In fact, Bosch (2011:430) spoke about mission as transformational praxis. In other words, it means to actually engage in dialogue with people who are suffering. This is to be transformational (Schreiter, 1985:12) because dialogue is an inductive approach, which invites the researcher to elaborate in more detail and ask questions. Firstly, what are the conceptual and hermeneutical frameworks of the issues and themes in theology, missiology, and the science of religion? Secondly, what are the key terms in this conceptual approach?

Lastly, how does such a conceptual study approach themes, and is the effect of its methodology positive or negative in the light of this study?

Furthermore, the questions that have been posed here expose the problems and gaps in the literature. This study seeks to conceptualize reconciliation in terms of critical ‘people-to-people’ dialogue in order to explore the praxis, has been indicated. Once the conceptual ground has been laid, I should be able to address the ontological question of whether the views of race, religion, and reconciliation (as defined in particular contexts) are real and relevant (Glasgow, 2009:8). This partly concerns the role of the church in processes of building reconciliation. Hence, the ministry of reconciliation is as an important key concept.

The element or framework of ‘mission as ministry by the whole people of God’ is one of the new directions in mission theology (Bosch 1991), including the encompassing notion of the *missio Dei*. This concerns *who* should be doing mission, but it is ultimately God’s mission. In other words, the concept of the *missio Dei* is an important one; people are not just responding and participating in relation to reconciliation but to the whole people of God in relation to the *missio Dei*. It is an overarching theological structure for the theological content, which will be discussed in the normative section of chapter two.

More information on the past and present historical causes of the conflict in Sudan will be elaborated on further in chapter three. Therefore, in every movement one has to stop and ask, what relevance does one’s conceptualization have for reconciliation? This means that praxis is important. Only a few relevant points will be covered in detail here, the rest will be dealt with in the next chapter. Nonetheless, I wish to acknowledge that there are certain themes that are very important here, i.e. some areas of justice, injustice, culture, transformation, and relational being with others. The idea is to understand the meanings that people have assigned to these themes.

Mission is linked to and has major implications for all of these areas. The point is that we have to place people into that praxis and engage with them, and that is why we have to ask these questions. For example, I would like to know what SPEC can do to reduce this long-term conflict? What is their stance in supporting the other? What is the connection to the causes? What is their approach to reconciliation?

1.3 Research problem statement

Peace and reconciliation in Sudan are currently at stake because of the fragile CPA that was reached in 2005. Glossing over the diversity of Sudanese identities contributes to the main problem and is at the root of the conflict in Sudan. The northern ruling class who inherited the power and the privilege from the British colonial authorities never accepted the people of the south, from the Nuba Mountains, the Angessena and Beja as they are “black Africans,” including those from Darfur. They were mostly considered inferior in their position in the social and racial hierarchy, and should accept whatever the ruling class decided for them in gratitude (Beny and Hale, 2015:3).

In one way or another, this affects almost every state in Sudan and the south of Sudan. The numerous tribal differences that continue to be politicized and the related bitter oil conflicts have exacerbated the problem even further. Despite all these instances where people can point to religion as a source of violence, one can also point to the manifold ways that religion has worked to build peace. This needs to be built on a definite relationship of peace, reconciliation and peace-building. Unless we build concrete foundations of reconciliation, peace is unachievable. From what has been mentioned previously, both peace and reconciliation is indeed a sign of the good news of Jesus drawing nearer (Kalu, Vethanayagamony and Chia, 2010:23). The concept of reconciliation needs to be clearly defined, and for theories to be refined towards target problem areas that are the real cause of the conflict. Possible solutions are perhaps through ethnic and religious dimensions and theological perspectives when seeking organizational intervention programs.

The concept of the Context Intervention Mechanisms Outcome (CIMO) logic helps to explain the reasons behind the conflict and makes a contribution on how to ease the tension, reduce and mitigate the conflict, deliver the nation from the hatred, and restore social harmony. The letters of the acronym CIMO stand for: C: Context, asks what to do? M: Mechanism, which way or in which situation? I: Intervention, to produce what effect? O: Outcome, offers an explanation for why this happened? The CIMO approach is a method in transformative missiology that connects theories and practice, and concretely integrates the concepts and themes. This is relevant to the interconnected themes and phases mentioned by combining the resources used in ‘people-to-people’ dialogue in the context of SPEC and to

respond to the aims of the programs. Also, to produce outcomes and actions as it reflects on the programs that lead to reconciliation and transformation, because the reality and people's dialogues are beyond explanation (Tilley and Pawson, 1997:74).

In light of the above, this study intends to understand the events and practices of reconciliation in a multi-ethnic state and contribute to addressing the gaps in 'people-to-people' dialogue and SPEC's 'mission as ministry by the whole people of God' in the literature and practice of mission. The research question focuses and guides the responses to the problem statement. A research problem implicitly or explicitly embodies the main research question and sub-questions (Mouton, 2001:52-53).

1.3.1 The main research question

The main research question is formulated first and then the sub-questions. Traditional qualitative or quantitative studies often begin by formulating one research question (Creswell and Clerk, 2007:105). The main research question is an exploratory open-ended question that guides the construction and implementation of an item-list or semi-structured interview schedule for the individual and focus group interviews. The main research question of this study is as follows: "How has and can 'mission as ministry' in the SPEC mediate the structure of peace and reconciliation within and beyond its institutional context through 'people-to-people' dialogue?" Making use of the CIMO approach and mission themes in questioning the events, factors, and causes leads one to focus on the relationship between the problem statement, research background and the main research question. This is a fundamental element that guides the research process.

In short, the main research question is exploratory (it asks 'whether' and 'how' types of questions). These are probed by means of an analytical and contextual approach, using the CIMO approach and selected missiological themes. This research explores the institutional context of how SPEC has facilitated peace and reconciliation along the three interconnected themes and phases of the emerging ecumenical mission in "mission as ministry by the whole people of God" These include: religious participation by the 'whole people of God' in the 'people-to-people' dialogue; contextual appropriation of the content and form of 'people-to-people' dialogue in the ministry of reconciliation of SPEC; and peace and reconciliation as a transforming (missional) practice of 'the people of God' in 'people-to-people' dialogue. This

entails participation and appropriation of ‘people-to-people’ dialogue in the transforming mission of SPEC, as explained below:

1. The three inter-connected themes depend on:

- a) Participation of religious leaders in mission as ministry by ‘whole people of God’ in ‘people-to-people’ dialogue;
- b) Contextual appropriation of the form and content of ‘people-to-people’ dialogue in the SPEC’s ministry of reconciliation;
- c) Reconciliation as transforming the content of missional practice of the people of God in ‘people-to-people’ dialogue.

2. The three inter-connected phases depend on:

- a) Contextual factors: engaging in the dialogue, content, and form of the community dialogue movement, and practice as peace dialogue.
- b) Theological factors: significant participation and influence of religious agents in mission as ministry by the whole people of God as prophetic dialogue.
- c) Institutional factors: involvement in promoting and supporting the activities of peace programs.

1.3.2 The sub-research questions

The research gaps exist either in the institutional context of the SPEC mission policy document, or it could be in its theology, goals, objectives, challenges and contributions along the three interconnected themes and phases of an emerging ecumenical mission and missiology. The research sub-questions are as follows:

- 1) Whether and how the Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church (SPEC) has participated in faith-based and non-faith based initiatives of ‘people-to-people’ dialogue?
- 2) Whether and how the SPEC has incorporated aspects of ‘people-to-people’ dialogue in its own context-based ministry of reconciliation?
- 3) Whether and how reconciliation as a transforming practice has informed and shaped the identity, role and contribution of the SPEC to ‘people-to-people’ dialogue?

These sub-questions will guide the research process.

1.4 Research aims and goals

The main focus and purpose of this study is to assess the impact of the peace process (events and activities) and peace practice (biographies and personal experiences), seeking new direction in the mission and ministry of SPEC related to ethnic and religious conflict in the Sudanese context. Additionally, their contribution and the application of peace programs, including the SPEC based ministry in mediating and communicating peace and reconciliation in Sudan's diverse context needs to be discussed. It explores SPEC's possible role in contributing to and securing a more grassroots, longer lasting peace and reconciliation. The aim of the study is to resolve the problem through human actions, decision-making and social intervention (securing stability and restoring social harmony).

The intention here is to explore aspects of community dialogue and peace dialogue by engaging and relating them to the ministry by the whole people of God as transformational practices and what it means to be a reconciled people of God. In this way it is hoped to show how dialogue can enrich spirituality with its disciplines for living in harmony and more creatively. Inclusive mutual and prophetic dialogue has to do with institutions and structures in that it inspires them with vision and purpose to restore the balance (Banathy and Jenlink, 2005:71).

In light of the research question, this study is empirical and conceptual, entering into critical 'people-to-people' dialogue as a practice based on the missiological, theological, and sociological approaches to explore peace dialogue, programs and prophetic peace dialogue processes. The researcher critically views, investigates, analyses and theologically evaluates SPEC's role and response to the ethnic-religious conflict, as well as the opportunities to confront these challenges from the perspective of 'people-to-people' dialogue through mutual and prophetic dialogue. That is, from the perspective of the grassroots people's movement and practices of faith-based and non-faith based organizations and their understanding of the local communities in order to serve the church and the society. Some issues, namely, SPEC's "mission as ministry by the whole people of God", including the *missio Dei*, poses the following questions: 'What is in their mission policy?' 'How does the content relate to peace and reconciliation?' 'What are the factors in the text that indicate how peace can be mediated?'

Something in their goal statement indicates that their policy on their goals of peace and reconciliation is important because of the nature of their belief in God. This means that one can be engaged in mission by dealing with certain issues by doing certain practices, namely, participating in the reconciliation process because of our identity and nature of our belief in God. These goals and objectives become even more important when one takes a closer look at some of SPEC's documents, as well as in terms of what their main interests are with regards to theology and reconciliation, and how they think that can happen.

Here, I have discussed SPEC's history, mission policy, objectives, goals, problems and contributions, but I am not going to review all of their history in detail here. I came across their mission policy statement. It showed that the content can influence the mediation of peace, which is actually part of their mission policy. What about their vision policy, ideas and goals? Asking these kinds of normative questions of what happens in policies can influence the praxis. The transformational and missional practice dimensions as well as reconciling dimension are also related to the systems, structure, programs and policies. This study, therefore aims to:

- 1) Find a new direction for the mission and ministry of SPEC to contribute towards grassroots contextual peace and reconciliation in the context of the ethnic and religious conflict in Sudan;
- 2) Explore the possible roles of SPEC that could contribute to the ways and efforts of securing more grassroots peace, stability and reconciliation, and to restore the social harmony;
- 3) Examine 'mission as ministry' in SPEC as an internal and external mediating structure for peace-making and peace-building, and ultimately for local and national reconciliation.

1.5 Research Objectives

- 1) To understand the events, and to reflect on the process and practice of peace and faith-based dialogue as a contextual religious response to the ethnic religious conflict in Sudan;

- 2) To examine ‘mission as ministry’ in SPEC as a possible internal and external mediating structure for peace-making, peace-building, and ultimately for local and national reconciliation;
- 3) To investigate how ‘mission as ministry’ in the SPEC does and can mediate peace and reconciliation within and beyond its institutional context through ‘people-to-people’ dialogue;
- 4) To assess and evaluate the role and response of SPEC to local ethnic and religious conflict and challenges in Sudan.
- 5) To register my own voice as a voice to be heard in the midst of our struggle and background of our long-term conflict and past experience.

1.6 The research design

This section captures the research content which is essentially about the research design. The current study primarily uses empirical qualitative research methods (interviews and observations) and a secondary (textual study and documentary analysis) qualitative research design (Creswell, 2003; Babbie and Mouton, 200:55), focusing on a given context. Qualitative inquiry employs different philosophical assumptions, strategies of inquiry and methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation, as qualitative procedures rely on text and image data.

The process has a unique step in the data analysis and draws on diverse strategies of inquiry (Creswell, 2009:173). Bosch (2010:430) mentioned that mission as contextualization is praxis and that we can start where people are. This entails constructing their social reality and religious values and inquiring about their meaning, experience, theological issues, connections and meaningful constructs. By ‘construction’ I mean to construct the meaning and understanding of some people, particularly, their experience and responses, and then explain these facts in the process of constructing meaning in their everyday life in terms of what the authors have said as part of the interpretative paradigm. Glasgow (2009:5) socially constructed meanings of different types of people and what they are saying, stating that they have been created by social practices rather than biological process. Not just asking questions about ‘what’ but also exploring ‘whether’ and ‘how.’ Questioning not only the SPEC

ministry but also those who are part of that mission, and how they can help the church own a way of understanding mission from that constructive perspective.

Triangulation methodology will also be used, which combines both the qualitative and quantitative data collected, and is viewed as being complementary, making the process more rigorous (Creswell, 2009:14). Triangulation helps to obtain various types of data on the same problem, such as combining interviews and observation, then perhaps adding another source of data (Corbin and Strauss, 2008:27). Using Sudan as a case study allows the researcher to understand how people see, feel, think about and understand their experience. Yin (1994:23) described a case study in a way that it allows the researcher to present an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life setting and context. A protocol or set of rules is a major reliability in a case study and is intended to guide the investigator in carrying out data collection from a single case (Yin, 2009:79).

The case study is a purposive sampling strategy and the criteria used are snowballing and quota sampling (Bunge, 1967:162). The case study can capture the complexity of the situation, which is often the case with human systems, as well as interpret and discover what is hidden when the boundaries between the phenomena and the context are not clearly evident, and where multiple sources of evidence are used.

1.7 The research paradigm

Chilisa (2012:2) mentioned that paradigms imply a methodological approach with a philosophical base that informs assumptions about perceptions of reality. What counts as knowledge and transforming values has an impact on the way research questions are constructed. Patton (1990:306, 393-400) mentioned that themes can be found in the local terms that may sound unfamiliar or be used in unfamiliar ways, referred to as “indigenous categories,” and are constructed with “analyst-constructed typologies”. But ethnic and religious indigenous identities in this study exist beyond face-to-face interaction. Broader interpretations of this concept as a combination of research questions is asked.

The research design primary used qualitative interviews and ethnography based on the participant observation. This reconciliation model falls within the interpretative and

transformative perspective. The approach is likely to assist in discovering and reconstructing meaning by means of discourse using: thematic, theoretical, and purposive case-study sampling, and open-ended questions in semi-structured interviews. Here, I need to choose the methodology and method of data collection, methods of data analysis and interpretation, and then develop the final praxis (Earl, 2010:474). The qualitative way of thinking is characteristically exploratory, fluid and flexible, data driven and context sensitive (Mason, 2008:24).

Specific programs were also used in this study: A case study of the conflict in Sudan using intensive, in-depth interviews; as well as multi-methods such as the ‘interpretative-semiotic’ model, as the researcher is interested in issues such as how people construct meaning, particularly “ethnic-religious indigenous identity”; and the thematic approach.

The thematic hypothesis is used to clarify the purpose of the interview and the concepts to be explored (Earl, 2010:302). The theoretical hypothesis reflects on the dimension and deeper meaning of these concepts (Earl, 2010, 308). The final outcome is to develop a model to help the church handle and deal with ethnic-religious conflict. The research design is the overall plan of the research, which includes the decisions and procedures that will be made for the research.

Babbie and Mouton (1998:72) refer to a basic point of departure. The Pro DEC framework, which refers to four elements that are standard in all empirical research: (1) a *research problem* (Pro), (2) *design* (D), (3) *evidence* (E), and (4) *conclusion* (C). Creswell (2009:3) described it as an inquiry and called it a strategy that spans the decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis. It is a road map that guides the study. Therefore, the study connects the research questions and the process of implementing the research. First, it makes use of the qualitative approach, constructivist worldview and ethnographic design, including the observation of behaviours; and second, a qualitative participatory approach, narrative worldview design and open-ended interviews.

The study therefore makes use of ‘whether’ and ‘how’ questions related positively or negatively to ‘people-to-people’ dialogue with regards to intergroup relationships and leadership roles in Sudan. Osmer’s constructive practical theology model is informative but

not strictly applied. His approach and phases are as follows: firstly, it makes use of the descriptive-empirical task of identifying the problems to describe the real root cause of the conflict and its impact on SPEC's ministry and society. Secondly, specify and precisely diagnose normative tasks to build a model for the church to witness during conflicts from the perspective of theology and ethics in the mission of reconciliation. Thirdly, an action-plan and steps towards problem-solving are carried out using the CIMO logic.

Ultimately, transforming missional practice and changes that can shape the identity of the church's mission and contribution to society is prescribed as the pragmatic task. Engaging in inclusive dialogue includes the "content and form" of the community's movements and practices, which involves peace-dialogue, peace-programs, and prophetic and spiritual dialogue.

1.8 The research methods and procedures

The qualitative methodology is useful in an ethnohistorical and ethnographic study of cultural and ethnic identities of people (Swinton, 2006:227-229). The ethnomethodological approach is mainly employed, literally means 'people's method'. It is associated with Harold Grafinkel's (1960's) sociological approach, and is concerned with rules and types of knowledge that governs people's everyday interaction. This enables their activities to be comprehensible to others, and makes sense of what others say (Seale, 2012:381). Thus, it mainly focuses on the way in which individuals construct their social reality through the medium of conversation and face-to-face interaction (Macrauld and Taylor, 2004:154).

The method of interpretation and data collection as a set of techniques is related to the task, specific choices to be conducted with (individual and focus groups interviews, and observations) and data analysis, as a qualitative analytical method (to implement the design). It focuses on:

- 1) What happened (Facts and description, giving reasons and causes for events).
- 2) How it happened (normative task for mechanism).
- 3) Why it happened (structure and logic, identify causes and reasons for the event).

In the procedures, measuring outcomes must have a baseline measure. In my evaluation, the study follows contextualized logic (rhetorical reasoning) and case study multi-methods.

The participatory research method, as an example of qualitative research, is relevant for research that empowers participants and communities in the context of conflict. Though informal and conversational, it reduces the social distance and use of techniques aimed at facilitating collective dialogue and engagement. Also, participatory methods recognize diversity and plurality, and values local knowledge alongside other forms of scientific and technical knowledge. A participatory approach is likely to capture the complexity and richness of the ‘people-to-people’ dialogue in mediating peace and reconciliation (Swinton, 2006:227-229).

Methods of data interpretation include a set of techniques related to the task, specific choices to be conducted with individual and focus groups, interviews, observations and data analysis as a qualitative analytical method to implement the design. The term observation refers to the process in which the habits, expectations and knowledge are formulated, and how the observer plays a decisive role during the actual recording of the overall impression. This can be automatized during the design of the observation and interpretation of the outcomes (Zscheile, 2012:167).

For the scriptures, the study makes use of Frank Matera’s (1996:16-24) synchronic method by the way it deals with the biblical writings in their present form, rather than tracing them back in time in order to see how particular writings developed and grew (Matera, 1996:16-24). Missiological studies are integrative in nature. The value of integrating the methodology of social science with missiological studies assists in understanding the culture of people or group in order to proclaim Christ to them so that they become His disciples (Grunlan and Myers, 1988:21-22). Information about the ‘people-to-people’ dialogue exists in documents of the SCC and SPEC. Published and unpublished written resources referred to in this study.

1.9 Unit of analysis

Representing individuals and the church leaders of the groups, as well as official and local organizational community leadership and those involved in promoting, supporting and

facilitating the program of peace processes and practices, including those engaged in the community dialogue, each group consisted of seven to twelve participants. The unit of analysis is the object of the study, which clarifies exactly what will be researched. A comprehensive evaluation and study of people and programs, and which dimensional role is going to be assessed, as well as the categories and variables that should be guiding and the coding of the data are all considered (Gray et al., 2011:293; 2007:305). In any context, decisions must be made in terms of the characteristic aspects of analysis in terms of the research questions, different hypothetical studies, theories, and ideas guiding the study, as well as the peculiarities of the sources used. The purposive sampling case study and sampling selection based on the unit of analysis is represented by key leaders and focus groups.

1.10 Data gathering

The data used is primarily empirical, collected from fieldwork schedules and notes from research conducted in Sudan. The data was in the form of audio and video recordings conducted between August–December 2013 by means of ordinary conversations, personal in-depth interviews, focus group semi-structured and open-ended questions completed by the individuals and focus group participants. It includes ten purposive focus groups followed by nine expert key leaders in total by means of semi-structured focus and in-depth interviews (Van der Mescht, 2004).

They represent professional and trustworthy influential leaders, including eight men and one woman, one of whom accepted to be interviewed in English. The techniques employed to select the research participants were snowballing and quota sampling (Babbie, 2007:36). This interest can be achieved by involvement in the research process in the way we appropriately apply different groups competing to understand the intergroup relations and the dynamics of the leadership roles. The inquiry was initiated through open discussions, ordinary conversations and the group's reflection on the content and processes. However, the use of the phenomenological method entails a deliberate commitment to understand the social meanings and their lived experiences (Bogotch and Shields, 2014:806). The secondary data includes the textual study and documentary data analysis research from both the SCC and SPEC's archives and constitutions.

1.10.1 The ordinary conversation interviews

This item list is a normal ordinary conversation covering both facts and meanings. The research question is broad asking overall descriptions, and with regards to the subject matter, the researcher joins the participants' discussion and shares in the free flowing argument with no specific guidelines given to participants to express their views and ideas. In order to generate a rich understanding of the data it is essential to gain other perceptions and values (Newton, 2010).

1.10.2 Personal in-depth interviews

This item list explores and focuses on: ideas, concepts and issues in more detail, with an agenda, smooth flowing guided conversation, and a good contribution. A follow-up exploratory conversational interview is carried out with professional and influential leaders who handle various patterns in different areas of the mission, vision, policy-making and implementation. Among the focus groups who represent the church, as well as official, civil and local leaders, the follow-up research questions have the same degree of in-depth detail and richness (Davidson, 2011:310).

1.10.3 Facilitated open-ended questions for focus groups

This item list is a formal, specific, guided interview approach that is focused on the story behind the participants' experiences and gives them more freedom in expressing their opinions to obtain more information. The discussion explains and gives more insight on how meanings are negotiated in interpersonal relations (Morgan, 1988).

1.11 Data analysis

Based on the nature of this qualitative-empirical research and coding process, the researcher uses thematic content analysis to organize and analyse the data. This is besides the respondents own experiences using interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA), which focuses on what the event or social interaction looks like to indicate the individual's interests from their lived experiences, what things feel like, as well as themes and patterns. Other analytical approaches look very different to thematic content analysis, IPA, and grounded theory methods and methodology, asking 'what' questions for events-status, 'how' questions for developing an understanding and to find meaning, and 'why' questions as way of

responding and applying theological and theoretical ‘semiotic, discourse, conversational and narrative’ (Seale, 2012:367). Developing a typology is likely to highlight differences between events and behaviours or people depending on the context (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Seale, 2012:380). The research interest and analysis type is as follows:

- 1) Characteristic of language is that it is an interactive process and ethnomethodology that mirrors the culture with regards to its process of discourse and conversational analysis.
- 2) Discovery of regularities as an identification of elements and categories of their connection to thematic analysis and grounded theory.
- 3) The comprehension of meaningful action is through interpretation and discovery of themes in the case study of life, oral history, and organization history.
- 4) Reflection uses reflective praxis (Atlas-ti7, 2014).

1.12 Ethical considerations

In compliance with the research procedures and ethical consideration the researcher obtained ethical approval from the Stellenbosch National Health and Ethics Committee (NHREC), registration number: REC-050411. The documents of the empirical fieldwork include: Appendices A, B, C and M. The participants were consulted and informed about the purpose of the research, and the relevant consent was obtained: Appendices G, H and I. The participants were also notified about the anonymity and confidentiality of the project, and were advised that they could withdraw from participation at any time, without prejudice.

1.13 Limitations

According to the purposive sampling, theory building, empirical case study analysis and interpretation, this requires what people have included. The limitation here applies only to the new emerging reconciliation paradigm and to the case study in particular, and not to the whole population. Only the target groups and the explanatory logic used both snowballing and quota sampling with the exploratory question/s and the characteristics depends on the research purpose (Babbie, 2007:193-194). The following points are all possible limitations that may impact on the validity and reliability of this study: judgments using free flowing,

ordinary conversation; snowballing and quota sampling targeting units of analysis and activity systems in the area of research; quota sampling used to determine which respondents in each organization are to be investigated (Corbin and Strauss, 2008:299).

1.14 Chapter outline

The introductory chapter provides the context of the study, a general background and the research framework, which includes the rationale, research questions, research problem, motivation, the relevance of the topic, and the importance of a preliminary study as well as its significance. In addition, the research objectives, its importance, as well as the methodological approach describing the data capturing collection procedures, analysis, and reasons behind the limitations and gaps of the study are all discussed in detail. The chapter concludes with a brief overview of the remaining chapters.

Chapter two begins with an empirical study, the conceptual framework, and overview of the definition of key concepts, i.e. reconciliation and dialogue from a contemporary social and theological perspective of confronting the challenges facing the church's mission of reconciliation as ministry in a diverse cultural context. It proceeds by describing the dimensions of ethnic and religious conflict, the practice of God in 'people-to-people' dialogue. The research design then develops a model of reconciliation as an emerging mission paradigm for the church on how to witness and deal with ethnic and religious conflicts.

Chapter three presents a theoretical framework and the general broader concept of socio-political and religious conflict of Sudan's long history of conflict. It begins with defining and then discussing the research instruments used in the measurement; it explains the design, sampling criteria and techniques employed (Osmer, 2008:57). It also targets the root cause and real reason for the conflict in the present and the past. In addition, it highlights the socio-cultural and religious system of the indigenous people.

Chapter four discusses the samples, its characteristics, charts the results by themes, and discusses main trends and patterns seen in the data. It also focuses on social-religious dimensions of peace and reconciliation initiatives of faith-based and non-faith based

organizations and dialogue as a contextual ethnic response to conflict at both regional and national levels.

Chapter five draws together the results obtained from the previous chapters on ‘people-to-people’ dialogue and the ministry of mission by SPEC in Sudan. Peace and reconciliation initiatives of the SCC and SPEC’s external and internal roles are also considered in mediating peace structures for peace-making and peace-building.

Chapters six and seven analyse the empirical data (individual and focus groups), the expected and unexpected findings; it also interprets the empirical data (from the individual and focus groups). It shows whether the results conform to SPEC’s mission as ministry by mediating peace and reconciliation, or deviates from it, and provides reasons for that.

Chapters eight and nine discuss the main findings, and include the final outcomes and implementation of the empirical research with special consideration given to grounded theory, showing the relevance and value of the study, evaluation of SPEC’s program, finally drawing conclusions and making further recommendations.

1.15 Contribution of the study

Developing research ideas and doing theological-empirical research in the areas of religious and cultural diversity is not easy. Many studies have focused on Sudan’s conflict and others have written on public issues of peace and reconciliation. For example, Amal Madibbo’s (2003-2011) research, *Canada in Sudan, Sudan in Canada: Immigration, Conflict and Reconstruction*, is the first Canadian book that draws on survey fieldwork carried out in Sudan and South Sudan in the social science discipline on immigration. Charles Webel’s (2004) work on *Culture and Public Action*, and Jenner’s (2000) work on the peace process and peace practice and the role of the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC) “*When truth is denied peace will not come: on ‘people to people’ peace process and peace practice*” and the NSCC). The case was written to allow the identification of cross cut issues and themes across a range of cases for agencies and organizational purposes. Tschuy’s (1997) WCC book is one of the few that addressed nine case studies in the complexity of the 20th century on *Ethnic Conflict and Religion*; based on statistical data Sudan was included among them. In

addition, the masters research study by Simon Chol in 2015, an empirical case study on ‘The role of popular participation in community development,’ focuses on the Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church.

As far as the records show, none of these studies have investigated SPEC’s response, nor addressed or examined certain samples and groups of people, or performed any theological assessment of public issues, i.e. mission as ministry in mediating the structure of reconciliation, peace-making and peace-building in Sudan; this is a gap in the research, which the researcher seeks to address (Morse, 1991:120-123).

Therefore, this study contributes to the field of practical and theological studies, namely, the fields of missiology and the science of religion. It also contributes to the case study on mutual and prophetic dialogue, as a contextual religious response to on-going ethnic and religious conflict in Africa, and ultimately, to national and local peace and reconciliation. In addition, it first contributes to the possible role and response of SPEC’s new way of securing more grassroots and long-term peace and reconciliation in Sudan. Second, with regards to problem-solving seeking a way out of the longest struggle by making contributions on how to ease the tension, deliver its people from extreme hatred, and reduce and mitigate the conflict through:

- 1) Human actions as peace-influence (theological factors-participation).
- 2) Decision-making as peace-program (institutional factors-involvement).
- 3) Human, organizational, histories and social intervention as peace-dialogue (contextual factors-engagement), so as to maintain stability and restore social harmony.

Furthermore, there are a number of challenges. As mentioned earlier, there are many gaps in the data and outcomes of the study, which highlights the complex aspects associated with the internal and external crisis. It is becoming a real challenge affecting peace-making and peace-building in the ministry of reconciliation in Sudan. The needs are significant, namely, intolerance, a sense of neglect, disregarding differences, rejecting others, and a lack of respect for human rights on an ethnic religious basis, these have further fuelled the conflict.

Most of the time, the political leaders don't accept any self-criticism creating tension and hostility, making it harder to normalize situations and maintain stability. Political dominance and violence is at its peak because there is no political will to carry out and resolve the pending issues. Military combat operations have assisted with various tribal 'militias' under different names and many uniforms have exacerbated the division and tension among the different regions of the country along racial and cultural lines. Tribal clashes and tribal superiority has continued to threaten the group's identity.

Traditional authorities have limitations and indirect rule has encouraged the continuous violence and unspeakable reality of genocide in Darfur, as well as the presence of large tribal and armed groups along the border, possibly the size of Texas. The economic situation in general is difficult due to the continuous fighting and renewed conflict even before and since the signing of the CPA deal. Underdevelopment and imbalance is more severe because of more than twenty years of imposed economic sanctions.

Unemployment is rife and job creation is non-existent. Mass migration of educated minds searching for opportunities elsewhere and for a means of better living have complicated issues on the ground even further, i.e. weak social services and infrastructures, low public service, lack of proper policies, weak institutions at various levels, especially the educational system. There is also a high illiteracy rate; some have branded it as the 'death' of a generation gap.

There is no longer trust and a loss of confidence in restoring harmony with the regime in the south of Sudan, while opposition leaders in the north are demanding and seeking regime change. Mediation with the international community and efforts guided mainly by the facilitators of the African Union High level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) are carried out to resolve post-peace pending issues through direct negotiations. The leaders are still urging and encouraging both regimes to engage in genuine negotiations to reach lasting peace. These efforts must reach some level of enforced, not only facilitation. There are serious dangers and even the risk of losing one's life by being involved in peace and reconciliation missions.

In addition, instituting Islamic laws on Christians is another concern. An example is case of a religious affair, namely, the death sentence and penalty for apostasy against a woman whose parents were of a different faith. Her marital status to her Christian husband was viewed as

adultery, even her children were considered illegal. It was at that stage very dangerous, and the first time ever of such a case in the history of Sudan and its judiciary system, attempting to apply 'sharia' law on a Christian woman. The punishment of the death penalty is often in the hands of family members. Grateful for a successful appeal, the agonizing threat of executing the sentence was later suspended and the charges were finally dropped.

1.16 Conclusion

This introductory chapter presented a 'road-map' to guide the research process. Building on the research proposal, it formulated the goals of the study to understand 'the ethnic-religious conflict' related to the framework of mission as reconciliation. It provided the background information and explained the main central themes. It clarified the problem statement and also the challenges facing church mission and the community at large. It also introduced the research design, method of data gathering, analysis, the research plan, as well as procedures on how to execute the research with ethical consideration and special application of the program using grounded theory.

CHAPTER TWO

RECONCILIATION:

‘MINISTRY BY THE WHOLE PEOPLE OF GOD’

2.1 Introduction

During the 1980s, Schreiter developed the contents of a reconciliation model of mission into a reconciliation paradigm, which relates to some elements or models in the new emerging ecumenical paradigm as described by Bosch (1991). For example, mission as *missio Dei* (theology of mission), mission as ministry by the whole people of God (church as an agent of mission), mission as contextualization (contextual/socio-economic and political dimension of contextualization) and mission as inculturation (cultural dimension of contextualization). Concepts and conceptualization underpinning elements, models or paradigms constitute important content of this chapter. Since experience is essential, the researcher brings to the table previous personal experience based on participation in theological education. This is alongside formal and informal participatory observation obtained during the study, which will inform the mission practice of leadership, and all engaging in mutual and prophetic dialogue.

Section 2.2 describes the context and content of the paradigm shift according to the interpretative and transformative approaches of Bosch and Schreiter, i.e. critical hermeneutics of Bosch, and semiotic hermeneutics of Schreiter. Following Schreiter (1985:12), his approach relies on the different models to outline and discuss the theological and contextual dimensions of the model of reconciliation, which expands the emerging post-modern and ecumenical paradigm of Bosch. Section 2.3 combines the two models: reconciliation as a model of mission (Schreiter and Jorgense, 2013:13) and ‘mission as ministry by the whole people of God’ (Bosch 1991).

Then, section 2.4 focuses on processes and practices, and the social and spiritual responses of people and the church as the ultimate defining feature of a reconciliation model for ‘people-to-people’ dialogue of SPEC.

Lastly, section 2.5 plots the issues of “reconciliation as ministry by the whole people of God” within a program theory of change framework. The contents and practices of reconciliation as a model of mission, as summarised in Table 1 below, will inform and be informed by the programme theory of change. *Sources* and *resources in context* (C) initiates and facilitates the *responses* (M, mechanisms) of agents, which leads to long-term *goals* and short-term *outputs* as combined *outcomes* (O) of mission as reconciliation: the dual transformation of Bosch—the church reconciling individuals, groups and communities, while simultaneously being reconciled. The Context-Mechanism-Output configuration (CMOc) is a realist approach applied to contextualise the dimensions of the ministry leading to different outputs and goals of reconciliation and transformation.

Table 1: Reconciliation and mission in the emerging ecumenical paradigm

Dimensions and categories of reconciliation in a model of mission (Schreiter)	Elements or models of mission (Bosch)
1. Source of reconciliation (<i>missio Dei</i>)	Mission as (<i>missio Dei</i>)
2. Context of reconciliation	Mission as contextualization
3. Agents of reconciliation	‘Mission as ministry by the whole people of God’
4. Reconciling the church participating in the mission of God in the world	Mission as the church with others

2.2 Interpretative and transformative approaches in a paradigm of reconciliation

An examination of mission history shows various contextual, religious and praxis dimensions, although these were understood differently in the various models, i.e. models of expansion, accompaniment and insertion, and solidarity. These diverse models were also defined according to their various tasks based on the important understanding of the church, as well as people’s roles and participation. This section also describes the relevant context and content of the paradigm shift according to the interpretative and transformative approaches of both Bosch and Schreiter, i.e. the critical hermeneutics of Bosch and semiotic hermeneutics of Schreiter (see Table 1 above).

Following Schreiter (1992:26), it draws on the different models to outline and discuss the theological and contextual dimensions of the model of reconciliation, which expands the emerging postmodern ecumenical paradigm of Bosch. The elements or conceptual models,

namely, ‘mission as *missio-Dei*,’ ‘kingdom of God,’ ‘mission as contextualization,’ ‘mission as ministry by the whole people of God,’ as well as ‘mission as inculturation’ or the cultural dimension of contextualization in the new emerging ecumenical missiology of Bosch can only be understood and used in transformational practice by looking at these realities. Following the conceptual model of Bosch (2011:379), this clearer expression can only be understood within a certain paradigm that has to do with the way we look at reality, people’s experiences, understanding, and meanings for the sake of community transformation.

The conceptual model is part of the research design for theoretical and practical research. As viewed in Bosch’s (2011:187-188) paradigms, writings and discussion on understanding and self-understanding, these are important aspects of reality not only for understanding but also transforming. Transformation means that mission is to be understood as an activity that transforms reality and that there is a constant need for mission itself to be transformed (Bosch, 2011:523).

This reconciliation model, thus, falls within the interpretative and transformative perspective of the paradigm or conceptual framework in a post-conflict context. Therefore, when we look at the interpretative approach to reality, we look at the meaning of reconciliation in the new mission paradigm. The term transformation focuses on how the objectives and goals can “facilitate the process of change and holistic transformation in the people, families and communities. This changes, is to improve the quality of living, hope for a better present and fruitful future life” (McAlphine, 1995:81). This also makes reference to the semiotic aspects. Looking at the whole process, the overall goals and the ‘Context,’ ‘Interventions’ ‘Mechanism’ and ‘Outcome’ (CIMO) logic, are means to undertake specific responses that seek to produce solutions.

Table 2: Developing a research design through CIMO

CIMO Logic: The components of the proposition:

Component:	Explanation:
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Context (C): Describe facts, factors and the nature of the human actors that influence behavioural change, like age, experience and human capacity or state of affairs; asks what happened?

Interventions (I): Seeks to understand how to go about doing things through a program, policy, law, legislation, and strategies;

Mechanisms (M): Give specific reasons to explain human behaviour, people's choices and historical events; along which dimension? Asks how it happened?

Outcome (O): Identify and make decisions, the outcome of the intervention and its various aspects (performance and improvement); asks why it happened? (EGOS, 2008:397).

2.2.1 The interpretative and transformative approach of Bosch

Reflecting on Bosch's approach, this section looks at the religious dimension, theological aspects and the human response in the process. The religious dimension in terms of the context of post-conflict includes God's perspective of Christ, faith, and is more specifically based on the text of II Cor.5:18. Thereafter, it opts for the human response and role of agents of those who must do mission, the call and the gift. The theological aspect of how to connect mission theology to how to preach the good news of the gospel and study the Bible for mission in terms of understanding one's identity is also described, as well as how faith and reconciliation are connected (Bosch, 2011:20-24).

Before going into more detail here, the following needs to be clarified: the meaning of a paradigm; what is meant by a paradigm; why is this important; and what the relationship is between a framework and a paradigm. 'Paradigms' depend on how we perceive and look at the world around us. For instance, a single person can hold conflicting paradigms. Human sin and conflict between God and the other is a major interpretative paradigm. Chilisa (2012:2) added that paradigms imply a methodological approach with a philosophical base that informs one's assumptions about reality, reconciliation, and mission. This counts as knowledge and values and impacts on the way research questions are conceived?

According to Bosch (2011:185-187), paradigms have changed throughout the missions and church history. Here, I first of all look at what a paradigm in mission means, and then more specifically at the themes of a paradigm. This will be followed by an exploration of the interpretative and transformative paradigm of reconciliation as a new paradigm and its relevance to missional hermeneutics. I hereby endeavour to understand the interpretation and the self-definition aspect of mission in different contexts or the real situation (Saayman, 2009:17), especially mission as hermeneutics, in building the socio-cultural gap between today's community and the early church corresponding with those of the first witnesses.

The origin of the term 'paradigm' refers to a close set of basic beliefs about ontology, epistemology and methodology. Mouton's (1996) discussion about these issues, particularly the interpretative paradigm, is a very interesting one. Defined in the epistemological sense, this can be found in Thomas Kuhn's (1962), *The Structure of Scientific Revolution*. Paradigms are general frameworks and viewpoints that provide ways of looking at life (Mouton, 1996:203). They are grounded in sets of assumptions about the nature of reality. They also offer ways of looking at theories.

Paradigms are frameworks in mission theology that consider the historical dimension but also the interpretative dimension in the hermeneutical approach, which is important, as well as how to apply it in a mission context. Important here, is to indicate how that understanding of a paradigm functions in Schreiter's work. Here I ask: "As a major issue where can I apply his main approach to suit the new paradigm?" For instance, the framework of mission as prophetic dialogue related to the interpretative paradigm and to the qualitative research approach, and 'mission as ministry by the whole people of God' with regards to intergroup relations and leadership in Sudan.

Schroeder (2011:56) noted that embracing the *missio Dei* has led to a shift in the church's attitude towards the world and all of creation, and consequently, to other religions and secular thought. Schreiter, in the late 1980's, talked about this global shift as almost marking the end of the cold war. This kind of discussion and its background can be traced in mission as a reconciliation paradigm. Also, at the same time, what do other leaders, authors and scholars have to say about that period of global change from a leader's activity perspective, and applied to the mission context in Sudan?

2.2.2 Schreiter's semiotic hermeneutical approach

The new emerging paradigm is a response to culture and interpretation of identity. This dimension connects the aspects of faith and reconciliation. It also provides the concept of reconciliation and how the theological dimension relates to the contextual dimension and the implication for each community and for inter-groups. The conceptual hermeneutical approach uses the term 'interpretation' synonymously with the word 'hermeneutics'. To experience is \longrightarrow to understand; to understand is \longrightarrow to interpret \longrightarrow to interpret is \longrightarrow to transmit and translate; and to misunderstand is \longrightarrow to misinterpret (Braun and McCutcheon, 2000:57). From the above, most explanations of any interpretation begin with the Greek word *hermaios*, which refers to the Delphic Oracle. The term is derived from Hermes, the son of Zeus and Maia. The significance of hermeneutics as the theory of interpretation means: proclamation, translation or transmission of knowledge from one domain (the gods) to another (human), and entails a relationship between language and understanding.

Thus, theories are essential elements in the theories of interpretation. This will be explored later on in chapter three. In fact, one might say that any theory of interpretation involves the characteristics of the language and understanding of interpretation (Braun and McCutcheon, 2000:58). This is a very advanced view of interpretation, that every text is an interpreted text, and that in a sense the reader creates the text when she or he reads it. The text is not only out there waiting to be interpreted; the text becomes real as we engage with it (Bosch, 2011:433). This shows how missional hermeneutics is theological and contextual in the praxis and context of the new emerging ecumenical missiological paradigm.

Based on the above, this study mainly uses the interpretative transformative paradigm. It is about hermeneutics in mission and missiology as the researcher seeks to understand how the church looks at the reality of reconciliation in mission theology. These models or frameworks are grounded in participant observation and understanding, which can shape both what we see and how to understand it. The term 'paradigm,' popularized by Thomas Kuhn refers to an accepted tradition and set of beliefs or values that guide the research (Babbie and Mouton, 2001:645).

Different ways of looking at the cultural, social and ethical dimensions of life are considered, connecting them to everyday living since each of them links to reconciliation. Schreiter (1985:12) uses the semiotic approach and places an emphasis on other issues related to local situations, responsibility, agents and identity. In a semiotic approach the meaning of the system already present in various contexts is taken into account, engaging in the events of history and shared life stories, so that people can be transformed. The aim is to listen and discover the richness of diversity, culture, religion and languages in God's world (Kritzinger, 2008:17).

Identity, self-identifications and definitions by others, i.e. of who we are, are important. How we understand our relationship with others leads to the topic of conflict theories, inter-group contact and intergroup leaders, which will be discussed later from a theological-contextual perspective in this chapter and chapter three, as mentioned above. Seeking self-identity involves an understanding of a person and a community in terms of complex relationships between one's identity, time, language, tradition, culture and environment (Beny and Hale, 2015). Edinburgh 1910 was a watershed for Christian churches and missionary societies to deliberate on evangelizing the world, focusing on human beings and the neglect of human responsibility in caring for the creation (Kalu, Vethanyagamony and Chia, 2010:1, 128). Therefore, in an attempt to find one's identity in relation to time, language, tradition, culture and the environment would be meaningful for self-understanding and understanding one's own identity through participation (Bogotech and Shields, 2014:223).

In this light, mission is of vital importance to inform the church's identity, analysing the historical background and historical situation in the context of Christian mission. Mission is an indispensable tool for the church to discern the signs of the times, since the church is called to bear witness to the gospel as it encounters God's universal grace in Christ working among all (Chung, 2008:114). Discerning refers to the divine action in conversation, and how theological understanding always invites responsibility of the Holy Spirit's liberating action, relating to others in our conversation while listening during those processes (Zschleile, 2012:145-146, 165). The theological elements related to God between leaders and the society in relation to reconciliation and restoring harmony is an objective with a certain output in the process; there may be justice before reconciliation. That objective might be restoring

harmony or there should be a sense of justice that ultimately leads to reconciliation and transformation.

To build this kind of connection between reconciliation and justice focuses on the theological elements at different levels of the relationship between God, leaders and society, using the dialogue as an inductive approach in the hermeneutical concept of social science and the theology of religion.

2.2.3 Integrating the processes and practices of Bosch and Schreiter

A crucial point here in this theological and missiological study is the praxis and how to integrate the theological and contextual dimensions because they are part of the theory of change. In the ministry of reconciliation we need to look at the two dimensions, the processes and practices, and then to integrate the two. Regarding the ministry of reconciliation, this section combines the two models: “reconciliation as the model of mission” (Schreiter and Jorgense, 2013) and “mission as ministry by the whole people of God” (Bosch, 1991). It introduces the emerging model, which integrates praxis, hermeneutics and theological reflection as an on-going process in the life of faith communities (Cochrane, de Gruchy and Petersen, 1991:13).

It requires integrating the steps and aspects in the process of creating space where people emerge, connect and meet each other. The dimension of the *missio Dei* is important and is in fact a fundamental element in the new paradigm for understanding mission, including theological, sociological, soteriological and missiological perspectives. In this section, the researcher looks at contextualizing the meaning of reconciliation in relation to the *missio Dei* as the overarching theological content and process regarding the research theme in an emerging ecumenical mission and missiology (Bosch, 2011:379).

The hermeneutical approach demands transforming a life of openness, vulnerability, wholeness and love in the church from below to win people over to Christ. For Bosch (2011:428-430), this is a very important term in contextual theology. He regarded contextualization as a legitimate process in the way he analysed the historical and contextual circumstances of South Africa.

Bosch (2011:185) used Kung's six historical epochs and their categorization in theology. This had a profound effect on understanding how Christians perceive the church's mission across Christian history and the way to understand the Christian faith, as well as carry out and interpret mission in this broad picture of their overall experience, understanding their reality and place within the universe. A critique of Kung's ideas, as described by Bosch, is not original because Kuhn's revolutionary theory of paradigm shifts provides a partial understanding of isolated experiences in the past history to the present context, and worldwide.

In Kritzingers' (2007:137-138) view, the Christian faith needs God's revelation connected to many factors and not only takes the experience but also the social position, personal context, culture, etc., into account (see: heading 1.1, P.4). Silverman's (2006:388) famous statement reads: "Without theory, research is impossibly narrow Without research, theory is mere armchair contemplation". Criticising Kuhn's term makes social research pre-paradigmatic or at least a state of competing paradigms. By choosing (A) instead of (B) and reporting back to science in parrot fashion because of all the advantages and drawbacks of (A), even if we decide to use qualitative or quantitative methods, we involve ourselves in theoretical as well as methodological decisions because they relate to how we conceptualize the world and our theories of how research participants think about the world around them (Seale, 2012:43).

The ideas and attempts to interpret the past is a direct attempt to understand the present and the future. Furthermore, the aim is to obtain deeper insight into what mission might mean today. One important way for Christian theology to explore its relevance for the present is to probe its own past, and to allow its self-definition to be challenged by the self-definition of the early Christians (Bosch, 2011:187). Looking closely at the way Bosch understood the different dimensions of the South African context, especially his term 'reading the signs of the time,' one sees people's responses and their understanding as related to issues concerning 'people-to-people'¹⁰ involvement in such kind of deeper dialogue, therefore, bringing attention to our own context as a movement from God to the world (Bosch, 2011:400).

Reconciliation related to the *missio Dei* is mission all about God, who is the agent behind it. God is not just any character in the drama of the universe but He is the author of the universe. The mystery of wisdom, which we know about but can't begin to understand, the wisdom

that is the reason why there is a harmony called the universe which we can just vaguely begin to understand and consider our lives are a part of that universe (McCabe, 2007:47).

This means that nothing remains outside the redemptive and reconciling purpose of God and God's will for the whole created order. Through Christ, who is the mediator between God and humanity, God has renewed His covenant in a new initiative to reconcile all things to Him. From this perspective and on this basis we have both our present experience of reconciliation, as well as future hope for the world. We have to welcome the divine verdict and take serious responsibility to share Christ by witnessing and through proclamation making Him known to the world (de Gruchy, 2002:69-70). More importantly, we need to ask, who should be doing mission?

2.3 'Mission of reconciliation by the whole people of God'

'Mission as ministry by the whole people of God' is a new direction that can be used to assess the impact and influence of the peace-making process and peace-building practice. The attention given earlier to reconciliation ministry in relation to the main identified themes formed the first level as a way of God's mission. I now move onto the second level, which includes the many ways of doing mission between human beings. 'Mission as ministry by the whole people of God' is central in the process of reconciliation and participating in the mission of the *missio Dei*. From this point of view, reconciliation is a very important theme in this new emerging paradigm and can be approached from various levels. At the first level is the God aspect in relation to reconciliation. At the second level, is the notion of the *missio Dei* as God's activity. From this perspective, the *missio Dei* in mission theology is a very important theological dimension to look at from various dimensions. The current crisis or challenge in the 'mission as ministry by the people of God' pertains to the theme of reconciliation as transformational missional practice and mutual prophetic peace dialogue.

The starting point is to ask who else spoke about reconciliation in this way. Then make propositions and build arguments, and later on speculate, theorize, and build and develop models to keep everything together. This will be discussed further under the next heading. A number of questions now come to the fore, for instance: "What, 'how' and 'why' have these paradigmatic approaches been used and applied in missiological research?" "What are

the different relationships between these concepts and how have other authors addressed this issue?” Therefore, fundamental, theological, contextual, ethnic, socio-cultural, soteriological, local indigenous, missional, and even religious dimensions, on the one hand, and a theological understanding on the other hand, can help shift the focus to what is facing church mission and society today.

Reconciliation, thus, is the overall theological framework and the new emerging paradigm for understanding what mission should be today. The theological model can only be understood within a certain paradigm. In addition, functioning from this perspective is how to look at these realities and then relate them to the role of the church, i.e. who is to be involved in mission and who should do and participate in that ministry. This means that one can use dialogue as an inductive approach to the concept of hermeneutics in social science and the theology of religion. This may begin broadly in the literature and end very precisely in the development of a theory or theories (Seale, 2012:368). The researcher will elaborate on this in more detail later on in this chapter.

Here, the researcher identifies key terms using the dimensional approach to these categories and the elements of reconciliation, which looks at specific aspects of a concept (Babbie, 1998:138). Therefore, an important question to ask is, “Does the postmodern paradigm proclaim a vision of unity or diversity?” The word vision here describes the quality and desired outcome that aims to foster and transform lives manifested in the love of God and people, and takes place within the larger cultural context (Plueddemann, 2009:196). Clearly, as the Japanese proverb states, “Vision without action is a daydream. Action without vision is nightmare”. This is continued in the discussion and conceptualization of the meaning of reconciliation with the God aspect being the point of departure (Earl, 2002:109). The following section addresses this topic further. More important now is to reflect on the theological dimension of reconciliation, and to ask what the relationships between the three aspects are: God, reconciliation and the *missio Dei*. These will be explored further in the next section.

2.3.1 The theological dimension of reconciliation

The theological dimension looks at how to study the Bible in terms of understanding one’s identity (Bosch, 2011:20-24). Bosch based the theology of mission on a biblical foundation

and introduced early Christian witnesses, namely, are faith and mission and what it means to them. This included how to understand the event of Jesus, the church's responsibility, and how we can apply this to our own situation. The first idea focuses on the three fundamental theological dimensions of reconciliation as described in the second letter of Paul to the Corinthians (see II Cor. 5:11-21). The literal meaning of the New Testament Greek word for the concept of reconciliation is 'to exchange,' and is derived from the meaning of 'the other'. Profoundly, in the process of reconciliation in the post-modern era, concepts and relations at different levels have a Christian meaning and are not just our own ideas but God's ideas and process (de Gruchy, 2007:153).

According to de Gruchy, the concept of 'reconciliation' (to reconcile *katallassein*), occurs only thirteen times in Pauline writings. It concerns the aspect of God and the role of human beings as God participating in what Christ is doing (de Gruchy, 2007:153). In other words, the God aspect is the one reconciling the people in the main discussion of the *missio Dei* as it is the overarching theological framework in mission theology. In this dimension and aspect of reconciliation there are themes that cannot be picked up by the title but what is important here is how to engage the authors who have conceptualized the term so as to uncover the meaning of the paradigm of reconciliation.

Schreiter (1992:26) repeatedly mentioned that reconciliation is largely discovered rather than achieved, and it is indeed the work of God to which we are all invited. He explains that in a post-conflict era reconciliation is God's initiative and is an invitation to which we are called as Christ's ambassadors in the ministry of reconciliation. His view from a biblical perspective states that reconciliation is the work of God through Christ and between human beings. He used the text of II Cor. 5:18-21 as a point of departure to build his conceptual semiotic model: we give..., we receive..., we are invited, and we are called..., and sent as Christ's ambassadors.

The text of II Cor. 5:11-12 sheds light on people's responses and indicates the end response as an emerging mechanism in the form of behaviour. Concerning the past, it is similar to the SPEC context in Sudan today. It is hoped that there will be a change in consciousness and an opportunity to take pride in us to answer those who take pride in what is seen rather than what is in the heart, for the sake of God for us. This is because we are convinced that one

died for all; this has to do with God's sense of wisdom and respect because we are compelled by the love of Christ.

Furthermore, from a theological perspective, Schreiter (1997:47) notes that through Christ's blood and death on the cross, the cross became a sign of death to many, but to those who believe that Christ has passed through death and resurrection it is a sign of life. Thus, we enter into that work and discover in a new way our own humanity. Schreiter (2013:324) states that reconciliation is concrete and is about building bridges. It is also about allowing conflicting stories to interact and collide in ways that create a meeting space, as well as build relationships and help restructure power relations. Part of this is God's active reign and the resurrection of Christ as the confirmation and seal of approval of what His Son has achieved. The way the ministry of the kingdom is seen is predominantly in the weakness of the cross, not just in the power to heal and deliver (Samuel and Sugden, 1999:33).

Before proceeding it is necessary to uncover the three specific meanings of reconciliation related to the *missio Dei*, namely: the aspect of God, faith in God, and the gift from God. The first meaning of reconciliation in mission is God's involvement in and with the world, nature and its activity, which embraces both the church and the world in which the church is privileged to participate (Bosch, 2011:10, 402). As pointed out by Bosch, (2011:400, 402) mission has no life of its own. Only in the hands of the sending God can it be called mission, which embraces both the church and the world in the movement of God's love towards people, since God is the "fountain of sending love".

The second basic meaning of reconciliation, as explained by Stott in the *Dictionary of World Mission*, is that faith is fundamentally relational (Stott, 2000:810). It affirms that God has acted decisively, once and for all (de Gruchy, 2007:132; Newbigin, 1963:11). Therefore, it is clearly the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ to bring back the created to its original purpose, getting back what belongs to Him in the first place. This does not merely involve the restoration of persons, the environment and the cosmos, but also the equality of relationships enjoyed in the creation.

Faith in God is a driving force to witness, which means the conviction to communicate the message of the good news, while inviting others to participate in the reign of God. Faith in

God means faith in transcendent unity of the essence and existence of the ideal and the real world (Niebuhr and Santurri, 1935; 2013:209) at whatever cost, even giving up life for the sake of others and for the ministry of reconciliation.

Chung (2008:23) draws on these relations describing reconciliation as a gift from God and thus elaborates on the third meaning. The mysteries of God's self-communication through Christ to the world by which God becomes human in Jesus and is present in the creation referring to the power of God's love, the *pneuma* of Christ who is living and effective among us, the Greek term *katallage*, which means the transformation, renewal and creation of a new creature. In other words, the mission of reconciliation does not depend on us, it is a faith issue and a gift from God, and is indicative of who we are. Significantly, the mission and ministry of reconciliation is a gift from God. Livingston (1998:422) adds that reconciliation is not a human possibility, but a divine gift.

Understanding what is meant by 'mission to make true disciples' and 'mission to make peace and reconciliation' is so special when we receive and act upon the teaching of the reign and kingdom of God. According to Nussbaum (2005:25), the outcome of this mission is not only for the followers but also a totally internal transformed life-changing mission made plain in everyday conduct. The impact of this kind of teaching and the efforts by practitioners serve as a connecting bridge between the original circles of followers in each successive generation of the ever-widening church in its mission.

According to Schwoebel (2003:171), reconciliation is thus 'mediatorial and substantial,' and considered as the source of a conflation of metaphors that in the most inclusive way speaks of various dimensions of the salvific work of the Triune God. The language refers to both an event in the past and to an enduring relationship in the present, which is claimed to be eschatologically ultimate (Kärkkäinen, 2013:367). One of the most common responses of mission today is to see mission as transformation in everyday life.

In Paul's argument in II Cor. 5:17-20 his message of reconciliation is about communal, racial and cosmic restoration. God reconciled us, and gave, committed, entrusted, bestowed, and placed on us the message of reconciliation. By being in Christ, we are a new creation, our existence is for reconciliation; our sins are not counted against us and we are called Christ's

ambassadors and as representatives of Christ we are to appeal to all to be reconciled to God. Three main statements specify: a *call* to be agents of reconciliation where we see ourselves equal before God; a *gift* and ministry put on us, and a *service* to do the work of reconciliation.

Reconciliation is not only a ministry and activity, but it is a lifestyle. If that is so, then we can say that we are for the sake of unity seeking ways for Christ to be seen and honoured in us. This means that God who “was in Christ” brings into the passion history of this world the eternal fellowship of God and the divine justice and righteousness that creates life to overcome violence in the world we live in (Kärkkäinen, 2013:350). With regards to the *missio Dei*, referring to the biblical resources from the Pauline epistles: “All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is in Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their sins against them and entrusted to them the ministry of reconciliation” (II Cor. 5:17-20). As Paul uses the image he closely relates to the new creation and cosmic renewal pointing to the final victory of Christ over all powers:

Reconciliation thus is metaphor that in a most inclusive way speaks of the various dimension of the Slavic work of the Triune God. Reconciliation is more than self-sacrifice, redemption and substitution...even though for its validity it assumes those aspects. Alongside the cross, it includes resurrection, ascension, Christ’s cosmic rule, and the founding of the Christian community for the sake of proclamation and embodied the gospel of reconciliation (Kärkkäinen, 2013:297, 366).

My argument matches that which the Apostle Paul saw as the practice, object of worship and faith of others as people hear and understand because faith comes by hearing the word of Christ. The questions asked here are: “Did they not hear?”, or “Did they not understand?” For people can only fit into three categories:

- 1) Hear and understand (know Jesus).
- 2) Hear and not understood (confused - may know information about Jesus).
- 3) Never heard the message of Christ (room for inter-religious dialogue).

It is only through the teaching of Christ” that you know the truth and then the truth will set you free, if the Son sets you free you will be free indeed” (John8:32). It is to reflect and arrange a series of sessions reading II Cor. 5:18-21 with a group of people as a response or

lens for the church to bear witness to this proclamation. ‘Faith’ is to trust or believe and is a gift from God. ‘Grace’ is a gift of God and through it we can enter into the kingdom of God and stand before His throne through Jesus’ redemption by the work of the ‘Holy Spirit,’ and it is also a gift from God, depending on the Spirit of truth to keep leading us to the full truth (Kritzinger, 2008:788).

“In the past God spoke to our fathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, and through whom He made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of His being, sustaining all things by His powerful word. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. And He is the head of the body, the church; He is the beginning and first born from among the dead, so that in everything He might have the supremacy” (Hebrews 1:1-4). That truth was spoken to the forefathers, nowadays it is spoken through Christ the Son. The gift of grace, the one God appointed heir of all and through whom God made the universe.

Reflecting on the postmodern approach, the researcher sees an interconnection between Christ and violence. To explain this further, she now turns to Girard’s (1996:134) ontology of violence. In the theory of religion the ‘sacred and violence’ is complex and embraced by the world without referring to any specific religion (Girard, 1987:180). Pointing to his basic thesis that there is nothing sacrificial about the death of Jesus Christ on the cross he exposes the violence of the resurrection. Mark Heim (2006:126) and John Milbank (2006:421) in *Theology and Social Theory* harshly critique Girard’s view because of his ontology of violence. His view of Christ’s passion concerning the myth in culture and religion of the sacrifice, in their response the victim rose from the tomb forever. Contrary to the myth that conceals the violence, Christ died as a sacrifice so that there may be no more sacrifices. Some churches or even thinkers do not view this as a means of cultivating peace and reconciliation (cited in Kärkkäinen, 2013:372-373).

Discussing the threat of violence in Christian doctrine and life, Roman Jesuit Raymund Schwager (1999:18), on violence in the Bible, he argues that instead of God punishing his son for the sins of humankind, men and women brought punishment over their own lives by rejecting the divine reign of God (Kärkkäinen, 2013:318). Rather, Christ took the violence

upon himself to conquer enmity and embrace the enemy. Reconciliation, even though an event and process initiated and brought about by the Triune God, its relevance goes beyond the restoration and hostility between the individual and God. It has everything to do with the reconciliation of relationships between humans and between groups of humanity, including the socio-political arena as is demonstrated in the conflict in South Africa and elsewhere across the continent, including former Yugoslavia, Western and Eastern Europe, and some Muslim countries that have brought the need for reconciliation into a new focus.¹¹ The kingdom of God is the central message of Christ and was the main reason for Him to become human, calling people to repent and believe the good news.¹²

Livingston's (1998) PhD thesis on Bosch and the soteriological dimension expands on the origin of the missionary church as being founded by God in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit in the world. The reconciliation of God and being a reconciling people of God has developed a systematic understanding of God. In addition, his work on the church and mission history views the church as the kingdom community, and in her existence acts as an instrument and witness to the present and future reign of God and as an agent of God's reconciliation, reconciling the community (Livingston, 1998:317, 423-424). Bosch's (2011:402-404) work adds breadth to mission showing that it is God giving up Himself, becoming a man, and moving into the world through His Son and Spirit. The church is therefore obligated to identify and participate in the areas of social conflict where God was and is at work. The missionary church is called to be a sign and instrument of reconciliation in the world, and an agent and sign of God's reconciliation, as she strives to retain the fundamental unity of fellowship and purpose (Guder, 1998:101).

The crucial understanding of mission according to the Great Commission and the kingdom is to witness in order to fulfil that mission. A missionary identity involves 'going to call others,' 'making disciples,' 'teaching them to obey' God through the assurance of Jesus' presence and power to the end of the world. The kingdom of God is creation healed; it is a new order which begins with Christ and which will be completed by Him. Through him all relationships will be put right, not only between God and humankind, but also between nations, generations, races and nature (Samuel and Sugden, 1999:40) as well as religions. De Gruchy's ideas of Christ as 'The Mediator,' 'The only One' and 'in Him alone' inform the Christian theological contents of reconciliation in the context of the 'three Abrahamic faiths'

as one whole household (de Gruchy, 2002:114). Awareness and recognition of and working together with adherents of other faiths for the sake of peaceful co-existence and reconciliation are important moments in the pastoral or praxis cycle.

Following the Roman Catholic Church's (RCC) approach of a shared vision and experience using the pastoral circle in the Indonesian context (Wijsen, Henriot and Mejía, 2005:75), it is clear that the cycle can also be applied in contexts of poverty. It is a grassroots approach from below which mobilises the local community by focussing on local processes of discernment towards development and reconciliation. Reconciliation is then viewed as a local process of discernment using the pastoral cycle as a way of finding out what is happening in the context of poverty using collective dialogue as a means of engaging with the poor, religion and culture. The approach is illustrated by means of inter-religious groups, visions, as well as how to integrate it with others and apply it.

Following the presence and work of the Holy Spirit within and outside the church in the context of the relationship between Christianity, the African tradition and religions, the three (what, how, why) types of questions are to be related and applied to the various inter-group relations and leadership to mobilize the content of social poverty. The missiological value of this is in contextualizing the *missio Dei*. The values of the gospel need to be promulgated through appropriate dialogue within the process of culture. Connecting faith and justice as well shows the struggle for the common good from a Christian perspective (Wijsen, Henriot and Mejía, 2005:74-76; Osmer, 2011:7).

To the researcher, reconciliation seems to be a gift given from God. Not only entrusting mission to us but is also a privilege that God bestowed on us to reach out to one another bridging the gap between damaged relations, and building and developing new relationships (Schreiter, 2013:71-73). True reconciliation according to the researcher's first understanding occurs when one embraces unity and togetherness.

In the researcher's second understanding, true reconciliation occurs when unity and togetherness is upheld. In other words, when disagreements and disputes between the conflicting parties are handled and misunderstandings are resolved. This in turn brings about reconciliation at the interpersonal level or between persons. Forgiving one another is

necessary for advancing and maintaining Christian communion with others for a better future. As a consequence, the misery of the ruined past is left behind; this is the central argument concerning God and reconciliation.

Hence, Leachy, in a project on forgiveness in the context of sectarian violence, forgiveness is loosely defined as to 'let it go' (Leachy, 2013), especially in a conflict situation. It is also seen as a new possibility and as the right way of dealing with justice. There are no conditions set, except to demand love before initiating any act. Facing the challenges of injustice, insults and injuries is the cost for both the offended and the offender. Truthfully, forgiveness is hard to define but there can be no reconciliation or peace without forgiveness, they go hand in hand (Schreiter, 2013:75).

Reconciliation in this regard is a very important theological concept, leading to the second area of mission to be discussed. Important questions to ask here are: "What is the relationship between harmony and justice with regards to reconciliation?" "Does Schreiter address that, and if so, where and how?" These questions lead to the next point in the emerging themes related to the socio-cultural and ethnic aspect. Therefore, in the context of enculturation, Schreiter (1997:379-382) offers a new meaning of reconciliation in terms of culture and justice contributing to the development of the contextual and practical aspects of this new paradigm from the perspective of embracing all. More important now is to reflect on the contextual dimension of reconciliation.

2.3.2 Contextual dimension of reconciliation

Culture takes a unique place in this study in the way it relates to the group's characteristics, retelling and narrating their stories, catching a glimpse and reflecting on who they are and how they should be in the world (Jack and Ali, 2010:11).

The work of Schreiter (2013:10) focuses on reconciliation because the concrete context makes mutuality in mission the starting point for reflection. Regarding culture, mission and contextualization of mission is used to read the culture and the context from an interpersonal and intergroup relations perspective. The element and categories of identity and inter-ethnic conflict are concepts of interest here. In this manner, Schreiter (1997:12, 43) viewed reconciliation in terms of culture and justice as God's initiative as the one who takes the lead

in the process of reconciliation and understanding in mission, giving the antecedents of reconciliation before achieving it. Proposing reconciliation in the introduction is a key statement.

Being a contextual community relates to various and complex realities. This means that contextualization never isolates a community from its own context because every culture has its own richness and limitations. It needs to be open to the richness of history and to a variety of traditions. This model of culture and practical cycle is an approach to understanding the context (Wijsen, Henriot and Mejía, 2005:75, 82). The idea of experiencing spirituality from the perspective of the *missio Dei*, is a doctrine expanded on and summarized by David Bosch (2011:10, 402), that mission is participatory in the sending of God. *Missio Dei* is God the Father sending His Son, and Jesus the Son sending the Holy Spirit. Mission has no life of its own; it is in the hands of God so mission initiatives come from God alone (Bevans, 1986:290).

Ethnic identity involves our memory, which is a necessary process for selection and creativity. In other words, identity becomes a problem only when other related factors become problematic. In the case of ethnicity, it is a call for homogenizing powers of global forces which otherwise become continual contradictions, especially for those minorities who want to maintain their identity among the larger majority. Schreiter (1997:24) applied the semiotic approach to what people say, do and feel, and the way he used enculturation in a post-colonial conflict context. The new emerging paradigm is a response to culture and an interpretation of identity. Schreiter built a relationship between identity and memory as part of dealing with culture in enculturation under the new paradigm.

Enculturation is not only about traditions and drums on the surface, but rather about deep issues concerning people, as well as their background and identity. In a way, it must be done without creating new tension, division or conflict. The way we remember to embrace our own identity and include others, even when we enter into conversation and dialogue is a way of mediating culture and justice. Enculturation, however, is described not only as a local event but also has regional or macro-contextual and macro-cultural manifestations in different contexts. Enculturation of Christianity and Christianisation of culture is being viewed as a cultural phenomenon. This is clearly understood in Schreiter's book,

Constructing Local Theologies, where it is evident that enculturation does not necessarily mean the same thing to everyone, since culture takes into account the meaning and systems of meaning already present in the context (Schreiter, 1985:12) and agency.

Nasir-Ali (1995:29) clearly stated: “Some missiologists distinguish between enculturation and its contextualization”. With regards to the former, in terms of the gospel they mean its expression of the tradition and background of the people. By the latter they mean the ways in which the gospel addresses people’s social, economic and political situation, particularly in terms of justice for the poor and liberation for the oppressed. Both aspects have far reaching effects on the lives of the people concerned. Bosch’s (2011:463-465) model of enculturation adds a further step: “Since culture is an all-embracing reality; enculturation is also all-embracing,” this is a revolutionary model of the context.

Missiology as an integrative discipline and is an ‘applied science’ in theology (Van Gelder, 2007:13). The development of a formal discipline began in the mid-nineteenth century. A major shift in the theology of mission began to emerge and went through several changes during the twentieth century. It particularly related to the church, mission, and the larger world, and was always involved in conveying the message of God’s mission to others, and engaging in the development of congregations as communities of faith. The basis is the understanding of mission around the following concepts: the *missio Dei*, and the kingdom of God, ecumenism, church growth in general, and dealing with congregations in particular (Van Gelder, 2007:14-23).

To do missiology is to look at how to articulate God’s mission, to reflect on that articulation and **to** formulate a theological judgement about it in order to discern the call of the Spirit and then map out a course of action for the future (Bate, 1998:153). As an academic discipline it emerged after the dismantling of the colonial system, with an increased expansion of the theological academy, and the development of indigenous and local churches. There was an increased interest and focus on church planting, and was never read neutrally but through the lens of culture, faith, tradition and experience.

Therefore, a responsible reading of the text and context needs to take place in the community (Chopp, 1991:86) with others who represent different traditions, races, classes, professional

disciplines, as well as urban status—listening, hearing and responding together. De-Beer (2008:181) echoes Palmer (1993:16) stating the following: “To be able to analyse the urban systems and powers, is to understand their neighbourhood to listen carefully in order to hear those without voice and make sense of the institutional compositions of the communities which they serve, re-reading the narrative of the city.” By means of interacting with our theological education in the particular context of suffering and between different worlds, we position ourselves as companions in the community. The very act of theological education becomes a way to foster interconnectedness with a community bond¹³, local cultures, leadership development. (Van Gelder, 2007:24). The word ‘mission’ is always restricted in a sense to a mandate that Christians assume with regards to other people. It is no longer adequate to take ‘mission’ at face value, but is rather the dynamic relationship between God and the world: God sends Himself, His Son and His church. Those who become actively involved in the vision of His redemptive will understand themselves as *sent* individuals or groups (Verstraelen, 1995:4). Newbigin understands the ecumenical perspective and emphasis of mission as the unity of the church as the body of Christ, as well as a movement among churches to get in touch with one another and to get to know one another, and to explore avenues of cooperation and unity (Newbigin, 1984: 177).

There is also a search for a new working definition of ‘missiology’. It examines the ‘multiplicity of processes,’ planned and unplanned, in which Christianity evolved from its own angle of interest. In other words, missiology studies the movement of Christianity in the world, and the way in which faith becomes attached to different contexts (Verstraelen, 1995:2). Regarding the very background and identity of the SPEC community, this context and culture forms part of mission as contextualization. Therefore, it is one of the themes of the new missionary paradigm of ecumenical missiology, which means radical change when issues of justice are addressed to assist in emphasizing other concepts and can be some or part of the conceptual model that connects the cultural, theological and contextual dimensions. This leads to the second level, to do mission is between humans. This will be discussed below.

2.4 Praxis dimension—agency, process and practice

This section reflects on the processes and practices, as the social and spiritual responses of people including the church as the ultimate defining feature of a reconciliation model for ‘people-to-people’ dialogue by the SPEC. In this section the researcher looks at contextualizing the meaning of reconciliation in relation to the *missio Dei*. Here, *missio Dei* becomes the overreaching concept, content and process of the theme in the new emerging ecumenical mission and missiology (Bosch, 2011:379).

The *missio Dei* has led to a shift in the church’s attitude towards the world, all of creation, and consequently, to other religions and secular thought (Bevans and Schroeder, 2004:56). In ‘mission as ministry by the whole people of God,’ Bosch (2011:479) argues that Jesus of Nazareth broke with the entire Jewish tradition when he chose his disciples not from among the priestly class, but from among fisher folk, tax-collectors, and alike.

At first, the Jesus movement was a renewal movement within Judaism. But later it evolved into a people’s movement, crossing ethnic and religious boundaries and including God fearers, Greeks and other nationalities. God chooses groups of people, and indeed, He chooses individuals through whom to reveal himself to the world and to reveal His will to us (Nazir-Ail, 1995:119). As a Congregationalist, de Gruchy (2003:43) wrote about his experience of the Reformed tradition and denominations as being in need of liberation. This was captured in his publication, *Liberating Reformed Theology*. Its on-going challenge and contemporary situation related to the Reformed tradition, particularly ‘native South Africa’ aligned with the liberating imperative of the gospel.

An earlier example in the Old Testament was when Moses chose Joshua his servant, not a high priest or a Levite, and not a prophet or someone from a high community class to cross the river Jordon to the new land of Canaan (Num. 27:18-23). The argument one is raising here is that Joshua could be viewed among the layperson as a leader, deserved to be called a ‘famous God fearer’ to guide the Israelites and some lay elders of the community. In contrast to this faith-based lay movement, the clerical paradigm of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism from the fourth century became the dominant and exclusive model of mediating the interaction between the church and society (Bosch, 2011:469-470).

In Bosch's understanding, the church is the bearer of mission to the whole world, and not that of a few specialist theologians and professionals. The church-in-mission is primarily the local church as an agent of mission (Bosch, 2011:368-89). A clear distinction was made between the clergy and lay people who were treated as inferior Christians. This is what led to the laity being involved in preaching, mission and leadership, as a movement of Christian-based communities evolved.

In many parts of the indigenous world, e.g. in Latin America, and by means of 'indigenous' or 'independent' churches in Africa, as well as 'house churches' in the West and China, these arose regardless of ethnicity, gender and location. More recently, there has been an increasing demand by the religious and ethnic leaders for 'home rule,' especially for national minorities and indigenous people, like in Australia, Ireland and Québec City in Canada (Ayigail and Spinner-Halev, 2005:271). It seems as of yet there is no agreed upon definition of 'indigenous people,' but they are viewed as groups of people that are protected in international or national legislation as having a set of specific rights based on their historical ties to a particular territory, and their cultural or historical distinctiveness from other populations. Since theology emerges from the experience of people and experience is explored in a qualitative approach. Pobe noted that:

It would be a surprise if the experience of attack or ethnic tension and threat. Indeed might be persecution, did not leave its mark and did not influence the documents of the church... it could even be argued that experiences of such persecution provided the language and imagery suitable for describing Christians experiences (1985:13-14).

These four points: threats, experience, sense of insecurity and inclusion have provided a fresh insight, valuable change, and opportunities for the mission of reconciliation during conflict. It gives rise to new questions, such as: "Who should do mission in an emerging paradigm in a conflict situation, like in the case of Sudan?" In fact, for many years the indigenous native people only listened and received theological knowledge in the ways experts told them, but today we are experiencing new phases in many church communities, the poor like those called blacks, native people, women and the laity who have decided to no longer remain invisible, and are demanding to be taken seriously (Pobe and Amirtham, 1986:113).

The reductionist view is to convert the church to become converted, or 're-born anew'. Cited in Chung's (2010:99) *Public theology in an Age of World Christianity*, Lamin Sannah

describes the initiation process of African Christian thought as a distinctive way of life through mediation of the Spirit. It is a process that enhances the importance of traditional religions for deepening Christian spirituality, and is also a particular worldview different from Pentecostal and Charismatic churches (Bevans and Schroeder, 1986:265-268).

The core activity of mission is the personal response to the call of Jesus of Nazareth and acceptance of the invitation to be sent to fulfil the task of the Great Commission, and to take responsibility to participate in the *missio Dei* in order to serve others in love, to inform the people of this new understanding, and to explore new directions; it is always a call for a responsible lifestyle and action. The clerical model shows how the agency, processes and practices can be a problem within the clerical model and continues to be a challenge to the agency, process and practice and the solution in the agency of all believers.

Dingemans (1996:82-96) in *The Modern Clerical Paradigm of a Church, Ministry and Mission* argued that the church's ministry and mission has failed to provide meaningful solutions and can become a stumbling block for 'people-to-people' dialogue in a ministry of reconciliation, as in Sudan. The clerical paradigm remains an obstacle for the grassroots ecclesiology "priesthood of all believers" and the "apostolate of the laity" as the operational basis of the *missio Dei* and of 'mission as a ministry by the whole people of God'. It also undermines the transforming value and application of reconciliation as a new paradigm of mission in the context of ethnic-religious conflict. The reductionist view of the church leader's role and systems is hierarchical in which they dominate and control both the church's ministry and activities.

As described by de Gruchy (2002:148), these processes are the art and skill of mediating, and are also a theme of reconciliation seeking to restore justice and harmony. From his own experiences he pointed out that it differs in each community and between inter-groups. For example, the conflicting parties coming from Northern Ireland seeking to learn from the experience of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) as a mechanism to foster national reconciliation uncovering the past in order to build a better future.

From the Northern Ireland example, de Gruchy adds that to understand culture, reconciliation as restoring justice must be practiced in the process of doing just that. In the art part of the

process, the first step is turning towards the other, 'creating space' without necessarily meeting face-to-face, keeping some distance from embracing reconciliation, which means together with 'other people' without direct meeting points between the conflicting parties. The second tentative step is to cease the opportunity and accept one another 'telling the truth' such as meeting and listening to others even if they are not convinced. The third step is very critical and involves both parties trying to position themselves in the struggle, in other words, to find ways to challenge their 'self-understanding and identity'. Thus, the others are making ethical demands in the process, while we ourselves at the same time are forced not to initiate and dominate other ideas and identities.

In the fourth step, if we pursue conversations for the sake of reconciliation it is the 'willingness to get to know' the other. This implies and shows respect for the other as a human being 'seeking wisdom and power,' no matter how much we disagree or see the other as a partner or threat in the search for reconciliation, with room being created for the relationship to develop by allowing space for dialogue. Lastly, this step entails positioning oneself in the place of the other addressing us. By doing so, we find ourselves in vicarious solidarity 'reconnecting' rather than being against the other (de Gruchy, 2002:152-153).

The theological and contextual aspects and the two dimensions in the process and practice are part of the new emerging conceptual framework; I will elaborate on this point later on in this chapter. This is the philosophical foundation of memory and systems of meaning at the paradigmatic level that Schreier is referring to. To build a connection between reconciliation and justice is to ask about the theological elements at different levels of the relationship between God, leaders and society. In reality, there is always tension between love and justice in the way it shapes all contemporary missiological reflection and action. Love is always important! In this sense, the overarching response should be love (Samuel and Sugden, 1999:227).

Reflecting on the Kairos document, this was drafted by Dietrich Bonhoeffer before the dismantling of apartheid. The idea was that South Africans should not pursue reconciliation only after injustices have been removed. In other words, if justice is impossible then forgiveness will not take place. The Christian community exists only by faith, which is evoked and shared by its members. Yet the church can find the basis and purpose, not by a

coincidence of commitment with confessional integrity developed in response to His action, but by the grace of God the church has a clear identity, a unique hope, a present freedom, and a basis for response (Dietrich, 2007:29). Robert Adams argues: ‘We ought in general to be treated better than we deserve—but we do not wrong the other; and this is the heart of Christian faith,’ (cited in Hiebert, 1994:41).

2.4.1 The agency of all believers

The image of the ‘priesthood of all believers’ and the threefold office of king (pastor), prophet (elder) and priest (deacon) are important ecclesiological themes in these two religious traditions. The ‘apostolate of the laity’¹⁴ is a central theme in a kingdom-orientated community. Instead of the kingdom-orientated-church and the community are inclusive lay-faith communities; a serving community, which closes the distance between the clergy and *laos* (people); a prophetic community, which does not blur the border between church and state or between the church and non-faith-based organizations.

The laity forms the ‘operational basis’ from which the *missio Dei* proceeds. But it has not made any significant difference on how the mission and ministry of the church mediate public issues like peace and reconciliation. It is, in fact, not *they* who have to ‘accompany’ those who hold ‘special offices’ in the *latter’s* mission in the world. Rather, it is the *office bearers* who have to accompany the laity, the ‘people of God’ (Bosch, 2011:478-485).

The clergy and some of the lay leaders who represented the clergy continued to dominate and monopolise public engagement. Also, the ‘priesthood of all believers’ is an important theological theme that has been used as an instrument of power to control¹⁵, instead of being a kingdom-orientated church and community: an inclusive lay community of faith; a serving community that closes the distance between the clergy and *laos* (people); a prophetic community, which does not blur the border between church and state or between church and secular organizations.

The abovementioned assertions are a true reflection of Christian mission but one would argue that it has not made any significant difference to the extent and how the mission and ministry of the church should mediate public issues like conflict, peace and reconciliation. Despite the division that exists within the churches on the basis of racial, economic, nationalistic or other

kinds of human distinction, she must be reconciled within herself (Livingston, 1998:405, 423).

Looking at the New Testament author's and ideas, the situation of mission, the Bible invested much to convey to us the historical faith of Jesus. The early Christians proceeded in the same way as responsible agents participating in what God is doing through the house churches. Bosch (2011:21) added, "If we have to take incarnation seriously, the word has to become flesh in every new context". As Echeagaray (1984:122) indicated, "Today's scholars show much confidence in earthly Jesus; consequently, the practice of Jesus has become the focus of theologizing Jesus".

The Presbyterian Church tradition, particularly the SPEC, mission as a ministry by 'all believers' is challenged, it seems very difficult to draw a relationship between the church and state as the different aspects of the themes change in this kind of mission in relation to the state. For instance, concerning the aspect of reconciliation, especially in terms of a dominant Islamic state and inclusion where this relationship seems inseparable between the sacred and secular as compared with what is described as a relationship in other majority Christian countries. Conflict and unspeakable atrocities have occurred in the Darfur region, which is considered to have a majority Muslim population (90%); this serves as an example here. Still I wonder how to relate aspects of God, faith, the church and state in these situations? The reality and results on the ground are tragic, characterized by feelings of disappointment, despair and hostility by people in mission and those left behind.

2.4.2 Relational dimension

This section examines relationality, at the contextual and institutional level from a theological perspective. It concerns how we relate to others at the theological and contextual level. How to relate to others in the context of reconciliation is a missiological perspective of the subject. The controversy is how to be responsible and be able to participate in what God is doing, despite the on-going crises and challenges in our world. The world represents people whom God loves, a place in which God acts, and the arena in which powers act. It is about "otherness" in terms of ethnic and religious denominations. Bosch (2011:377) particularly mentioned that mission is about the "church-with-others," missional witness to the world, testifying in faith and calling others (Guder, 1998:110). Thus, there is a whole

shift in understanding the church with others and mission as “mediating salvation”. Bosch also warns us that we should not try to delineate mission too sharply and too self-confidently.

Bosch (2011:398) described mission as crossing a frontier and missiology is the reflection of it. But there are theological aspects and activities of the whole people of God in empirical contexts, metaphors used for pilgrimage, all crossing boundaries and avoiding cultural imperialism. But using metaphors and images referring to the “church of all others” in terms of the church’s role has a place in mission as the first fruits of what God has done. Guder (1998:101) views the context of the church as the fruits of reconciliation, an instrument and sign of reconciliation, peace and life (Bosch, 2011:386-389), this is related to the role and is similar to the SPEC church. These point to the many challenges of how Christians participate in the *missio Dei*, and how they will assist in transforming and liberating spirituality, while reflecting as co-workers with God to overcome these situations for the church and society, as mission is also what moves and motivates change and renewal (Bosch, 2011:287).

In *Mission as Church with Others*, Bosch (2011:373-378) talked about integrating the two themes. Here, describing the church as the aspect of crossing all boundaries and welcoming others as part of the activities of the ‘whole people of God’ and as activities of building new relations and communities of faith, where it shows how the church must be with the other as it is a pilgrimage people, a wandering people, and a people on the way, it is not just a clerical paradigm. The road is the destination, its activity and the process. It is the second design of the missiological and theological concept, which in fact becomes the content of the whole people of God; this is why the church with others is fundamental in this chapter. It contains the longest discussion in terms of the new emerging paradigm, the theology and the praxis under all these themes and the different points covering these diverse issues.

Bosch (2011:414-417) mentioned that the church-in-mission is primarily local and should be the responsibility of a congregation. Simply put, the participation of Christians in the liberating mission of Jesus looking for a future seems critical. It’s the good news of God’s love incarnated in the witness of a community for the sake of the world. Bosch (2011:48-50) in other words says: “The church becomes the real church only when it responds to God’s call to mission” (Guder1998:149).

The church with others and as a “ministry by the whole people of God” is an element and is integrated with the theological and contextual dimensions (Bosch, 2011:379). In times of crisis, violence and various forms of change taking place around the world have an impact on the lives of people and society, as well as institutions in general. There are some individuals who claim to be driving reconciliation, even politicians. It became a real problem affecting the church’s mission and participation, ending with the loss of that agency. Indirectly, affecting all church members, their experiences and the responses of many people related to the issues of equality, marginalization and continued tension in the light of the many challenges, as in the context of Sudan.

As Livingston (1998:414) argued in his thesis on Bosch that those who seek reconciliation are to speak the truth to one another, but to do so in love and in solidarity, lest they block the way of true reconciliation. Telling the truth looks easy but also looks hard. Consider George Orwell’s 1948 essay, where he describes the ‘Political and English language,’ and argues that in the twentieth century, “Political language is designed to make lies sound truthful, murder acceptable and to give an appearance of solidarity to pure wind.” Since so much of that political speech presupposes insincerity and defence of the defenceless, it can’t be clear but consists largely of euphemisms, questions begging for answers and sheer cloudy vagueness (Werpehowski, 2014:119). Truth telling will continue to be a challenge, as long as people continue to silence and dominate others not even leaving room for a fair conversation that could reflect the view of others, including official arenas with hidden agendas and issues not yet addressed and swept under the rug.

Guder’s (1998:1-2) Christian view of the church found less and less reason to express their faith by joining the Christian church with secularization as a “social club”. Its private and individualistic nature is where religiosity becomes increasingly challenged to practice and change. Concerning the identity crisis in terms of Guder’s own church’s mission experience and as a different tradition provided a lens to focus on SPEC’s own mission. The issue of members not participating in the church’s ministry where mission is not seen as a missionary movement, if we place reconciliation in the discussion and context as this, the result would have questioned my whole theological framework.

In fact, many are already saying that everyone should be involved in such kind of ministry, but how and why, because the construction of our identity is at stake within intergroup mission. This is the view of a transformative and interpretative constructionist perspective. In other words, in mission we should be constructing our identities through our conversion, and therefore, the result should be our spiritual liberation or renewing of our faith, which implies that we have that faith and what we only need is renewal of our faith, in other words, ‘dust it off or heat it up,’ as described by Robinson (2008:61). The crisis Guder’s (1998:13) church experienced instead challenged their ministry as they began to experience the loss of youth and genuine spirituality, as well as corruption, even division and confusion concerning the Christian message. People’s responses and experiences in relation to the issue of inequality in Sudan’s context always brings the issue of trust and mistrust to the forefront, as well as feelings of discontent, and thus, one begins to lose confidence.

The crisis in Guder’s church was not viewed as a missionary one, but if we have to place reconciliation in the violent context of Sudan, it gives an important and new meaning. This is a new way of understanding the church. One can’t just look at it from the foundation of reconciliation and it can’t just be considered as the goal of reconciliation, but it is only provisional reconciliation and is a challenge. This forces one to look at the different aspects of reconciliation defined by Schreiter as the gift of reconciliation (Schreiter, 2013:xx). This takes place through patient listening, hospitality, and self-service, the role of the leader’s own identity as a ‘safe place’ for welcoming a community (Bevans, 2009:113).

Bosch’s (2011:11) argument on ‘church-in-mission’ ‘is being instead of others’, which means for a Jew you became a Jew to win the Jewish, a concrete Christian community of everyday life from below or the church with others is an important concept, and not just a church speaking about or for others. But with regards to the church’s message speaking from below, the issue of the signs of reconciliation fit here. From the previous statement it is clear that the heart of mission involves the conflict between the message of the messianic future and the force of the anti-messianic present, the same ‘present’ that puts Jesus on the cross when the grace period began.

Nussbaum’s (2005:40) argument summarises Bosch’s work. The world with all its powers might keep trying to extinguish the witness of the messianic age, but those very efforts only

enlarge and deepen the witness by showing the incredible resilience of the messenger. The world has not been extinguished yet but has rather exhausted its own resources in the attempt, but now the only thing that can happen is the collapse of the world and triumph of God.

Although it is a broad concept, many have tried to come up with a working definition of the term ‘mission,’ yet it remains difficult to define. Therefore, we can perhaps formulate some approximation of what mission is about (Roux, 2011:47). This implies that Christian communities and missionaries must avoid all forms of cultural imperialism, particularly the influence of Western imperialism (Stott, 1986:77). Though mission churches and many other agencies operate in explicit or subtle colonial modes as in Sudan, a few leaders have managed and begun the difficult task of allowing and formulating ways of how to develop new local congregations, avoiding the colonial mode and differentiating between church languages. Some have moved deeper even to the relationship of mutuality, vulnerability and boldness with regards to individuals and groups from other indigenous races and cultures.

The following section discusses crucial issues that come up, which are related to reconciliation at different levels. For example, the role of leaders, which is related to the role and the contribution of the SPEC church in this process. Raymond and Roodney (2001:314), as mentioned before, define reconciliation in terms of the quest for restoring justice and harmony. Yet, what is important to ask here is: “What is the nature of those missional congregations?”

2.4.3 Agency, roles and practices

A number of major issues have been discussed so far. Similarly, as we can combine themes like coding, we approach the text in the same way as a congregation, but what is ‘people-to-people’ dialogue and the understanding of the church ‘being with others,’ as I have talked about? What is the nature of this congregation? For example, the gift of the priesthood of all believers was never mentioned before. Entrusting that gift to the whole people of God, does it belong to everyone? This brings the language about the kingdom issue to the fore here, so that the gift of reconciliation is within mission as the church with others.

Schreiter in the theology of the congregation is both discovering but also doing, and it is the expression of the relationship between God and such faithful congregations seeking other

people, but also listening to discern where God is leading them (Ammerman et al., 1998:23). Mission as a congregation and reconciliation is another new traditional missional language of ‘ministry by the whole people of God’ in relation to mission, the church and the world. Mission as the church with others, serving together and doing mission reflecting on the role of the church in the world recognizes that the church could be neither the starting point nor the goal of mission. In Guder’s (1998:xx) book *Missional Church: A vision of sending the church in the North America* the term has taken on a life of its own, describing the identity of the church.

This notion of reconciliation is then applied to the SPEC’s role and contribution in its particular history of mission. Missional church, is a community of believers, ‘the whole people of God’s’, those who defines itself, and organizes its life around; it’s real core being an agent of God’s mission to the world. In this context, the word missional is to be understood as “another traditional missional language of ministry.” Being missional is about pilgrimage. It is worship that is able to welcome outsiders and make them feel at home; it is the church with pastors who have the monopoly and members are not merely objects of pastoral care. Its Christian community members are equipped for their calling in society beyond boundaries in a missionary situation towards a mutual mission partnership (Bosch, 2011:377-381). During the early twentieth century mission was recognized as the core of being Christian and not an activity (Nussbaum, 2005:116,117) but now it has shifted to local congregations (Saayman, 2007:118). The New Testament model of mission focuses on the three main stands of the kingdom of God making the disciples ‘carry the good news,’ transcending boundaries to go with the Holy Spirit, and salvation and a grace period to ‘proclaim the Messiah to the whole world’. Van Gelder describes the nature of the church as follows:

The church is called to be both confessional (claiming and reclaiming its identity in relation to the historic Christian faith) and missional (engaging its context and continuously decontextualizing its ministry). The church should always be forming (*ecclesia semper reformanda*) (Van Gelder, 2007:54).

Bosch’s (2011:543) theology of mission and his approach to the ‘creative tension’ of mission, the ‘already and not yet,’ described mission as a total work of God and set the church on course for the salvation of the world and Jesus’ second coming. The gift of the Holy Spirit, the importance of the laity and the personal decision of the Christian commitment and refusal to identify with the church despite the violence made her lose her position of privilege in

society and attempt to encounter dialogue with religious leaders and sects used to condemn and build bridges among its denominations (Bosch, 2011:91).

The church is missionary by its very nature, this is perceived as an instrument of that mission, and that mission belongs in essence to the church (Bosch, 2011:381, 539). Van Gelder (2007:54) formulated three basic statements describing the missional church as guided by the Holy Spirit: the church is (nature), the church does what (goal and purpose), and the church organizes around what it does (ministry). Saayman (2007:125) argues that Christian mission compels us to be missionaries as we are human, authentic and sustainable; Christian mission is human by its very nature “for God so loved the world”.

An important question to ask here is: “What are the other issues that might come up when we discuss issues of reconciliation under the theological and missiological headings, with regards to the issue of truth telling that leads to trust? Schreiter (1992:12) stated that truth telling is a very important aspect of reconciliation and it can be practiced to obtain and make achievements breaking through a culture of lies and muffled under a pall of silence (Schreiter, 2013:19). Truth telling involves testimony of what really happened in the past, and a common effort to reconstruct a public truth. A good example is to build trust objectively with some certain outcomes of truth telling, which for sure leads to building trust when people have their own conversations.

These are issues that will be discussed later when I get to the programs. But because it is part of the process, just like building trust, truth telling is also involved somewhere and that is what I mean by being very important in the process, and what is involved in the activity of reconciliation is crucial. Integrating the use of ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions and different aspects are very important as it gives a basis from which to move and includes others in terms of what to engage in, or agree or disagree with. It keeps a focus on the questions and picks up issues on the praxis, and then discusses them. It is in the process and the practice; the praxis has an ultimate goal of reconciliation, so reconciliation as a goal is considered to be the overarching long-term institutional goal (see next heading 2.5). In the meanwhile, there are certain issues that should happen in the process and in between.

With regards to the issue of goals, there are certain objectives along the way that require particular activities to reach and achieve these activities. Regarding the first area let me illustrate this with the empirical data. There are some emerging voices or respondents who mention the issue of building trust and mistrust, in other words, building aimed at trust is an important aspect of the process. It is important enough to engage in and to begin to ask, “Where do they discuss the issue of trust in the literature of this new reconciliation paradigm?” Having a brief theological and missiological discussion it is time to turn these into concrete objectives that lead to trust. The objective is to build trust by gaining trust through some of the following activities. This will definitely lead to some output, and that output after sometime will lead to reconciliation. It is a process; there is no single overarching reconciliation through a single activity. It really is a process; therefore, as far as theological reconciliation is concerned, there is this element of trust.

Trust, however, can be defined as a process that has a personal and group dimension. Trust describes the state of mind or attitude of an individual or group, and how they permit and allow interaction. This is done in a manner that encourages networking despite diversity or pluralism in a social, economic or religious sense. Networking could be a form of bonding or bridging, as proposed by Putman (1993:1-10). It was suggested by Forrester that practical theology is the branch that is concerned with the question of truth in relation to taking action. This is the deep reciprocity between theory and practice, whereby theological understanding not only leads to action but is also the result of involvement in action in the life of the world (Forrester, 1990:5).

Telling the truth is the first injunction we learn as a child, and the first we teach our own. But the teaching and learning across the life span is far from categorical, strictly based on affairs that I, at least seem to remember as a youngster. Since the underlying concern is “speech-acts” in which we do something with our words, we need to place the norm as forbidding it in a network of practice (Werpehowski, 2014:119). To my understanding, trust is an advanced form of faith because to trust is to do well, which requires delightfulness, commitment and complete reliance on integrity to see the mighty work of God as in Ps. 37:1-7.

The second area from the data that is important concerns the individual level, namely, the role of leaders and what they say with regards to trust, mistrust and the losing of confidence.

What is the context within which they discuss their own trust, and so on? They talk about trust and the conflict that comes in the context within which it happens. That is why we do qualitative research, to connect with the literature. What are the other issues that are coming to the fore in this chapter that need to be practiced in connection with the literature on the truth telling aspect? This is one way to connect this chapter with what is coming in chapter three. Therefore, thinking ahead about building a proposal, program or guidelines that can help the church with their activities; I also build on that here. This will be one way of connecting chapter two with the rest of this research. At this stage, I have not discussed enough nor finalized everything related to reconciliation yet, but this is the beginning as may be seen in the outline.

The integrative approach is used as a point of departure to answer the ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions. The empirical research includes the emerging data from the interview schedule of both the individual and focus group participants, with reconciliation considered to be the overarching long-term institutional goal. For example, the contribution and the application of the peace program, including the ministry of the SPEC in mediating and communicating peace and reconciliation in Sudan. It is important to ask here: “What are the factors that indicate how the structure of peace can be mediated?” Is it something in the statement of their goals that indicates their policy goals on peace and reconciliation? Therefore, from the above example, if we have reconciliation not just as an idea but also as a praxis, that indicates to me what it means, as can be seen on page 34.

2.5 Reconciliation and transformation program theory of change

This section on the practice of social meaning informed by the theory of change uses language to explain these realities and develop programs to assist in developing skilled leaders to empower the church and community. The theories of change or development in the process describe how change takes place and how it is expected to happen. Focusing on specific changes, this is what the participants hope to achieve as a result of their activities, situation or condition, even various knowledge and behaviours, establishing a clear connection between the goals, activities and programs. These theories of change are sometimes implied or explicitly stated in my proposal, preliminary literature review and the questions, as well as in the literature consulted.

Relevant issues are discussed in the logic frame and logical framework, focusing on peace and reconciliation. The above issues form the content of the theories of change for the ministry and mission of reconciliation. Livingston (1987) and Max Weber (1998) refer to the study of inter-subjectivity ‘*verstehen*’ noting that social meaning is important. They employed an interview study using ethnomethodology to examine the way people produce orderly social interaction on a routine, everyday basis and their ideas provided the underpinning of conversational analysis: “Thinking about the nature of some institutions like tribes and families implies different theories about how the social world operates” (Corbin and Strauss, 2008:32).

Gubrium and Holstein in *The New Language of Qualitative Method* classify researchers according to their orientation towards the data (solve-oriented research). Holstein and Gubrium (2008:35) focus on how each qualitative research approach, like discourse analysis, ethnography and conversational analysis use a particular analytical language to emphasise a specific facet of social reality (Seale, 2012:34). For instance, what is being studied or practiced, and how it is constructed. The approach begins with data but theorizes a model with underpinning mechanisms that might produce patterns seen in the data. The constructs use a rhetorical research strategy, which helps move between one’s own data of everyday life relating categories to build a theory, which tends to speculate about the nature of the relationship, then builds propositions around it.

For example, methodological theories on constructing a framework of adapted peace (Levin, 2007), besides the Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and Guidance for Developing Logical and Results Framework (GDLRF) (See Table 3 below). A theory of change is the goal and objective in a logic frame and logical framework. An activity is used to produce the desired change; outputs then emerge from the relevant individuals and group participant’s feedback. Developing a professional program assists the intergroup leaders to empower both the church and community by developing knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary to integrate social justice issues into the learning environment (Bogotech and Shields, 2014:575).

- 1) Contextual factors: To engage the participants in community, dialogue, peace movement, content, form and practice.
- 2) Institutional factors: To facilitate and support peace programs and activities.

- 3) Theological factors: To significantly involve religious leaders in prophetic dialogue “ministry by the whole people of God.”

Concerning this topic, the conceptualization of a long-term institutional goal or outcome (OC), can produce a series of individual objectives (OB) with the activity (AC) connected with mediate or intermediate output change (OP) in the understandings, experiences, behaviours, attitude, meanings, decision-making and actions of the individuals and group of missional church. In conceptualization and building of an adaptive and additive model of ministry of reconciliation, the content of reconciliation includes the theological and missiological dimensions.

Congregational, social, community and other aspects and themes in the preliminary literary review should guide the aspects that are important and relevant. Later, the documentary analysis also guides the selection and incorporation of the themes and issues that are relevant in the conversation and data from the interview schedule. Therefore, these models contribute to the mission of reconciliation as a long-term goal for the Presbyterian Church. As indicated by Schreiter (1992:12) above, leaders, literature from Sudan, organizations supporting the theoretical premises and propositions, and the models on the truth telling and friendships are some outputs of the two specific objectives and their activities.

Table 3. Theory of change: Performance indicators on the role of the leaders

Goal/ objectives	Strategic Objective (OR)	Intermediate Results (IR)	Outputs (OP)	Interventions (I)
				Process –Inputs
To build trust	People want build trust	Long-term institutional goal	Leaders organize contact sessions	Leaders organize truth telling sessions
To build friendships	People want to build good relationships	Short term impact indicator	Leaders organize contact sessions	Leaders organize peace meals sessions
To reduce ethnic tensions	Both groups provide non-violent sessions to interact	Short-term impact indicator	Two ethnic groups implement agreed upon	Training workshops to improve mobility

2.6 Conclusion

Human beings cannot bring about reconciliation because it is God who reconciles through Christ (see Table 3). However, they can facilitate reconciliation in complex situations by means of their measurable programs and practices. Christ died once offering salvation for all; this salvation is an event and a process. Through the events of Christ's humanity the meaning of the God who became flesh is explored and the reign of God which Jesus preached and practiced. As an event that is always present, God acts to heal and reconcile; as a process, the finished work continues in the church's missionary proclamation of the message of the gospel. Thus, we should speak about salvation in the new paradigm as 'people-to-people' dialogue in Sudan; ethnic and religious identities and roles are remembered and contextualized through an inclusive dialogue. It is a dialogue that narrates and admits past experiences of injustice without creating new exclusive identities or promotes new injustices.

CHAPTER THREE

CHURCH STRUCTURE AND MEDIATION PROCESS IN THE CONFLICT

3.1 Introduction

This chapter takes a closer look at the context of Sudan, including the socio-religious context. It presents the broader perspective of the ethnic and religious challenges of the conflict, church structure and mediation process during the on-going conflict. Additionally, it focuses on the role of the church and people's responses in terms of the church's background, views, and the strong voices of the Sudanese people, including scholars in mission history from different orientations. Section 3.2 provides the historical background of the past, as well as the current conflict situation in Sudan. Section 3.3 seeks to clarify the current issues, which entails a number of different factors, i.e. resources, regime change, and slavery. This is besides the role played and responses of the missionaries, church and state. Section 3.4 identifies the root cause of and the reasons for the conflict, i.e. the issue of abduction, development, and the President's response.

Section 3.4 probes into the causes and describes the event that deals with the socio-cultural and religious system of the indigenous people and profile of the target groups, simultaneously trying to provide evidence. Furthermore, section 3.5 derives the explanatory factors from different theoretical traditions and various perspectives. Section 3.6 incorporates the aspect of the socio-political and religious dimensions of the ethnic and religious conflict, using the social identity conflict theory and the intergroup contact theory. The 'people-to-people' approach is used for prophetic, community and peace dialogue. Finally, it concludes by providing a mechanism on how people respond to social and ethnic-religious diversity in the context of Sudan. Section 3.7 draws on relevant theories and models of missiology and science of religion in order to interpret the social forces operating in the society.

3.2 Past and current conflict

This section introduces some of the root causes of the conflict in Sudan—it looks at what they are about and what is behind them? It also recognizes the historical challenges that both

the SPEC and the SCC's ministry of mission have faced. It also notes the dialogue between them during the conflict and the mediating process, as well as the structure of peace and reconciliation. Different factors that contributed to the conflicts, like regime change, state, resources and issues of slavery are also studied. The term 'structure' emphasises the importance of understanding how society is generated and structured, and the interrelationship between these social institutions (Henriot and Holland, 2005:30). Clearly stated in Henriot and Holland, coming to understand human experience is a process of mediation, and this mediation process must be relevant to the human community.

Before I proceed further it is necessary to define 'conflict' and what it actually is. The term 'conflict' is described as a situation in which two or more actors pursue incompatible goals, which are justifiable from their own perspectives. Ethnic conflict is one particular form of this, in which the goals of at least one party is defined in 'exclusively ethnic terms' (Cordell and Wolf, 2010:4-5). In that certain ethnic groups perceive themselves to be superior to others, and therefore, engage in warfare to subdue or exterminate them in the same way as racism (Tschuy, 1997:xi). Here, social analysis can assist us to see the divisions of the society more clearly, according to race, sex, age, class, ethnicity, religion, geography, etc., because these divisions exist whether we like it or not (Holland and Henriot, 1980:26).

Historically, Sudan has been blessed with many human and natural resources. But over time history has shown over and over again that we are marred by conflict and violence. This began before Sudan's independence (between 1821-1955) and continued after its independence (between 1956-2011) up to the present day, as was pointed out in the CPA deal that was reached in 2005 (Weran, 2000:5). Unfortunately, wars, suffering, poverty, sickness and ignorance have been an unwelcome and unfriendly companion throughout the struggle. According to Sondra (1996:130), the word 'Sudan' originated historically from the Hebrew word 'Kush,' which is equivalent to the Greek word 'Ethiopia'. The name Sudan was given by the medieval Arabians. Sondra added that Sudan occupies a very unique position in history because of its 'size' and location (Sondra, 1996:xx). It is located in a strategic frontier position at the crossroad or corridor to Africa, but this position is no longer the same after the cessation of the newly formed state of South Sudan.

Considering its political and historical context, Sudan has had successive regimes in the past one hundred and fifty years. Since 1821-1883, the country has been under Turco-Egyptian rule, and between 1898-1956 it was ruled by the Mehdi's, which is called the condominium period. For more than sixty years after its independence from British colonial rule, which lasted until 1956, the military has been in power. Since 1953, the country has intermittently been spilt by a civil war between the north and the south (Weran, 2000:5). The 1989 coup was a result of the weakness of the Sudanese state, and the rise of the Islamist strength. The sectarian rivalry of two major parties, the National Islamic Front (NIF) and the National Congress Party (NCP) was behind all political efforts that worsened the economic situation. Widespread violence, as well turmoil in Darfur showed the extent to which the government lost control of the political parties, including the public loss of confidence in the political parties (Rassil, 2013:166).

The issue of slavery is crucial in the understanding of the past and current conflict in Sudan. Although the institution of slavery was officially abolished during the 1920's after having been under British colonial rule from the 1840's, it has still been widely practised in Sudan even to the present day but under the guise of other names. When European explorer and tourist Pallme Ignaz visited Sudan, he found that slavery was still being practiced and that they were severely mistreated (Ignaz, 1842:42). He informed the consulate in Cairo and countries in Europe about the spread and problem of slavery. In 1843, Ignaz wrote a book in German about slavery in Kordofan, which was translated into English. The book on open slave-markets became a valuable source of information about what was actually going on in Sudan (Werner, Anderson and Wheeler, 2000:128). As a result, by 1870 an estimated 12,000 to 15,000 slaves were removed from the south and transported to the north (Beny and Hale, 2015:177).

There are claims that slavery is still being practiced in many other countries, i.e. in Mauritania, Pakistan, Haiti and Sudan (Barash and Webel, 2014:405). It is widely accepted that slavery was never completely abolished before and after the civil war. But the practice is not usually discussed openly, since it is a sensitive socio-political, ethnic and religious issue. Recent reports (1992) from the Swiss-based Christian Solidarity International (CSI), a worldwide NGO, provided the first detailed account of slavery as a weapon of counter-insurgency. It was based on actual reports from wounded victims and eyewitness accounts of

the attack on Nyamlell by the civil commissioner Awiel, west of the country, and sold at the markets in Meiram and Daien (Cockett, 2010:149-151).

In 1987 it is estimated that about 700 southerners were killed around the town of El-Daien under the second elected democratic government in 1984 (Beny and Hale, 2015:186). As a group, Christian Solidarity International (CSI) embarked on a massive and highly controversial program redeeming southern slaves from their Arab masters. The CSI “was the largest amongst those who practiced the redemption process instead of condemning, rewarding and encouraging the practice of slavery. They have redeemed thousands of slaves since 1995” (Beny and Hale, 2015:221). Concerning the CPA ‘abduction commission,’ during the peace process the government in return resisted and preferred to use the term ‘abduction,’ claiming that what was taking place was not slavery, but practices claimed to be associated with tribal warfare. As Johnson, D. (1998:10) affirms, “There is no question that slavery exists in modern Sudan today and that it is fed by slave-raiding deployed as a tactic of war” (Johnson, H. 2003:159). Examples of slavery during the colonial period include:

...the UNESCO approach in 1994 to trace the fate of the generation of the African slaves during the Ottoman Pasha invasion of Egypt, and those who died in Sudan resisting enslavement, others succumbed in transit in the *qafilas*¹⁶ crossing the Sahara, in boats along the Nile, in holding camps in Upper Egypt. The survivors were sold in the slave markets in Lower Egypt, or there ‘were those who eventually served their Egyptian owners’ (Campbell, Miers, and Miller, 2007:170).

History always seems to repeat itself because the same happened after the new Mehdi’s government was elected, as stated in the above report for the two periods of 1966-67 and 1986-1998 (Daley, 2010: 236). In the past, a revolutionary Islamic movement led by Imam Al-Mehdi (1881-1885), declared himself as the ‘Mehdi of Allah,’ which means the Mehdi of God and the one who is to come for the whole world. This was a major force in the political and religious landscape. Mehdi and his followers managed to expel the Turko-Egyptian colonialists during the 1885 movement and killed the general governor Charles Gordon in 1956 (Gai, 2002:32). During the time of Al-Mehdi, slavery flourished and slave trade increased more than ever before. For example, the population of the Nuba Mountain¹⁷ population was more than 50,000 before the time of his movement, but by 1899 the population had dwindled to less than 25,000 (Saleh, 2011:14).

When President Abboud renounced his power in 1964 and the transition was formed and emerged under Sir-al-kahatim al-khalifa, a dangerous situation followed. The situation on the ground fell apart; there were demonstrations and harassment by the government resulting in the killing of many civilians, including lay people by means of violent oppression. There were riots and attacks on American missionaries, which led to burning a whole compound to ground. Where many southerners gathered to receive baptism, the crowds poured over the walls like an overflowing river, unknown numbers were killed including the newly baptized. Numerous attacks followed in Comboni on the Catholics, with many serious attacks on the Catholic mission in Khartoum (Werner, Anderson and Wheeler, 2000:400). The Comboni's refined their vision: "Save Africa by Africans," with the aim of planting churches and eradicating the devilish slavery system. Moreover, as a result of the revolution of the Islamic movement, churches were forced to close their doors and missionaries were forced to leave Sudan, others were kept as hostages (Vantini, 1978:65).

The hostages were given the choice to convert to Islam or face death (Werner, Andrew and Wheeler, 2000:190). Later on, some of those who left took along with them a hundred Sudanese students who had been freed from slavery (See Table 4). History always repeats itself, the same expulsion happened to all foreigners in different organizations who were forced to leave Sudan by the end of 2012. Any tension nowadays between the northerners and southerners that is related to political change or revenge due to religious affairs, followed by attacks on the churches is a reflection of these incidents that took place in that society.

3.3 Mission, missionary and local response to the conflict

This section denotes mission and the responses of the leadership role of both the government and church to the ethnic and religious conflicts. In 1898, the British colonial powers under Kitchener were victorious against Al Mehdi in the famous Karari battle (Sidahmed and Sidahmed, 2004:18). The victory opened the doors to the broader evangelical church in Sudan both in the Church Mission Society (CMS) and the American Mission (AM). The Presbyterian Church in Egypt was established in 1853 and, from the beginning, became proactive in helping Christians.

Kelly Giffen was an American missionary and founder of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Egypt and Sudan (Anderson, 1998). The mission societies and some denominations cooperated in mission in northern Sudan. The American missionaries who arrived in Sudan in the late nineteenth century planted a church there; they were based in Aswan, along the Egyptian south border. The Evangelical Church in Egypt assisted the missionaries. Gebra Hanna, a young Egyptian pastor, who worked with Christians from Syrian, Lebanese and Egyptian backgrounds, was also involved in the planting of the church (Chol, 2015:32).

The first report from the Sudanese mission was presented by Rev. Hanna to the general assembly in Egypt in 1901. The assembly decided to open new churches and schools (Werner, Anderson and Wheeler, 2000:232). The first SPEC was established in Khartoum, the capital of Sudan, in 1903. Due to hostile political circumstances, the foreign missionaries were expelled and forced to leave the country. This was the result of the government's surprise announcement, hostile attitude and decree that was issued on the 27th of February 1964 for the expulsion of missionaries from the south (Werner, Anderson and Wheeler, 2000:386).

The responsibilities and property of the Church was turned over to the resident Christian community (Chol, 2015:33). Since its birth and growth as a church in Sudan, the present day SPEC has taken her vision, mission and position within the armed conflict. The biblical story and self-understanding of the church has claimed to be an instrument of God in leading the people out of oppression and slavery. For several decades, the SPEC's ministry of mediation has struggled in its search for truth and justice, serving in solidarity as a vibrant national church and active member of the SCC, and as part of the ecumenical body at the local, regional and global level. For God's reign to become a reality in our daily life, we must be ready to heal our brokenness, and confront violence, injustice and division.

The SPEC operates in eighteen of the twenty-six states in both South and North Sudan, within the Synod's four Presbyteries—the north, south, east, and west. Despite the separation, the church operates as one church in both states. Due to the recent developments and tension between the two states, it became difficult to operate as one administration in two

different countries. So the south presbytery became independent in the new sovereign state, and the Sudan synod in the north remains with the other three presbyteries.

In the early 1960's, the role of missionaries, as well as church growth and impact became a threat to the government. It affected about 543 missionaries working in different fields who had to leave the country (Jendia, 1983-1969, 2000:66). According to government figures, there were 272 Catholic and 62 Protestant missions that were expelled between 27 February and 8 March 1964. The missionaries, especially the Protestants, felt it was wrong to oppose the rights of the Sudanese as they had the right to govern themselves and make crucial decisions about their identity and future. Since Vatican II, the Catholics made no distinction between mission and local churches. The missionaries were involved in church work and mission was reduced to "mission aid" (Werner, Anderson and Wheeler, 2000:586-588). A few years later, the leadership of the Sudanese church had to take responsibility and managed to establish national and indigenous churches.

Beny and Hale (2015:109) noted that the government's plan was not only to target the Christians and African Traditional Religions in the south but included all, as well as the imposition of Islamic Sharia law. Moreover, since 1998, the present government has embarked on a campaign called, "The Comprehensive Call" or in Arabic "*al-Dawa al-shamilla*". This was aimed at the Islamization of the indigenous Nuba people by using at least six strategies. These are:

- 1) Religious indoctrination and imposition of Islam and Islamic teaching among non-Muslim Nuba;
- 2) Political, social, and economic favouritism for Muslim-Nuba and their plan to spearhead the religious campaign;
- 3) Jihad or military campaign against non-Muslim Nuba, as well as Muslim Nuba who defy the "*call or al-dawa*;"
- 4) Isolation of the Christian Nuba and intimidation of clergymen and church congregations, including denying human rights groups, Christian NGO's and representatives from the international and regional Christian councils and organizations access to the Nuba Mountains;
- 5) Resettlement in "peace villages" to facilitate points (1) and (2);

- 6) Harassment, detention and torture of any Nuba or other Sudanese people who oppose the campaign inside or outside the Nuba Mountains.

The government plans were obvious from the above-mentioned forms and strategies, as well as contrary to the stand of separating the state and religion, unlike the Christian call. Due to the start of the first Persian Gulf War in 1991, Dakar postponed the World Islamic Conference in Senegal. The agenda of one of the chief leader's was to eliminate indigenous Christian minorities in their countries and to stop all foreign mission efforts directed at their nation (Johnston, 2000:265; 1998:129). Religious conflict from the jihad holy wars by Muslim extremists was one way to destroy Christianity and create Christian remnants like in the ancient Christian kingdoms (Beny and Hale, 2015:29). Thus, in Sudan and since its independence in 1956,

...the exclusive interpretation of its history and identity was translated into state policies, and there were debates over its constitution. For instance, the head of the Sharia division of judiciary argues, "Sudan constitution must reflect the Islamic and Arab tradition of the Sudan". Thus, Sudan came to be seen as an Arab-Islamic state with a "civilizing mission" of Arabization and Islamization at all cost (Beny and Hale, 2015:70).

In 1964, after the expulsion of the missionaries, the Muslim brotherhood became agitated in support of radical Islamic causes, and thereby, adopted vigorous political practices to promote its view in order to fulfil the state Islamic vision. After the 1998 military coup, the regime has not been afraid to adopt the language of jihad. In 1992, jihad was actually publically declared in Western Sudan in the town of El-Obied against the rebels in the Nuba Mountains. As the Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported, General al-Huseini, governor of Kordofan State, recruited 40,000 fighters from Northern Kordofan to chase the rebels from the whole southern province of the region. At the internationally televised induction of the newly trained tribal militia in the presence of President al-Bashir, he told the crowd: "The banner of *jihad* which was declared by Kordofan will never stop until the war comes to an end" (Beny and Hale, 2015:108). The language of the jihad has been constantly used to mobilize support for the war in the south.

Tragically, this led to a series of confrontations marked by massive wars and waves of violence all over of the globe, as well as numerous riots and the systematic destruction of many churches by Muslim mobs (Johnston, 2000:265; 1998:130). Since the Declaration

towards a Global Ethics World Parliament of Religion (DGEWP) in Chicago and Tubinge in September 1993, and the clash of civilians in 1994, which was widely rejected, a chain and series of violence followed the re-emergence of Muslim power, which meant the re-claiming of their place on the world stage (Huntingdon, 1994:23).

Recently, there has been a rise of ‘holy wars’ by extremists in many countries across the globe like Indonesia, and moving to the Island of Java, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Algeria and Egypt, all the way to Sudan. This has dismayed many sincere Muslims, who in turn have resorted to violence, which has also cast doubt on the credibility of Islam (Johnston, 1998:134). For Aslan, ‘jihad’ literally means a ‘struggle,’ or ‘striving,’ or ‘great efforts,’ and not ‘holy war;’ it is either just or unjust. He also differentiated between two types of jihad: (1) the first one has an inward religious connotation: ‘greater jihad,’ which means the struggle of the soul for holiness and submission to overcome the sinful obstacle that keeps a person from God; (2) the second one is outward, the ‘lesser jihad,’ to struggle for the welfare of humanity. Jihad has more often been associated with the secondary connotation, that is any military exertion or otherwise against oppression and tyranny (Aslan, 2005:81).

In December 2010, tumultuous Arabs and the dramatic spring waves of revolution changed many regimes in most of North Africa and the Arab world over a very short period of time (Ryan 2014:24). The presidents of the three countries—Libya, Egypt and Tunisia, and their regimes, were overthrown. The same took place in Yemen more recently, as well as in Central Africa. Unrest in Syria, Mali and in many other regions followed, Sudan being no exception. It was in the middle of these waves that the newly formed South Sudan followed suit and continued fighting, even within their own tribes.

3.4 Causes of the conflict

This section gives more insight into the nature and effects of the conflict, trying to specify what the real causes, factors and complexity might be. MacCabe (2007:51) argues that looking for the cause means looking for the things that are the cause, as well as clarifying and addressing the main causes of the conflict and describing the relationship between ethnic and religious differences. In other words, it is impossible to make sense of a cause unless a description of the effect is formulated.

Although this is a very hard reality one can still draw a relationship between the ethnic and religious divisions. More details will be given on the views of different authors in this section, including Sudanese voices. Before delving into the causes, the following question is raised: “What is the cause of the conflict?” Asking whether it is ethnic or religious conflict, or both, may prove to be more complex than that, which may assist in the further elaboration of these factors. In fact, there are many root causes of war, as well as social aspects surrounding conflict. Yet it is true that for many it has been the role of religion that has evoked the strongest commitment and deepest pain since the beginning of the 1990’s.

Whilst Sudan has a long heritage of religious tolerance and openness, this heritage came under profound threat during that period (Werner, Anderson and Wheeler, 2000:583). In May 1990, the Sudanese government issued a decree, No. 941, to tear down all the churches and consider them as unrecognized areas (Mading, 2005). This included all those surrounding the capital of Khartoum. As a result, approximately 139 of 226 churches were destroyed by security agencies. These remain demolished to this day.

On the one hand, twenty-nine para-church organizations working in health, education, and with clean water ceased functioning; half of the 87 clinics were closed. More than 70% of the 146 schools and institutions were closed as well (Johnson, 2003:30). On the other hand, the total number of mosques by then was 14,000 in the capital of Khartoum. In addition to that, the government built approximately 4,500 new mosques; their plan was to build five mosques every month.¹⁸

In reality, the cause of the conflict in Sudan is a complex mix of both internal and external factors. Conflict is considered one of the recurring causes for the tragic loss of life and suffering of the Sudanese people. It has destroyed the infrastructure of the country, eroding its economic and social-cultural resources, as stated in material from the Comprehensive Peace Agreement-CPA, published by Peace Direct.

MacCabe (2007:53-54) explains that the way of doing something is not always to act naturally; unnatural conditions are conditions that can only exist by being exceptional, and this is for the sake of controlling an event or offering an explanation. MacCabe draws a distinction in the relationship between the essence of something and its properties, which he

illustrates with the following analogy. The essence of something is what it takes for it to be at all, and has to do with its existence within the world. For example, if there is to be a possible world containing sparrows, then sparrows must be able to fly most of the time. Being unable to fly thus indicates that something is wrong with the sparrow, which means that the sparrow lacks some property. The property of something is that which is natural to it (MacCabe, 2007:53-54).

Professor Ayers (2012:261) raised a different view of the internal and external causes of conflict. Critiques of the ontological primacy of the internal view is commonly portrayed by essentialists as differences between groups based on racial, ethnic, religious or self-seeking behaviour by local elites, as many have seen it:

Esses and Jackson (2008), for example characterise the conflict as resulting from ethnic Arab, Muslim north and a non-Arab Black African Christian and animist in the south. Cultures as Huntingdon (1993), others race not religion is the fundamental fault line in Sudan (Mutua, 2004:10). While Lind (2004), invokes the immutable hostilities, claiming that conflict arises from people's fighting for 'their primary loyalty' to tribes and race as they have done since the history's dawn' in (Johnson, 2007:92).

Thus, the conflict is not solely caused by religious factors. They are driven by a combination of factors, i.e. ethnic, national, economic and religious motivation as seen, for example, in the brutal Sudanese conflict between the light-skinned Arabic speaking Muslims in the north, and the dark-skinned Christians and traditionalists in the south (Bevans and Schroeder, 2004:280). These conflicts may be defined along ethnic, cultural, religious or linguistic lines. The 'people-to-people' dialogue and other peace-making activities in Sudan have focused on these local conflicts.

For example, faith-based and other organizations cannot assume that poverty is the only underlying cause of ethnic, religious and other forms of conflict, and that socio-economic development leads to and supports grassroots peace-building. It is possible that, "Conflict can arise from exploitative and extractive forms of development. And when elites are pursuing their own economic advantage conflict and instability can be a means of maintain power" (Bradbury et al., 2006 26).

The self-perception of the ethnic Islamic Arab is dominated by the ruling party, which seeks to extend control over the state through assimilation where it can or by force where it can't,

in contrast with strong resistance from the other side. The self-perception, however, is multi-layered. In terms of *ethane* (*ethnic*), the northerner, while speaking of him or herself as a pure radical (Arab) denies his or her own biological African connection of origin and acts with varying degrees of prejudice towards southerners of African black origin. It is worse when it comes to religion as most are referred to as pagans and are considered as “people or children of wrath”. The term was also used by missionaries to consider others (Bosch, 2011:293). Francis Deng (1995:1) writes:

The northern Sudanese tendency to exaggerate Arabism and Islam and to look-down on the Negroid races as slaves could be the result of a deep-seated inferiority complex or put it in reverse, a superiority complex as compensational device for their obvious marginality as Arabs (cited in Jenner, 2000:3).

The conflict is deeply about imposition, be it religious, ideology or leadership. The Sudan church leaders’ consultation held on the 25th of June in 1998 in Khartoum, and the 8th assembly in Harare, Zimbabwe, in 1998 indicated that only a just and peaceful settlement would offer people a chance to rebuild their lives (WCC eighteenth assembly official report, *Together on the Way*, 1998).

In the remarkable joint statement by the two, the Sudanese Council of Churches maintains that the Sudanese conflict takes the form of: communal conflict, value conflict, media conflict, and interestingly, data conflict. ‘Communal conflict’ involves ethnicity and race, in which the power elites who come predominantly from a certain ethnic group are considered as superior to the ‘other’ ethnic groups. In ‘value conflict,’ “political elites invoke Islam to justify or perpetuate their grip on power and material resources” (Jenner, 2000:7).

‘Media conflict’ is included as a form of conflict because the media’s narrow sense and direction limits the agenda in a way that contradicts the national message and is used to recruit others to serve their own cause, that of Islam, not reflecting real-life as it is on the ground. And finally, ‘data conflict’ is also recognized because facts are distorted to serve the political elites and technocrats (e.g. the government of Sudan refused to update the census last taken in 1956, information provided jointly by the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC) and the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC)).

Black and Williams (2010) and Sachs (2006) argue that the conflict in Darfur is an amalgamation of many factors and it “has roots in an ecological crisis,” as stated by the UN’s chief Ban Ki-moon (2007), and which later turned into armed conflict. Briefly, the historical root cause of the conflict in our land is due to the lack of implementing shared agreements, national identity, self-perception, and unequal accesses to wealth–power sharing, the lack of good governance, and more recently, the issue of natural resources, in particular, oil revenues (SCC, 2010:2).

The following factors have therefore contributed to the present situation in Sudan, which is characterized by ongoing conflict: the phenomenon of ethnic migration, massive internal displacements, population mixing, divisions caused by civil war, religious conflict, attempts to develop and declare Sudan as an Islamic Republic imposing ‘Sharia law,’ (Werner, Anderson and Wheeler, 2000:6,443). Attempts to resolve these issues include: many agreements that have not been honoured, for instance, the abrogation of the Addis Ababa agreement in June 1983; the division of the South into three regions; the 1983 ‘September Laws,’ followed by the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA, 2005) a few months later.

The civil war was reignited by the re-division of political boundaries for the southern land to benefit the north; this was the biggest and clearest violation of a number of agreements that were reached. The project constructing the Jongli Canal was meant to speed the delivery of water from the Nile through the marshes of the Sudd for use in the north; this however, is destructive to dry season grazing reserves and was just another imposition from the north. Due to the abrogation of the Addis Ababa agreement in 1983, and the division of the south into three regions, the place of religion was exploited and it appeared that Christianity and Islam were in direct confrontation (Werner, Anderson and Wheeler, 2000:583). Moreover, attempts in the north to redraw borders to include oilfields, minerals and rich fertile agricultural lands were seen as a modern continuation of northern trends to exploit the people and the land in the south (Jenner, 2000:5).

Sadly, the lack of unity among different ethnic tribes encouraged the famous colonial manipulation policy of ‘divide and rule,’ an old Roman concept for domination, where people are vulnerable to political and economic forces. Resistance with the aim of protecting

human dignity is only possible if people join together in communities and speak socially to determine their lives (Moltmann, 2010:164).

Besides disputes over cultural grazing lands, living and cattle herds, even fishing disputes are the cause of underlying ethnic and tribal tensions (Jenner, 2000:6). Another reality in Sudan is the authority of the ruling party and the way in which they control political decisions, i.e. manage economic resources by the post-colonial rule of 'rule and displace,' misuse the legal system, violate human dignity, as well as use power and food as possible weapons to threaten the existence of life and stability (Werner, Anderson and Wheeler, 2000:587-589). Another factor that needs to be taken into account is the occurrence of internal conflict in the Sudanese churches, particularly where some church leaders are involved in politics and internal administrative conflicts, which have brought division among them.

The conflict in Sudan has broadly and politically divided the country into two regions. The first is a predominantly Muslim region; it is mostly an Arabic speaking culture, and includes nomads in the Sahara desert with Christians being the minority, and the second is the South Sudanese African indigenous region consisting of many different cultures, traditions, beliefs, the Christian faith and indigenous African Traditional Religions (ATR) with Muslims as the minority (Dau, 2002:20). Since then, Sudan was divided into two regions and will historically and on the map, never be the same on again.

After elaborating on the root cause of the conflict, it is time to turn to the main empirical question/s, where the researcher seeks to examine the stated hypotheses followed by the 'group threat' theory and the realistic intergroup contact 'conflict' theory to improve the understanding of the role of SPEC in its process and practice of peace, and the 'anti-outgroups' attitude of violence related to ethnic-religious diversity. Assumptions are made regarding what the data supports in the peace process, and explanations are derived from the analysis to seek ways to solve the conflict.

The *existential* hypothesis questions whether our state of affairs exists or not? Bunge (1967:167) notes that physical existence is necessary for actual observation to take place, if anything is observed then it exists. The causal-correlational and *rational* hypothesis seeks to find out whether the event happened or not (Bunge, 1967:122). It also questions the role,

nature and extent of SPEC's mediating structure for peace and reconciliation. The research question/s encompass the following areas: life histories, which trace individual and personal biographies; and oral histories, which explores how the participants experienced historical events, significant locations and the need for specific events.

3.5 Theoretical research hypotheses

This section focuses on the research assumptions based on the three phases and interconnected themes undergirding the study. Any effort that seeks to understand and see the different mechanisms in the process and practice of peace more clearly and its impact on daily life would begin by focusing on translating the conceptual framework into a researchable question. This enables one to develop and generate themes and praxis-oriented theories for mission and ministry in various contexts. The theoretical hypothesis relates to the nature and extent of the structure of SPEC. Mediating peace and reconciliation in these three phases depending on the three institutional, contextual and theological factors, which include the following:

- 1) Significant participation of religious agents in past and present faith-based and non-faith based programmes of 'people-to-people' dialogue;
- 2) How the key religious leaders and participants have appropriated important aspects of the 'people-to-people' dialogue in SPEC's 'mission as ministry' of peace and reconciliation by the 'whole people of God';
- 3) How the leaders and a significant part of the 'whole people of God' cooperated and dialogue with participants from other local and global faith-based and non-faith based organizations;
- 4) Indigenous leadership power issues and the role of expatriate missionaries and mission organizations;
- 5) Conversation with 'others' to discern opportunities for missional practice as a transformative religious contribution to 'people-to-people' dialogue.

In particular, when seeking to understand the mechanism that impacts on daily living in a meaningful way, this is considered as the explanatory approach to reality. For MacCabe (2007:54), the work of finding causes is simply re-description, but its ultimate purpose is to

find a language in which the event can be described with predicates which are natural to their subjects. What the researcher means by the explanatory factor is to view the current situation by trying to explain and interpret with broad imagination everything that is real and related to the conflict.

This leads to the combining of Osmer's two tasks: the descriptive-empirical and the interpretive or the hermeneutical approach (see section 2.2). This method is used to engage key theories, for example, through an extended literature review, or examples drawn from one's own experience, and a number of other sources including various literature. This research focuses solely on the case study of Sudan, which proved to be a good case for witnessing the longest civil war, tension and conflict in African history. The researcher improves on previous studies using well-known, reliable, valid and generally accepted measurements (Creswell, 2009:190). Furthermore, the researcher distinguishes ethnic diversity at the regional and national levels so as to understand the role of outgroups, and to explain the violent attitude of the ingroup. It is also an attempt to make a methodological contribution by employing different measures and different explanations simultaneously in order to estimate their relative importance. Figure 3 below illustrates the theoretical framework and its various levels.

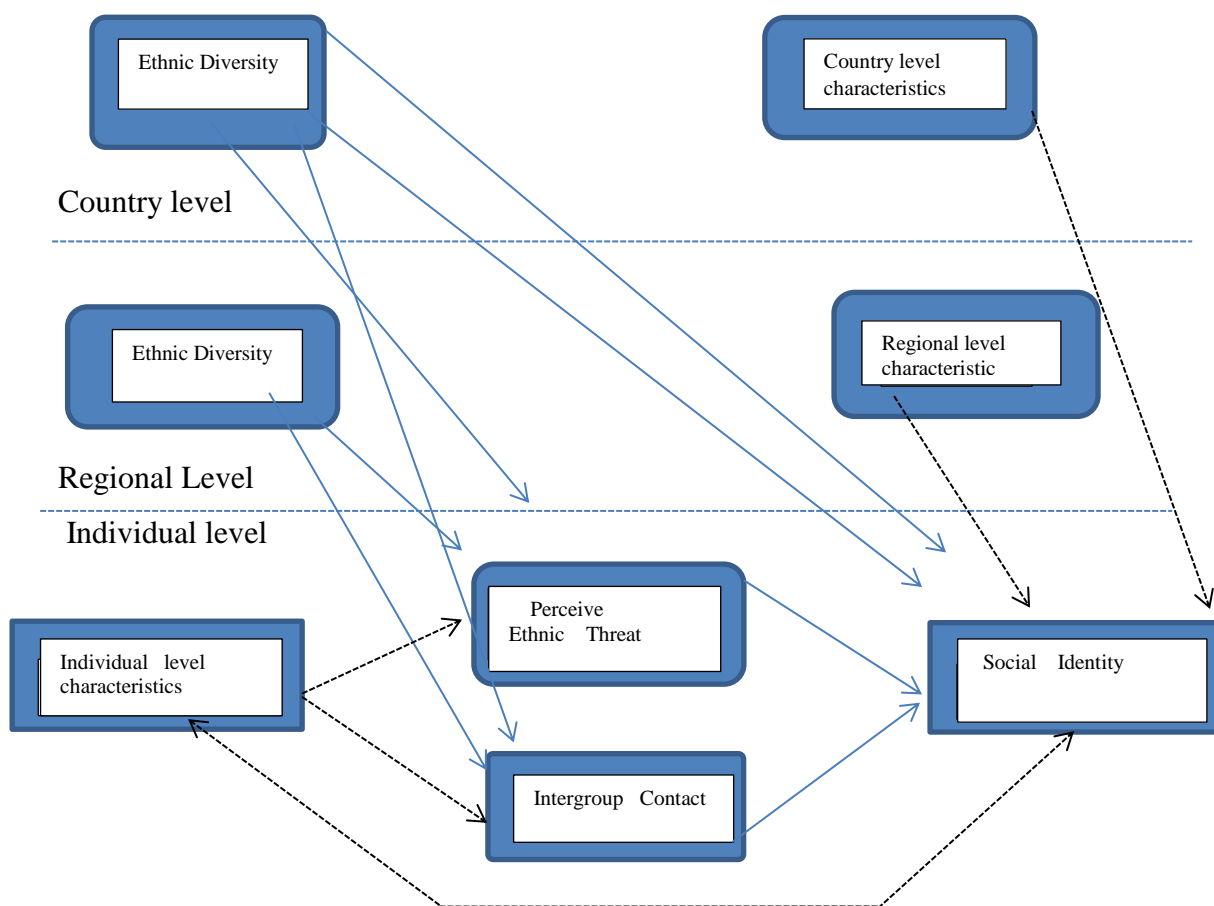


Figure 1: Theoretical framework of the ethnic-religious identity and mission of reconciliation (Source: adapted from Savelkoul et al., 2011).

Using the empirical data and secondary data from SPEC's archive and the SCC's constitution, the study assessed the effect of ethnic-religious diversity on peace processes and practices at the local and national level. Before proceeding, the researcher seeks to define the term 'theory' and how it is related to ethnic-religious theories, namely, intergroup contact theory and realistic conflict theory, and asks, "Which theory?" Glasgow (2009:23, 26, 36), reflecting on the concept of race described a theory as a tale of two sets of twins, which means to draw a unique belief about something that makes a shared meaning of a concept, or to talk of a word and then analyse the concept through one's cultural lens.

Theories are statements intended to explain an aspect of social life that shapes and directs research efforts, pointing towards possible discoveries through empirical observation of interesting patterns of social life (Babbie, 2004:43). Plueddemann (2009:xx), writing about

leadership describes a theory as a mental picture of why things work the way they do. He explains why the world works the way it does.

For Creswell (2009:171-173), excellent theory must grow out of good theology and be echoed in actual practice. He also stated that theories underlie assumptions, articulate strategies, and interconnect actions in a project... that are intended to lead a community towards positive transformation. A theory is particularly important in explaining social change. MacRaild and Taylor (2004:3) explored the complex and developing relationship between social theory and social history, arguing and describing it as awareness between the two mentioned realities, and it is the key to a deeper understanding of the process of historical change.

MacRaild (2004:4-5) argues that theory can help explain the events, social change and deal with the complex nature of the problem. But essentially, it involves an expansion of the historian's range of concerns beyond the activities of social and political elites. The key to understanding peace processes and practices is to understand the transformational change in SPEC's mission and process of change. Change can mean and imply conflict. As we explore the dynamics of change, we are really looking for fundamental interpretations of the social forces operative in the society (Holland and Henriot, 1980:31), like the dynamics of intergroup and influential personal interactions, and their responses and reasoning when confronting the realities of ethnic-religious conflict.

3.6 Conflict theories

This section begins to examine and explain the influence of ethnic-religious diversity on peace processes and practices. However, the study set out to incorporate core propositions of three theoretical traditions. These are: contact theory, conflict theory and constrict theory. In the dialectical process, when exploring and explaining the construction of theories and typology emerges from the data. The analysis involves emerging data analysis and associates the concepts of meaning and experience, as well as broader concepts. It also incorporates styles and mixed approaches into its explanation and argument. Here, I concentrate on the last two realistic group conflict theories and intergroup contact:

- 1) Constrict theory (Putman, 2007:1092) statement: ‘Ethnic diversity reduces social cohesion with regards to both outgroups (minority-them), as well as ingroups (majority-us)’. Conflict theory (Coser, 1956; Blalock, 1967; Bobo, 1999) and competition theory (Scheepers et al., 2002; Gijsberts and Coenders et al., 2004a) statements assume that: ‘Ethnic diversity fosters actual competition between members of ethnic ingroups (majority-us) and outgroups (minority-them) over scarce resources and cultural values, which increases conflict of interest between these groups, and eventually leads to enmity in intergroup attitudes’ (Putman, 2007:1092).
- 2) Conflict theory (Allport, 1954; Tropp and Pettigrew, 2006) statement: ‘Interethnic contact effectively reduces outgroup derogation’ (Gesthuizen, van der Meer and Scheepers, 2009:1093).

According to Gesthuizen et al., (2009) and Putman’s (2007) proposition of intergroup contact theory (Allport, 1954; Tropp and Pettigrew, 2006), both propose a direct *negative* effect on the social identity of multi-ethnic and religious states. In the case of Sudan, ethnic outgroups (minority-them) were ranked among the indigenous and were considered less educated, as well as threatened by the ingroup (majority-us). As a result, ethnic diversity should reduce the social cohesion with regards to both the (majority-us) ingroup, as well as (minority-them) outgroup.

Based on constrict theory, our current context defines context as having various aspects, which function as tools. The church, its mission and ministry of reconciliation are considered as mission by outgroups (minority-them) in ethnic diversity. So interaction among church and society will reduce social cohesion in both groups, and that diversity triggers social isolation causing people to withdraw from social life. As a result, the level of ‘people-to-people’ efforts for peace-dialogue will decline or reduce.

Derived from realistic conflict theory and ethnic competition theory, both form actual competition and perceived competition between the ingroup (majority-us) and outgroup (minority-them). Ethnic competition theory argues that the process of social identification and social contra-identification becomes intensified under conditions of actual intergroup competition and/or perceived ethnic threat. Ethnic competition is assumed to increase the perception of ethnic threat amongst (majority-us) ingroup interests. These perceived ethnic

threats should increase the level of (minority-them) outgroup derogation. Such anti-outgroup attitudes serve to protect or restore their interests, and also increase the favouritism of the majority-groups (Coser, 1956; Coenders et al., 2004 a; 2004b).

Previous studies on expressions of intolerance towards (majority-us) outgroup derogation (Schlueter and Wagner, 2008; Savelkoul et al., 2010) already showed several effects. Hooghe et al. (2009) used a mechanism proposed by conflict theory to explain the negative effect of ethnic diversity as proposed by constrict theory. More focus will be placed on ethnic competition conflict theory and intergroup contact theory to explain the relationship between the two. Although this in fact leads to a struggle between individuals and groups who tend to regard themselves as members of in/out groups based on their ethnic backgrounds (Tajfel, 1982). Therefore, individuals struggle for scarce resources, which became a struggle between ethnic groups.

The theoretical framework for ethnic competition is based on two influential, as well as complementary theories, namely: realistic group conflict theory and social identity theory (Scheepers; Gijberts and Coenders, 2002). This ethnic competition takes place across the whole social spectrum of individual's lives and may consist of struggles, including the struggle for resources or power, which will result in an increase of negative attitudes, discriminatory behaviour and hostility, or decrease the amount of intergroup contact prejudices. Social identity theory applies sociological perspectives to explain negative attitudes towards the out-group (minority-them) (Tajfel and Turner, 1981; 1982; Turner, 1982; Brown, 2000). One of the mechanisms is the process of categorization, which leads to intergroup identification.

Classic theory treats social identities as primordially given and inherited. This theory way to the idea that identity by its nature as a social construct, is open to manipulation and contrivances. It can be found on weak, remote, imagined, fabricated base, yet it has the capacity to become like a religious belief (Beny and Hale, 2015:6)

Hooghe et al. (2009) offers an alternative perception of ethnic threat; it may indeed *mediate the effect* of ethnic diversity in the 'process and practice' of peace dialogue, in line with conflict theory. They argue that the feeling of 'ethnic' threat and insecurity amongst members of the ingroup (majority-us) can easily turn into a generalized attitude of discomfort with all intimate connections. They used a mechanism proposed by conflict theory to explain the

negative effect of constrict theory as contextual factors. Engaging in the community dialogue movement and practice of peace-dialogue in the indigenous outgroup minority and church ministry is perceived as a threat to the ethnic-religious ingroup majority related to our Christian identity. This creates tension that leads to competition over scarce resources and turns the small minority group's attitude negative, in the form of neglect, discrimination and social isolation (Schlueter and Scheepers, 2010).

- 3) In the contact theory or intergroup contact theory, Putman (2007) proposes that inter-ethnic contact effectively reduces outgroup majority-us derogation. Previous studies repeatedly show that ethnic diversity increases the likelihood of intergroup contact, which reduces levels of outgroup minority-them derogation (Wagner et al., 2006; Schlueter and Wagner, 2008; Schlueter and Scheepers, 2010). It also reduces intergroup anxiety; it reduces feelings of threat, an uncertainty that people experience in an intergroup context.

Intergroup contact theory proposes that a larger outgroup size provides opportunity for positive intergroup contact, which in turn ameliorates ingroup interest and attitudes, motivating them to express anti-outgroup attitudes. Consequently, the actual evidence that the outgroup size as a contextual characteristic, which was assumed to positively or negatively affect the attitude of the ingroup, remains inconclusive. The present study intended to add to this gap in the research in three complementary ways:

- 1) Understand the role of the out-group (minority-them) and explain ingroup attitudes.
- 2) Examine peace processes linking outgroup attitudes to in-group attitudes.
- 3) Make a theological contribution.

Schneider (2008:54) argued that a larger outgroup (minority-them) might not only increase economic competition but also ethnic-religious conflict over norms and value-identity concerns, as well as worries about the declining of national identity leading to cultural competition. The effect of contact is generalized for the entire group involved in the new situation, and even to the groups not involved in the original contact (Pettigrew, 2009). This type of broad generalization may require some degree of similarity between the two

outgroups if contact takes place under optimal conditions and a group remains aware of their group identification (optimal contact) (Pettigrew and Tropp, 2006; 2011).

The realistic group conflict theory refers to the rational behaviour of individuals and the example by Putnam (2007) and Tolsma et al. (2009) proposes: “Ethnic diversity fosters actual competition between members of ingroups (majority-us) and outgroups minority-them over scarce resources of all kinds,” these could be cultural values or markets. Empirical evidence regarding this *negative* relation between intergroup contact and the perception of ethnic threat was recently provided by Schneider (2008), Pettigrew et al., (2010), and Schlueter and Scheepers (2010).

Hence, the perception of ethnic threat might be considered an important mechanism mediating the effect of ethnic diversity for ‘people-to-people’ peace dialogue in peace processes and practices. Contact theory might be important in two different ways, as intergroup contact affects ethnic diversity both directly and indirectly, so inter-group threat theory will complement realistic group ‘conflict’ contact theory and it is important for the outgroup minority to understand how inter-group tension and unfavourable inter-group attitudes might be alleviated. The core of inter-group theory is actually inter-group contact, which also creates opportunities between members of different groups, and may also include more unfavourable attitudes, as ‘inter-group contact, improves inter-group attitudes’.

Therefore, consideration will be given to the overarching themes from the interview schedule, and field material notes will be taken into account. These two theories contain important mechanisms that can be correlated:

- 1) Personal experiences of the key leaders-practitioners.
- 2) Ethnic threat perception.
- 3) Causal relationships

In order to estimate the impact and effect of the process and practice of peace on ethnic-religious diversity and conflict, one needs to consider both mechanisms from the practitioner’s experience—individual level—and perception of ethnic threat, then apply and correlate these to explain negative ingroup attitudes. According to Gesthuizen et al. (2009),

cross-national research on the effect of ethnic diversity on different dimensions of social cohesion should distinguish an additional level of aggregation between the national and individual level, that of the municipality level.

The literature shows that previous studies on the effect of ethnic diversity on several dimensions of social identity at municipality or neighbourhood level has only been conducted between countries (Liegh, 2006; Letki, 2008; Tolsma et al., 2009; Laurence, 2011). Looking at both, the realistic group conflict theory and ethnic competition theory, it was proposed that the actual competition between majority-us and minority-them groups would increase negative attitudes and hostility (Allport, 1954; Tropp and Pettigrew, 2006). Gonzalez et al., (2008) addressed both mechanisms and in their study were only limited to six secondary schools. Competition was found to exist between social groups over scarce resources, and value and power increases conflict over shared interests. Ethnic competition theory has been applied in cross-national contexts, although they may also be applied at the regional level within countries.

Social identity is derived from group membership. It further proposes that people strive to achieve or maintain a positive identity (thus, boosting their self-esteem). This positive social identity is largely derived from favourable comparisons that are made between the ingroup and relevant outgroups. In the event of 'unsatisfactory' identity, people will seek to leave their group or find a way to achieve more positive distinctiveness for it (Tajfel and Turner, 1986). The theory also applies socio-psychological perspectives to explain negative attitudes towards ethnic minorities (Tajfel, 1981, 1982; Brown, 2000). My focus will mainly be on the competitive conditions at the regional level. This is proposed to influence the perceived threat and negative attitudes, and in turn influence the mission and ministry of the church in mediating public issues like peace and reconciliation.

Ethnic competition theory has been applied in cross-national contexts, although it may also be applied at regional level. The competitive condition can be applied at the individual and contextual level within the country (Olzak, 1992; Quillian, 1995; Scheepers et al., 2002; Schneider, 2008). The focus here will be on competitive conditions at the regional level, which is proposed to influence perceived threat, and in turn, negative ingroup attitudes.

Attention is now turned to the theories of theology and missiology in religious studies; this follows next.

3.7 Theories and models of missiology in the Science of religion

In the dominant system, favouritism based on ethnicity-religion appears to foster violence, inequality, marginalization and exclusion of the minority by the majority in various forms. Mostly, favouritism conforms to superiority over inferiority, silence and grief, but worse is the fear not to address it at all. Thus, the explanatory model in theorizing uses contextual rhetorical logic and the dialectical process by combining observation and the experience of how to construct an explanation and sense of meaning.

This section draws together some of the traditions related to mission in the science of religion and how it can be practically applied to the Sudanese context and the root cause of its long-standing conflict. By drawing on both competition theory and intergroup conflict contact theory, and in line with the findings of Scheepers and Schlueter (2010), people living in the regions are more experienced with integration (Blalock, 1967; Schneider, 2008). Through the process over time, unfavourable contact with outgroups may occur at the individual level. This process will reduce people's level of perceived ethnic threat based on the two theories of inter-group contact and conflict theory.

3.7.1 Competition theory or the group threat theory

Considering the case of the universal religions in particular, the religions of Christianity and Islam are regarded as directly competing with one another, and impeding the growth of a particular identity (Gat, 2013:220). The competition and the struggle are between various ethnic groups as well and consist of a struggle over resources or power, which increases negative attitudes of discrimination and hostility, which could turn to competition over norms and values, national identity or cultural competition (Scheepers et al., 2002; Coenders et al., 2004a). The theory argues that both actual and perceived forms of competition between the groups and the process of social identification intensify under conditions of actual inter-group competition or perceive ethnic threat.

3.7.2 Social identity theory or the realistic inter-group contact (conflict) theory

Looking closely at the conflict and violence related to ethnic religious diversity in Sudan provides the researcher with the opportunity to reflect on the events, processes, context, materials, content and to understand individual and group responses to the struggle, tension and ethnic threat. The focus is on how experiences, involvement and participation are incorporated and engaged in the theoretical traditions. A biblical understanding could be an opportunity for transformation to emerge and the chance to be translated into action (Schneider, 2008; Pettigrew et al. 2010; Schlueter and Scheepers, 2010). These processes are:

1. Select data tool
2. Represent a model (material-describe-explain-analyse)
3. Display (method of data analysis which involves:
 - a. Concept meaning
 - b. Own experiences
 - c. Broader concept
4. Emphasis on reflection (rhetoric construction of aspect knowledge) (Mason, 2008:183)

Methodological themes and practical aspects start with praxis, and as Saayman describes (2007:137-138), this is also true for when we connect theology to praxis. Any practice grows out of a goal or task and an appropriate method, keeping in mind that experiences can change, especially when we reflect on human experience. This takes the explanation further in terms of this study, and links the data, argument and analysis (Blueddemann, 2009:158).

Experience is always contextual or spiritual since it is a given of the human condition because the Spirit is a 'gift poured out,' captured by the context and can lead us through and beyond the action of the 'Spirit-filled-person'. Even God through his Son became human (Bate, 1998:151-152). Bate reminds us that as Christians, based on John 3:5, 'we were born of water and spirit'. By our first birth we were corrupt, steeped in sin; therefore, we must be made by the Spirit, which recreates our humanity. To discern 'Spirit-filled-people' is the practice of the faith community and is essential in the journey towards the Promised Land and the reign of God. Without some sort of understanding of the context and the way in which it conditions us and the expression and articulation of our humanity, we can easily misunderstand our experience (Bate, 1998:150).

Thus, in order to describe the relationship of peace and reconciliation, telling the truth is not only directly related to the ethnic and religious dimension or ethnic group. But it has a relation to ethnic identity, and this is what people expressed in their responses, which can be problematic. This is evident from the different group discussions. There is something about the context and who they are. Some attitudes are more important and decide what the major outcomes should be, and which are to be focused on more in the analysis.

The qualitative data strategy also raises basic and important points that I need to discuss here. Now, if power issues come up as a mechanism, then something triggered it. In fact, theories have helped the researcher to see how power issues work; I can see it reflected in the people's responses. In one way or another, the 'cause-effect' strategy is a generative causal model for understanding outputs like reconciliation. Understanding how to achieve peace and equality in the outcomes that are generated is a way of understanding reconciliation before applying it, it is thus a reflection on actions.

According to the understanding of the CIMO model, this kind of problematic context, which can be used and applied in different ways, guides the process. It can help one to look at the desired or negative outcomes. For instance, if we claim that there should be peace, and then people must tell the truth. From this perspective, people should respond in a certain way in order for their attitude to change.

If we want to achieve an outcome (**O**) in a particular context (**C**), then we use an intervention (**I**) by raising the issue of causality, namely, and asking through which generative mechanisms (**M**) should this be carried out. In other words, this requires a resource or intervention where people begin to tell the truth and respond in terms of their reasoning about some skills and through various activities.

The CIMO components, in which the context (**C**) describes facts, factors and the nature of the human actors that influence behavioural change, like age and experience, human capacity or the state of affairs, i.e. what happened. Interventions (**I**) invokes a mechanism on how to understand, respond and go about doing things, through programs, policies, laws, legislation and strategies or creatively generated mechanisms. Mechanism (**M**) gives real and specific reasons. It explains how human behaviour, people's choices and historical events happened,

as well as along which dimension it occurred, and how it produced that outcome. The diagram below is more explanatory:

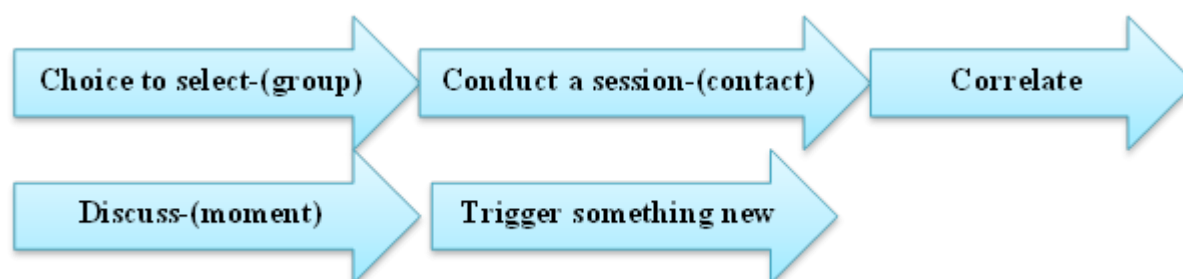


Figure 2. CIMO Model

When using mutual and prophetic dialogue and incorporating the aspects of dialogue, interaction, contact or insertion, then the responses generated among the members of a certain group is always a problem. It produces a lot of resources on what people say or do. During these processes and discussions people may often be busy with their daily living or ministry, constructing their own different contexts during war or threat that triggers something new that ultimately leads to certain outcomes like reconciliation.

This means that reconciliation and change do not come directly from people's dialogue, but is the result of their interactions, responses and reasoning. This is not directly from their conversations but from incorporating and inserting (being part) those aspects into their discussions. In fact, people want to speak the truth with commitment, willingness and skilfully. They can share what happened and speak about the event, but some hide out of fear. Others prefer to remain silent, or they do so by force. If those people can intervene and establish the truth in those contexts, this is a resource that connects the group with reconciliation and procedures of long-term output, like in my case.

There are factors in some contexts that make it impossible because people are connected and some don't want to disclose the truth. But if they do so, this may produce some kind of outcome that may facilitate reconciliation. For people to reason in a truthful way, will require what to put into the group discussion. In mission and missionary work, the mission group encounters the outcome, this is the resource of what that means to them; the intervention mediator is the response of people towards mission. There are areas, for example, that lack a peaceful co-existence; this is always a problem because the output in this case may result in a

negative output and negative image, which we read in this current chapter from this perspective. Table 4 below uses CIMO analysis to illustrate the positive or negative outcomes as a basic way to live and continue to co-exist, and at the same time it is a way to construct meaning from everyday life.

Table 4. CIMO Analysis

No.	Groups	Encounter	Outcome	Mechanism (mediatory)
1.	Mission group	Encounter	Resource	Responses
2.	Sense of injustice	Share/lack	Negative	Interaction
3.	Lack of peaceful co-existence	Discuss/lack	Negative	Contact

In fact, contextual theologies and postmodern theories helped us to understand that texts are inseparable. Osmer's (2008) four tasks of practical theology throughout the text made a good connection and appropriate use of experiences from the case study. The intention is not mere problem-solving but a mystery venture. To elaborate, "My goal is to teach you a way of approaching the situation...a good ministry." Osmer's (2008:133) model refers to "prophetic discernment". The prophetic office is the discernment of God's word to the covenant people in a particular time and place. The Bible provides clear insight when handling the Christian tradition. Three different methods that Osmer used to discover God's word for the present time include:

1. Theological interpretation.
2. Ethical interpretation.
3. Good practice and normative reflection.

Theological interpretation: focuses on interpreting the present, the various dimensions of an episode, situation and context, using theological concepts (Osmer, 2008:139). Ethical interpretation: uses rules, guidelines and ethical principles to guide actions toward moral ends (Osmer, 2008:147). Good practice: draws on the models of the past or present to 'reform a congregations present actions' (Osmer, 2008:152) by using contextualization as CIMO logic,

inter-ethnic, inter-religious and inter-cultural influences, which deals with the problematic context and inter-group contact theory, and reduces ethnic-religious violence.

Saayman and Kritzinger's (2007) circles¹⁹ are used as a methodological theme, which starts with praxis, where people are. Because they construct their social reality as a way of helping theological students to focus and relate to these themes, it may lead to reconciliation and transformation, their construct of being with people is part of those practices. When asking about their experiences, theological and missiological issues form part of the motivation not only to conduct the empirical fieldwork but to explore my main question, and how and why they construct these meanings (Bosch, 2011:291).

To construct meaning, not only using the SPEC as an example of the Presbyterian Church, but all people who are a part of and who are involved in that mission. Part of that mission is to help the church own a way of understanding mission from a constructive perspective by means of engaging with experiences in their own context, and through conversation and practices as they partake in that mission through interaction, inter-group relations and inclusive 'people-to-people' peace dialogue. Thus, Christian spirituality is prophetic and transformational. Prophetic in the message of mutual and spiritual dialogue that brings hope to people that could be reflected in the spiritual realm.

It is transformational in the way it is meant to achieve change in people's lives in the kingdom realm. It is through the dialogue of spirituality or prophetic dialogue, inter-religious dialogue and understanding of local community traditions that make them appreciate the gospel introduced to them and to people of other faiths, and dialogue that meets the hearts and not only the minds as a reflection of prophetic 'people-to-people' dialogue. This also provides a service and a chance to reduce the tension and mitigate the ongoing violence.

Christians are required to deeply reflect on their previous experiences so as to evaluate future mission more seriously and to critically realize, acknowledge and seek not Christian presence but 'Christ's presence,' and to engage in the kingdom's declared expansion by encouraging fruitful and honest prophetic dialogue. 'Christ's presence' is the reign of God in the presence of Jesus; this is a reality that is beyond the perception and interpretive capacities of the listeners.

As an expression of love, all of mankind are to love and forgive their enemies because God in His kingly power through His servant Jesus was always willing to forgive (Samuel and Sugden, 1999:31). So Jesus began by describing the reality, the relationship between those shaped by Jesus and those shaped exclusively by other cultural forces and not merely a matter of values or doctrines. It is about hermeneutics, ‘concerning what is real,’ and embodiment in ‘practice’ (Van Gelder, 2008:99).

Samartha (1991:46) in his later work *One Christ–Many Religions* encountered normative exclusivism with the possibility of the relational distinctiveness of Christ. He asserts that it is relational because Christ does not remain unrelated to neighbours of other faiths, and the distinctiveness of the great religious traditions as a different response to the mystery of God, with no mutual enrichment is possible.

In Jesus Christ we who once were far off have been brought near through his blood, for Christ our provider of peace made the two one before God, both ‘Jew and Gentile,’ making peace is a vision of reconciliation. In that, He has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, putting an end to it in one body once and for all through the cross. This is referring to new union in His peace, the mystery of God that was kept secret in the past, according to God’s plan. The Gentiles became heirs together with the Jews, according to the promise of God. Not only that, He has also reconciled these contrasting groups of people into one.

Bosch argues in his twelve theses that reconciliation, which God demands, is not a human possibility but a divine gift (Bosch, 2010:422). The church’s role is based on the gospel of reconciliation because it is the task of the missional church (Kärkkäinen, 2013:368). In order to achieve reconciliation we should be fully engaged in inclusive mutual and prophetic dialogue. This has to do with the institutions and theological structures in which they are inspired with vision and purpose to restore the balance. Redesigning and reshaping our institutions and human actions requires continuous transformation in the realm of reflection, which is a kind of inner dialogue (Banathy and Jenlink, 2005:71). Conversely, in the Sudanese context the relationship between contextual elements on the one hand and ethnic and religious conflict on the other hand, is also complex. Such complexities make it almost impossible for outsiders to fully understand, once again highlighting just how indispensable

grassroots peace and reconciliation efforts and programs of faith-based and non-faith based organizations are (Bradbury, 2006:26).

Despite the complexity of the conflicts, Christian-Muslim inter-religious and inter-faith initiatives have attempted to address both the ethnic and religious conflicts, for example in the north with the Arab groups for Islamic-Christian dialogue, which started in 1995 by a number of Arab elites through an initiative of the Middle East Council of Churches. In 2001, they issued an Arab Islamic-Christian Covenant targeting dialogue not only among Sudanese citizens but included all nations through the practical expression of their commonly-shared religious values. Such values provide the meaning and basis of multiplicity and the value of human dignity.

The application of the theological and missiological themes in the field of reconciliation ministry calls for a “holistic approach” to ministry. In order to meet the needs and concerns of people, maybe some specific programmes targeting important areas of human needs. Practitioners need to re-evaluate their strategies and reasons for hope, not forgetting to recognize and identify with the victims’ experience of suffering and trauma that they have endured, thus, identification with whole nations. This took place with Abraham Lincoln (1861) and Nelson Mandela (1994), both sought peace for their nations. Meister (1999:136) thus puts a stop to the cycle of revenge in Rothfield, Fleming and Komesaroff (2008:21). When successfully internalizing the other, the burden of guilt is shared.

Thus, deep theological insight is received and perceived through the experience of surviving slavery and civil war, located in human understanding integrated through critical reflection and creating meaningful ideas for life. Finally, it is only manifested by taking action through decision-making and organizational histories, achieving the effect of these forms of injustices (Banathy and Jenlink, 2005:80).

In the Muslim world, Christianity is, for example in Sudan, regarded as a religion of the West and where the church is always perceived as a representation of colonial imperialism, sometimes associated and identified as an agent to fulfil the interest and agenda of the West. The Sudanese government accused the church of being an enemy of the government’s agenda. Sudanese Christians, as their followers, were seen as agents of imperialism,

dedicated to destroying Sudan's independence and unity (Werner, Anderson and Wheeler, 2000:401).

With such kinds of confusion and suspicion, the activities and programs of faith-based and non-faith based organizations are limited by regulations and mandates, governed by few rules and policies. They are therefore always under threat or forced to leave their tasks and agendas at any time (Limouris, 1990:18). Sometimes they leave even if they were not asked to do so but they evacuate and that would sound or count as safety and security measures.

3.8 Conclusion

In this chapter the researcher explained the complexity of the conflict situation. In order to fully understand the nature of this complexity, the researcher explained the history of the conflict, the injustices, inter-group relations and reasons for that. The struggle confirms the search for self-identity; peace and justice always becomes a challenge to the society and believers at various levels of ministry. Social harmony, stability and suffering as fruits of injustice impact on daily life. Multiple conflicts remain a hindrance to peaceful co-existence and any kind of sustainable development, revealing these painful realities.

Table 5. Africa gateway to slaves

Period:	State:	Relation:	Location:	Nature/term:	Slavery:
Ancient/history: 37-400 500-552 552-750 750-800 900-1254 1255-1453 1500 1810-1870	X-Seed -Axum 3-X-Nubia F-Egypt/Abbasid 3-Islam/invasion Fall/Medi-Fatim F/Constantinople M/Ali-Egypt	Pure-X Tension Tension Cont./Tension Muslim rule End of -X rule	North Dongla- W/N/E F/Mamluks F/Soba-	Golden/age None Gateway- Slavery: (close/circles)	Nothing Not yet Baqt/Treaty Changed- Widely Spread Continued Continued
Colonial/history: 1820-1844 1848-1863 1881-1885 1898-1920 1920-1945 1945-1952	M/Ali-Khartoum Keddive Ismail M/Mehadi's-1 Miss/Foundation Rebirth/Sudanese End/W2	Muslim-X Europe/aware Tension continued	Nuba areas El-Obied	Slavery/hunting Slavery/trade (open/market) Mehdi/Camp	Sill/Practiced Flourish
Independence: 1956-1963 1964 1964-1968 1969 1984-1989 1989	Abud/coup Mission/expel Azhari/coup Nimeri/coup Elect/Medadi-2 Al Basher coup	Mus./dominant X-Minority and sharia-laws	Fighting areas/ Hammara Death road	S/Kidnapped Continued/ Closed areas Close roads	?
Modern/history: 1989-2000 2000-2005 2005-2011 2005-2010 2015- April	Al- Basher/coup Continued CPA Interim-election Election	Musl./dominant X-Minority	Fighting areas 'along the south boarder'	S/Abduction Continued in Peace/village ²⁰	?

Table 5 above traces the past and current history of Sudan, and may help one to gain a better understanding of the root cause of the conflict. During the CPA, an abduction commission was appointed to handle the issue of those who were lost and kidnapped, including children; it seems to me that it was a planned strategy. The term 'slavery' may change every few decades but the same practice and policy applies, as is evident in child labour and trafficking (Witnesses; Hale, 2015:274).

CHAPTER FOUR

‘PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE’ DIALOGUE IN THE SCC AND THE MISSION AND MINISTRY OF THE SPEC

4.1 Introduction

This chapter draws together the theological and missiological themes by interpreting the main results obtained from the previous chapters, in particular, the model of mission as dialogue which came into being in post-colonial times in the 1960's. As the main results are described and summarised, the expected and unexpected findings are also discussed. The focus of each section of this chapter is as follows: Section 4.2 engages in critical analyses of ‘people-to-people’ dialogue’. Section 4.3 looks at dialogue in the SCC, and section 4.4 scrutinizes dialogue in the ministry and mission of the SPEC in Sudan and ecumenical mission. Section 4.5 introduces the goal of peaceful co-existence. It looks at the way the key leaders and practitioners have appropriated the important aspects of the ministry of peace and reconciliation by the ‘whole people of God’ in the community. Section 4.6 gives an example of mission team effort and outreach, and section 4.7 concludes the study and. Finally, it answers the second research sub-question: “Whether and how the SPEC has incorporated aspects of ‘people-to people’ dialogue into its own context-based mission and ministry of reconciliation?”

4.2 ‘People-to-people’ dialogue

Christian theology is a theology of dialogue. Dialogue would lose its meaning unless Christians bear witness to the salvation they have received in Jesus Christ. Reconciliation depends on dialogue in order to achieve its purpose. This includes dialogue with and among the victims and offenders in the present time, as well as from the past, so as to create a different future (Schreiter, 2013:24). Nazir-Ali (1995:29) mentions that in every one of the church’s missions, the gospel had to be embodied in vocabulary. The forms and traditions of various people, including their expression and mediation of the gospel in terms of their particular culture require an extended dialogue with the people of that culture. Such communication facilitates interaction between both inter-ethnic and inter-religious groups in

peace dialogues and from this mutual prophetic dialogue one finds important key concepts, relevant themes and realistic future hope, not false hope.

Here, the researcher asks what participation would mean in the light of ‘people-to-people’ dialogue. Remarkably, history has shown that in the late twentieth century three multi-denominational models were used for understanding mission, as was mentioned earlier. The direction of the church, as well as the way it has shaped the thinking and understanding of missionary activities has also provided a deeper understanding of the *missio Dei*, especially in the mainline churches and other traditions.

In Bevans and Schroeder’s (2004:438) view, the *missio Dei*, kingdom of God and perspectives of reconciliation, prophetic dialogue, many of their theories, as well as prophetic spirituality are all challenged by complex relationships between contextual elements on the one hand, and ethnic and religious conflict on the other hand. Bevans and Schroeder (2004:438) asserts that mission as prophetic dialogue is similar to the insights and challenges of Bosch’s (2010:501) “bold humility”. That is why they proposed prophetic dialogue as a main concept, which includes elements of mission spirituality - being bold, vulnerable and humble. Additionally, commitment is necessary as we don’t dialogue from a neutral position but from our own faith (Schroeder, 2013:54). Together with our dialogue partners we hope to hear the voice of the Spirit of God calling us forward, and in this way our dialogue can be called prophetic (Schroeder, 2013:51). Before proceeding, the next section clarifies the concept of dialogue in mission as prophetic and as future hope.

The word ‘dialogue’ comes from two Greek words: ‘logos,’ which refers to ‘*meaning,*’ ‘*knowledge,*’ ‘*word*’ and ‘*dia,*’ which means ‘*through*’. Dialogue is essentially about participating in the unfolding of meaning. It is a creative interaction that allows and enables new insights and unexpected ideas to emerge from the encounter. When we say that a relationship or a team is more than the sum of its parts we are referring to dialogue (Banathy and Jenlink, 2005:82). Dialogue in the Macmillan Dictionary is the process in which two people or groups have discussions in order to solve problems (P.359). The Oxford Concise Dictionary defines dialogue as a conversation between two or more people, as a feature of a play, book or a film. Thus, the discussion is directed towards exploration of a subject or resolution of a problem by taking part in dialogue.

Bevans and Schroeder (2004:280) acknowledge that mission as prophetic dialogue calls people beyond conversation; it calls them to a deeper and fuller truth that can only be found in communion with dialogue trinitarian ground. Honest dialogue amongst various denominations and mutual dialogue within the Christian traditions are required, because Christian theology is a theology of dialogue with openness, listening and respect with purpose and a willingness to share, and to speak out about the truth of God as a chance to practice what is preached. A spiritual crisis and challenge in mission as prophetic dialogue is related to the themes of transformation and liberation (Dialogue with the Word, 2000, par. 44).

From the above, dialogue is an aspect of the human condition, and all human societies presuppose a certain amount of encounter and dialogue as a basis for their existence. Thus, reconciliation as a ministry calls for participation in the *missio Dei*, which means participating as co-workers in God's mission, preaching, teaching and healing (Guder, 1998:133). Prophetic dialogue, on the one hand, is a way of engaging in the lives of people, but also to immerse oneself in their conversations and their lived experiences on the other hand, with the act of participating being a social struggle to secure justice in the society (Nazer-Ail, 1995:60).

Bosch (2010:500) asserts, "Dialogue means witnessing to our deepest convictions, while listening to those of our neighbours". At a conference in Mexico City (1984), the term and theme was "evolution". They used the formulation: "the witness" for adherents of other faiths. A year later at the Bangkok meeting (1964), the theme was: "The Christian encounter with men of other beliefs". On the power of dialogue, Banathy and Jenlink (2005:77) assert:

Both dialogue and spirituality are kinds of conversations. Conversation is about connecting with life through others. The word has its roots in the Latin word 'convertere' which means to 'turn with.' It has the sense of working with life: with other human beings, certainly, but also with other things. To work with things in the indescribable relationship is not too hard for us.

The word 'conversion' which has the same root adds a dimension of change or development. When we work with life, things change. We see things differently, we understand better what is going on; we co-create as we participate in the emergence of new meaning. When we converse, life happens; the world unfolds (Banathy and Jenlink, 2005:72).

Dialogue consists of a combination of attitudes and skills that will allow this to happen: attitudes like a willingness to be influenced, and skills like the capacity to listen deeply. Underpinning both attitudes and skills, however, is intention. The intention in Dialogue is not to win or force a position but to work toward greater truth through deepened understanding (Banathy and Jenlink, 2005:84).

Nazir-Ail (1995:59-60) distinguished between several types of dialogue that can be practiced in numerous ways, for example: there is discursive dialogue, where the parties exchange information about themselves and their beliefs. There is interior dialogue, where people talk about their spiritual experience and attempt to understand one another. There is also dialogue to build up the community where the different sides live; dialogue that recognizes our common humanity; and there is dialogue today about how different faiths view the environment, and how we can gain a relationship with our environment from different traditions. An important question to ask here is: “From where do we have to start the conversation in order to achieve reconciliation?”

Bosch (2010:495) explains that mission as true dialogue is commitment, openness, vulnerability and boldness. Yankelovich (1999) speaks of three essential conditions that enable dialogue to happen: openness, empathy and equality. When these are in operation, dialogue is taking place. We are all familiar with various types and experiences of injustice, whether on a good team or in a great exchange. We know when dialogue is happening, for we feel enriched, even energized, by the encounter. By the same token, we also know when it is not happening, as we feel enervated, even abused by the exchange (Banathy and Jenlink, 2005: 84). Schroeder (2013:51) in the final document for the Society of the Divine Word (SVD) stated that:

It is in dialogue we are able to recognize “the sign of Christ’s presence and the working of the Spirit“ (*Redemptoris Missio*, 56) in all people, that we are called to acknowledge our own sinfulness and to engage in constant conversation, and that we witness to God’s love by sharing our own conviction boldly and honestly, especially where that love has been obscured by prejudices, violence and hate.

Robinson (2008:188-192) suggests that we should start with prayer, discernment, purpose, sermons and pastoral steps because dialogue helps both sides to ease the tension and provide genuine information on why the other community acts and reacts in a particular way, and

thus, contributes to the emergence of a more conciliatory appreciation of the other. It can also highlight the real problem that should be addressed, without ideological distortions.

Since Christian theology is also a theology of dialogue. Dialogue will lose its meaning unless Christians bear witness to the salvation they received in Jesus Christ. The study also addresses and seeks continuous inter-religious dialogue and pursues peace through more efforts to maintain stability. It also seeks to engage with the community in the process of reconciliation, and for fellow Christians to open up and dialogue with those of other faiths. The notion of ‘Christian presence’ as dialogue increasingly becomes a challenge to peace-making and illuminates opportunities and processes of reconciliation in communal life with people of other faiths. What is happening in our churches today is not exceptional. It is the same tension that the Jews and Gentiles faced in the Roman Empire. Questions arising from these challenges are. “How will Christians participate in the *missio Dei*?” “How will they assist in transforming and liberating spirituality, while reflecting as co-workers with God to overcome these situations for both the church and society?”

Tension exists in Christian mission today, especially regarding the allocation of responsibility for social services and actions. Tension began among church organisations, mission agencies and in the mission field. Tension also exists within various churches, i.e. The Catholic model of (adaptation) and the Evangelical model of (enculturation). However, there is a difference between the Lutheran, Reformed and Anabaptist understanding of the church and society (Stott, 1986:34). The Pentecostal, Orthodox, AIC’s and various denominations show honest and mutual dialogue within their Christian church traditions because Christian theology is a theology of dialogue with openness, listening and respect. The purpose is the willingness to share and to speak the truth about God, as a chance to practice what is preached.

Worldview and secularization requires genuine inter-religious dialogue with people of other faiths as a method of understanding their view and as an investigation to determine whose model map fits the reality and truth most closely, with no contradiction, nor confrontation (Hiebert, 1994:71). Spiritual-dialogue as a ‘people-to-people’ prophetic dialogue is a liberation movement that goes to the deepest roots of systems, structures and actions by addressing the thinking that creates them. As a method to understand their view and as a

means to determine whose model fits the reality and truth more closely, prophetic dialogue requires genuine prophetic inter-religious dialogue with people of other faiths

Knitter's (1996:183-188) vision on the future theology of religion and liberation provides the main method that is equally applicable to an individual and a culture. It is through the dialogue of spirituality, inter-religious dialogue and understanding the local community's traditions that would make them appreciate the gospel introduced to them and to people of other faiths. It is dialogue that meets the hearts and not only the minds of the people, and also provides a service and a chance to reduce the tension and violence as a newly formed local Christian community and become part of body of Christ.

4.3 'People-to-people' dialogue in the SCC

This section focuses on the dialogue carried out in the SCC in particular, as an influential voice amongst the Sudanese churches. 'People-to-people' dialogue and conflict resolution in Sudan was predicted several decades earlier. Consequently, such 'people-to-people' dialogue is the only effective method to confront conflict in Sudan. Additionally, through open mutual dialogue the historical heritage can be transformed from a destructive curse and can become the basis for creative exploration for a different kind of future (Werner, Anderson and Wheeler, 2000:385).

The many conflicts, disputes and debates are national and historical Sudanese problems. And unless people from all faiths and political backgrounds acknowledge and wrestle with these realities, it is about "voices not a vote!", only then can we remedy the tarnished image resulting from the devastating wars. A breakthrough can only occur when the voices of the people, leaders and local chiefs at the grassroots level are heard in the long struggle, without distortion from leaders in the higher realm and imposition from the politicians (Jenner, 2000:10).

All people in conflict zones or at the grassroots level are suffering. When it happens, the church suffers most. They also experience many difficulties, pressure and threats, especially in a long struggle like in the case of Sudan. By focusing on reconciliation emphasis is placed on forgiveness and the process of giving and receiving from both sides; thus, reparation and

reconciliation are aspects of one dynamic process, creating self-unity, making amends and peace. The ability to be a whole person comes from mutually experiencing all three aspects (Kuster, 1999:61, 96).

One ability and capability of dealing with the feelings resulting from injuries, attack and resentment by the enemy or towards the offender, must be incorporated and expressed to extend forgiveness. Yanci (1990:36-39) sees it as way of saying: “I am human, I make mistakes”. As violence produces more violence, blame produces more blame, denial also progresses from silence to unacknowledged refusal to official declaration (Augsburg, 1996:94). All forms of upheaval, injustice, unequal access to power and resources, including inequality, discrimination and manipulation, forced displacement continued as the civil war intensified and escalated since the 1960’s, with the churches increasingly seen as institutions that are to provide both spiritual and material aid for those in the midst of massive upheaval. The church has played an intermediary role in all phases of life in the south (Jenner, 2000:10).

Since its establishment in 1965, the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC) is famous as a “unified voice,” or one voice for all Sudanese churches at the national level. It came to prominence a month before the Addis Ababa Agreement (AAA) in 1972. The council has its roots in two Protestant church and mission organizations that were formed to promote inter-church cooperation and understanding, these are: the Northern Sudan Christian Council (NSCC) and the Sudan Evangelical Council (SEC).

The joint visit of the WCC and AACC, referred to as the “Good Will” visit in 1971, wouldn’t have succeeded in its final negotiations without the SCC. This is because its chairman, Archbishop Baroni insisted that all Sudanese churches must be involved in the process, when he saw the need for the common good to stand on public issues affecting the church. The establishment of peace and the massive need for relief and aid operations provided the SCC with further opportunity to be both the voice and the hands of the churches. It mediated peace and provided needed guidance to the ecumenical team²¹, as well as formed a commission to relieve and rehabilitate refugees who returned from exile and displacement camps (Werner, 2000:451).

The council remained united working under one administration for more than two years during an interim period, even after the cessation of the South Sudan state in July 2011. It was until mid-2013, when the leaders decided to maintain their own council due to difficulties of operating in two different countries. During the decade between 1970 and 1980, there were remarkable achievements and a wide range of development programs initiated by the church and organizations in both the north and the south. Due to the escalation of the civil war beginning in 1990, dialogue took place between the church and the movement in the south to collaborate and cooperate in the search for just and lasting freedom. The 1992 survey indicates that around two million were internally displaced; within the north, Christian movements became very active among those displaced, various denominations opened prayer centres, schools and clinics in cooperation with the SCC (Maker, 2005:82).

The New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC) was initiated in 1989 in Torit, in the Eastern Equatoria diocese by the Rt. Rev Nathaniel Garang of the Episcopal Church of Sudan (ECS); in addition, the liaison office was established in Ethiopia. Effectively, the purpose was to be a unified voice for the church and to serve the churches in the areas not under government control or liberated areas under rebel control. Nairobi was relocated adopting a major focus on peace and reconciliation leading to ‘people-to-people’ peace processes, following the Yei gathering in 1997 (Jenner, 2000:11). The Yei Declaration in 1997 provided endorsement and called for ways and means through which the churches could pursue reconciliation efforts and unity for the south at the local level by peaceful means.

As a matter of fact, Sudanese churches always clarified their stand and continued with their prophetic message. In 1996, there were calls for the church to stand for peace, and again in 1999, “Together we remain united in the action of peace”. The churches committed themselves to speak the truth fearlessly, and to continue to lead in its gospel-led mission to give a voice to the voiceless, poor and marginalized, and address issues of national concern (Choose life: A vision for a peaceful Sudan, 2002:10).

The 2002 document called for the churches to stand and also play a great influential role in promoting justice and peace for all Sudanese people. The Good Will organization called for all parties to join hands in pursuit of just and lasting peace for all the people of Sudan. Since

1999, the Sudanese government has neglected and failed to use revenues from the abundance of oil for the development of the people, particularly those in the oil rich areas; instead, it has been used to purchase weapons and military necessities for killing and displacing people in these oil rich areas.

Earlier, the NSCC issued a statement calling the partners to establish a ‘trust fund’ to receive oil revenues for the Sudanese government. In March 2002, the churches issued statements on oil and proposed that this revenue be appropriated fairly in accordance with an agreement by IGAD. Such an agreement has proved unworkable (Circulated by the inter-church Coalition on Africa on SCC and NSCC). On the 19th December in 2001 they issued an Arab Islamic-Christian Covenant declaration. It called for continuous mutual remedy for the internal discomfort and trouble. The group held its first conference represented by 136 countries registered under the title, “Inter-religious and Co-existence Council” (IRCC). Dialogue was exhorted, targeting not only citizens but included all nations through practical expression of their commonly shared religious values. Such values provide the meaning and basis for multiplicity and the value of human dignity (Philosawos, 2007:8). (As members of the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC) in the south, many churches have called for peace in Sudan. Churches have used South Sudan’s new constitution to highlight the rights of Christian minorities in the north).

War broke out in Darfur in 2003 before signing the CPA. Another war started in South Kordofan state during the June ‘election of 2011 and Blue Nile during the popular consultation’. This popular consultation was a mechanism to allow people to express their views, especially concerning the two areas covering the long border between the two states of Sudan and South Sudan. The fragile Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was reached in 2005. In one way or another it affected almost every state in the north and south of Sudan. In addition, numerous tribal differences continue to be politicized and the oil related conflicts, which exacerbate the problem, are the cause of further conflict. Failure to meet the protocol triggers real regional neighbouring wars in many countries like West and Central Africa and Eritrea, and the change affects what is happening in Libya and Egypt, causing unrest in Syria and many to be on the run, which clearly means that the need for ‘people-to-people’ dialogue is a crucial necessity.

4.4 ‘People-to-people’ dialogue in the ministry and mission of SPEC

Dialogue is neither a substitute nor a subterfuge for mission. Witness is not to be viewed as identical, or as opposite. It is fallacious to suggest that dialogue is to be “in” and mission “out,” and that commitment to dialogue is incompatible with commitment to evangelism (Scherer, 1987:162). Keeping in mind the different ways in which we continue to live and dialogue with one another, as well as how to keep the peace and a sense of safety, some of these types were taken on-board by the WCC, the Program of Combat Racism (PCR), and Commission on the Church’s Participating Development (CCPD).

When the new British colonial rulers entered Sudan, they faced fierce opposition from local residents not to evangelize the north, so the missionaries took the gospel to the south. Health and education affairs were delegated to the missionaries. There was an increasing demand for Scripture in all languages, and a need to satisfy the new converts who were eager to explore their faith by means of reading the Bible (Werner, Anderson and Wheeler, 2000:492).

As a matter of fact, we can’t tackle the issue of ‘people-to-people’ dialogue and SPEC’s ministry without highlighting the history of the various languages and dialects widely spoken in Sudan. During that time the immediate need was to develop projects, railways and to maintain security. The development of local languages and dialects, and Bible translation became a necessity. As part of the 1928 consultations the government agreed to cooperate with the missionaries, and according to the Ragaf conference, to translate the New Testament into seven languages of the south and six different Nub Mountain languages by 1964.

After the Addis Ababa deal in 1972, which ended the second phase of the civil war, there was an increasing need to train leaders for the church and for education to meet the new situation in the camps and displacement locations. There was also the need for literature and Bible translations in the tribal languages. Currently, an early translation of Scripture in a local language was recognized as belonging to Sudan, mainly the Nubians. Fragments of books of the Bible have been discovered dating around the ninth century. However, the Islamic state was not yet established until the fifteenth century.

It appears that the Nubians of that early time probably had the whole New Testament, if not the whole Bible in their language, but we do not have the name of the translator, nor the exact time, but we do know someone wanted the Nubians' to hear the Word of God in a language they understood and which speaks to their hearts (Person, 1997:7). Eli Smith and Cornelius Van Dyck, with the help of several Lebanese individuals translated the Bible into Classical Arabic, which quickly became the standard version in use among the Protestants; it is still used in many of the Arabic speaking churches. The Smith–Van Dyck New Testament left the press in 1860 and the complete Bible appeared in 1864. This work was done in Sudan but it led indirectly to the beginning of the most important institution in the history of Bible translation in the country, namely, the “Sudan Bible Society” (Person, 1997:10).

The advantage of developing local languages helps indigenous education become influential. People could read and write in their mother tongue, there are few translation institutes still working to help small tribes obtain copies of the Bible in their own dialects. Tribalism and cultural barriers are still a challenge to ethnic religious minorities and this influences the rights of minorities in the new situation and constitution of Sudan.

To face the religious conflict we may need to start with political ideologies and components of the political sectors, as well as the denial and marginalization of ethnic groups and tribes. Extremists and radical fundamentalists make use of media by shaping and inspiring their worldview and thinking. Development and accesses to technology provides a means for creative human capacity that will benefit all. Policies enforced by colonial attempts to divide the country into ethnicities caused more conflict. Other causes include the propagation of Islam by political means and militancy, as well as denial of being a multi-racial, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society.

4.5 Inter-religious and co-existence Council

The goal of inter-religious dialogue helps participants to learn, grow, gain knowledge, discern and appreciate values to encounter new dimensions of reality (Swidler, 1987:26). Stott (1986:52) greatly emphasizes the need for inter-religious dialogue. He asserts that true mission must include all three: proclamation, deeds and dialogue. He views four reasons for dialogue: authenticity, humility, integrity and sensitivity (Munk, 1993:522-523). The Sudan

Inter-religious Council (SIRC) was created by the International People's Friendship (IPF), the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC), the Society for Religious Dialogue (SRD), and the International Centre for Religion and Diplomacy (ICRD), to strengthen the values of tolerance, co-existence and cooperation among various religious groups in Sudan. Its main goals are:

- To undertake dialogue and extend ties among religious leaders.
- To protect religious freedom.
- To solve conflicts between religious sects.
- To encourage cooperation among religious groups.

As an example of dialogue, Spina (2004:151) explains that according to the Gospel of John 4:4, Christ spoke to a Samaritan woman in the town of Jacobs Well in Sychar. By doing so, he offered and gave us an example to follow as we dialogue with other people, especially for those whom we can't associate with and sometimes call strangers. It also offers an opportunity to witness either through our basic or spiritual needs as a drive to start a conversation, whether it is over an issue of race or ethnicity, even public exchange. It is sometimes characterized by social tension, culture or traditional barriers that may lead to the avoidance of direct contact.

Here, interaction and engagement in direct conversation took place regardless of gender, religious issues, belief, geographical area or neighbourhood, political or economic situations, social lifestyle and life after death, etc. As the communication developed, and as a result of her enquiry, conviction and confrontation occurred... instead of him asking for a drink, she should be the one asking and he will provide her with the 'living water'. Her impression, but also her confession, "Sir, I see you're a prophet," and in response to her testimony many others turned to Jesus. This is an example of outsider faith that evoked a movement in the whole neighbourhood of Samaria and brought a huge change in many people's lives.

In his book *Towards Universal Theology of Religions*, Swidler (1987:13) stated ten rules for inter-religious dialogue, namely:

- 1) It is mandatory for all dialogue partners to define themselves, and what it means to be an authentic member in their own traditions;
- 2) Learn to grow and change their perception based on an understanding of the reality, and act accordingly;
- 3) Each participant must come to dialogue with complete honesty and sincerity;
- 4) Dialogue takes place between two equals, with ability to learn from the other;
- 5) Each should listen with openness and sympathy, while maintaining integrity of his/her own;
- 6) Avoid being preoccupied with misconceptions, with no hard and fast assumptions as a point of disagreement;
- 7) Dialogue takes place only on the basis of mutual trust;
- 8) Accept minimal self-criticism of both sides and their own religious or ideological tradition;
- 9) Attempt to experience the partner's religion or ideology from within or 'being whole,' and not merely something of the mind but spirit (heart);
- 10) In the inter-religious and inter-ideological dialogue, we must not compare our ideals with our partner's practices, but rather our ideals with the partner's ideals, and our practices with our partner's practices.

The San Antonio (CWME) meeting affirmed that, "witness does not preclude dialogue but invites it, and that dialogue does not preclude witness but extends and deepens it" (1.27; WCC, 1990:32).

Furthermore, in the model of the Protestant tradition Christian dialogue with other faiths must begin with a theology of creation, assuming that the effect of redemption is not limited to Christian communities only. But Christ cosmically through the Spirit "illuminates" all people and is at work in every human's heart (Knitter, 1985:138). Basically, God's word is central and more emphasis is given to healing and special revelation and the ability to combine both elements of ritual and hierarchy with the spontaneous and charismatic. These are elements that Christianity identified with different traditions and were not usually found in one church. In *Correlation Theology*, Knitter (1995:30) added that if Christians are open to, and if 'there are so many true and saving religions' with Christianity being only one among them, only

then can authentic dialogue take place and Christians enter the forum of inter-religious dialogue.

My argument matches that of the Apostle Paul, who was called and saw the practice and objects of worship or the faith of others, as faith comes by hearing, and hearing the message is heard through the word of Christ, and the question is: “Did they not hear? Or did they not understand?” For people can only fit into three categories:

- 1) Hear and understand (know Jesus).
- 2) Hear and not understood (confused - may know information about Jesus).
- 3) Never heard the message of Christ (room for inter-religious dialogue).

“The word is near you and it is for the church to bear witness to this proclamation. ‘Faith’ is to trust or believe and is a gift from God. ‘Grace’ is a gift from God and through it we can enter into the kingdom of God and stand before His throne through Jesus’ redemption by the work of the ‘Holy Spirit,’ who is also a gift from God, depending on the Spirit of truth to keep leading us deeper into the full truth” (Kritzinger, 2008:788) not by works or human endeavour, as some may boast. But the true Christian way of life, a life of participating in faith and in the service of the Lord Jesus proved it by His first coming so that we may have a better life, and not only that, but eternal life.

The Old Testament can be perceived as a violent book depending on what attribute one considers, i.e. as is illustrated by the first killing, that of Abel by his brother Cain (Gen. 4:7); the delivery from Egypt, the crossing of the Red Sea using Moses’ staff; the battles within which the Israelites participated, this does not mean divine participation.

In the postmodern approach, a relation is drawn between Christ and violence. Before discussing violence, according to Girard’s (1996:149) view of the ontology of violence in the theory of religion, the ‘sacred and violence’ is a complex matter and is embraced by the world without any particular reference to any religion. Pointing to his basic thesis, he notes that there is nothing sacrificial about the death of Jesus Christ on the cross, exposing the violence of the resurrection.

Rather, Christ took violence upon himself to conquer enmity and embrace the enemy. Reconciliation is an event and process initiated and brought about by the Trine God. Its relevance goes beyond the restoration and hostility between the individual and God. It has everything to do with the reconciliation of relationships between humans and between groups of people, including the socio-political arena, as the conflict in South Africa and elsewhere across the continent, as well as former Yugoslavia, Western and Eastern Europe and in Muslim countries have brought the need for reconciliation into a new focus²².

Moltmann's (2009:21) view of reality is not a pre-determined or self-contained system of cause and effect, the future is not completely inherent in the present. On the contrary, rather than the past determining the present, the future determines the present. This way, the future is 'ontologically prior' to the present and the past, the past does not rise from the present, but comes to it. In his understanding, the future draws the present forward into a totally new form of reality.

In Miller and Grenz's (1998:111) view, theology can speak relevantly to secular people because revelation provides answers to their questions. So he declares that if it is correct to say that the Bible is essentially a witness to the promissory history of God, then the role of Christian theology is to bring these remembrances of the future to bear on the hope and anxieties of the present. He also does not deny God's presence in the world; this means God is historical and exists in history, the story of God and then the story of the history of mankind.

But he finds this presence primarily in the power of suffering, which is mostly evident in the cross, resurrection and in the sending of the Holy Spirit, though aware of the implications he also offers an explanation for his position: "If one conceives of the Trinity as an event of love in the suffering and death of Jesus, and that is something which faith must do, then the Trinity is no self-contained group in heaven but an eschatological process open for men and women on earth, which stems from the cross of Christ" (Miller and Grenz, 1998:114, 115). His understanding is that God's presence in the world draws us towards understanding God as the Trine God. Also, this critical theory of God has some social implications; the focus of hope can overcome the destructive separation between theories and practice (Miller and Grenz, 1998:109).

Barth (2003:94, cited in Bromiley, 1979:176) explains this substantial argument correcting the existentialist subjectivism of Moltmann, describing the work of God as the ‘reconciler,’ bridging the ‘creation’ and ‘reconciliation,’ pointing to the covenantal fellowship between God and man. The key to understanding Barth’s ‘Christ–culture relation,’ the divine person of the eternal ‘Word’ both fills and enfolds the humanity of Christ, albeit in a different way the creation and the world of culture are in a distinct though inseparable relation as the elect of Christ, both the church and society are integrally related to Him, although not in the same manner. The former stands as a revelation of Christ having come to participate in the event of revelation and thus serves as a witness to the rest of humanity. The latter is not the church but Christ Himself who mediates the presence of God to the world. And in this manner, He Himself is the basis of authentic culture, not existing alongside culture, but filling and enfolding it, enabling one to bear witness even in their ‘otherness’ (Metzger, 2003:229-230).

Pannenberg’s (1998:373-377) theology of hope and reason and his concept of “self-differentiation” seeks to drive his understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity from which God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit appear in the primary event of the revelation, the life and the message of Jesus as the core and basis of His Divine Sonship (Kärkkäinen, 2013:139). As hero Martin Luther King declared, by nature faith cannot be driven from itself (as the Pietists claimed), but only beyond itself. This “beyond itself” is nothing else but “in Christ,” that is, in what Christ has done for us in submission and obedience. He boldly clarified, faith is not just trusting in God but depends on the historical basis, namely, the historical activity of God, starting from reformation then turning to the classical model, he sees theology as a public discipline related to the quest for universal truth that must be answered in the process of theological reflection. Instead, he sees truth as historically conditioned and ultimately eschatological (Miller and Grenz, 1998:129, 130).

The application of the theological and missiological themes in the ministry of peace and reconciliation, in Sudan mainly requires the sharing of biblical truths. The way the local people should respond to the offenders, and approach the tension and injustices can only be done when the church is empowered with the vision that emerges out of concern for people in conflict situations and earnestly seeks to understand and carry out her role as a kingdom to serve the community, with an openness to embrace all the people of God, including dialogue with people of other faiths. The church’s capacity to contribute to her ministry of

reconciliation, social justice and peace in the world being called into the world but without being of the world, creates the possibility of unity and solidarity towards peaceful reform avoiding all kinds of violence.

In doing holistic ministry, I would like to propose that attention should be given to physical needs, spiritual needs, emotional needs, social needs, skills training and the provision of resources, whereas some churches only focus on the spiritual and physical, as they approach the aspects of suffering, violence and the many traumas people face (Hiebert, 1994:41). Hiebert (1994:71) also adds that prophetic dialogue requires genuine prophetic inter-religious dialogue with people of other faiths as a method to understand their view and as an investigation to determine whose model map adequately suits the reality and truth most closely. It is neither contradiction nor confrontation but witnessing because truth is a prophetic concept (Banathy and Jenlink, 2005:84). In addition, it is better if the local culture is accepted and respected instead of being neglected and rejected. Newbigin's (1995:29) trinitarian approach indicates that, "The fundamental belief is embodied in the affirmation that God has revealed Himself as a Father, Son and Holy Spirit". It informs the perspective of Christian mission in three ways:

- As proclamation of the kingdom of the Father (announcement).
- As sharing the life of the Son revealed (presence).
- As bearing witness of the Spirit (power).

Goethe (2004:20) asserts that the first step towards dialogue is to try and understand the other community in its own context. The only way to do justice to your partner and fellow human being is to assess his and her actions and statements from their own perspective. Dialogue always starts with empathy; otherwise, it will be nothing more than a monologue, lacking any relevance for those addressed. Conversation involves personal cleansing, forgiveness, reconciliation and renewal in order to become a participant in the mighty work of God (Bosch, 1991:488). It could be a dialogue of life, action, theological exchange or inter-religious experience (Bevans and Schroeder, 1994:285).

4.6 Outreach ministry team

The second example is the mission team and is another example of combined efforts of the lay and clergy. The plans were laid earlier, but launched later around 2003 when the fighting groups in Sudan accepted peace talks as the best means to end the long civil war and pursue stability. Ceasefire was signed as a ‘good motive’ between the two military groups, guaranteed by the Joint Military Commission (JMC) of 125 monitors under Nigerian Brigadier Okonow with the possibility of renewing it every six months until the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was finally signed in 2005, and for six years during the transitional period referendums were held to determine the future of both sides (Beny and Hale, 2015:150).

The vision targeted vast unreached areas of Sudan. The strategy is to train and equip native people from different tribes, especially those with the capacity to communicate in local tribal languages, as well as experts to directly translate into indigenous languages and dialects with the aim of being the focal team in the near future for that mission. The board entrusted this task, in collaboration with other resource organizations, which contributed significantly to the enrichment of this expansion.

After the 2011 referendum, South Sudan became a sovereign state, although there were some difficulties and many other obstacles that required some adjustments and modifications. The team’s strategies on the ground had to be shifted from individuals and volunteers to house meetings and teams working in order to cope with the new changes. With numerous efforts by well-trained Bible and theological school graduates, including a number of committed lay volunteers, they pursued the ministry’s goals.

The devoted team on the ground and active coordination among all the groups serving in harmony continued to network, communicate and dialogue in true mission style for daily living, spreading the gospel among many natives as they were able to hear the good news through various means and methods, carrying out activities such as: training, Bible distribution, English classes, relief and rehabilitation, fire circles, leprosy mission, open market places, a film about Jesus translated into different tribal languages, sharing group

visions and dreams. In such a marvellous way, God had prepared the hearts and opened many doors to meet the longing, desire and thirst for the Word (Ps. 37:4-11).

Many welcomed the message with joy and increased in numbers. They trusted and committed their lives and way to the Lord, with many others inquiring and seeking to learn more about that path called “The Way”. Joint efforts still continued among the main players, church leaders and lay community members despite the challenges and risks, as Paul experienced pressure from every side, but he was not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may be revealed in our body (2 Cor. 4:8-11); it is likewise for those who bear that name.

Some key leaders involved in this ministry have endured many hardships while witnessing the Word of God. I have known some who have been stoned three times, escaped plane crashes twice, even rescued from being killed in fierce fighting and violence, as well as from crossfires about six times. But they were all kept safe because of God’s protection, faithfulness and provision. The next points briefly summarises the empirical fieldwork (See: page 25, 144 and 153).

4.7 Summary of empirical-descriptive results

This section draws together the main missiological–theological themes and theories. I briefly summarise the empirical feedback and the people’s responses about the struggle. I also have more insight and understanding now of how people go about doing things in their everyday lives and in their interactions by creating meaningful categories for themselves, as well as for others. In addition, I viewed ways in which they can learn from their own experiences, as they share from their own perspectives. The theories have helped to explain what has been done, the effect, and how to reflect on the many communities during their struggles and conflicts. The reflection on the communities is done from the broader society and builds on what has been developed in previous research. Torres stated that: “Talking about practices is not a matter of description of the event and level of narrative experiences only but to give more meaning and place it in context” (Torres and Eagleson, 1981:14). Here, drawing mainly from competition theory and intergroup conflict contact theory and in line with the findings

of Scheepers and Schueter (2010), on the one hand, the people living in the regions are more experienced with integration of the process over time, including unfavourable contact with outgroups at the individual level (Blalock, 1967 and Schneider, 2008). This process may reduce people's level of perceived ethnic threat on the other hand, as based on intergroup conflict contact theory.

Feedback from the empirical fieldwork with regards to the main research questions, the participation and the role of religious agents in the process and practice of peace (the SPEC mediating structure for peace is discussed in sub-sections 4.7.1 – 4.7.6), as well as its effect on the community, both faith-based and non-faith based, have been reviewed. Reflecting on the responses from the individuals and groups interviews, there are six main findings from the interview material and in the conclusion (sections 10.1 and 5.4.4). To make connections and bridge the links requires summarizing the main results of the 'people-to-people' dialogue and responses. These are described below:

4.7.1 Historical-colonial and military-regimes

The historical-colonial and military-regimes in Sudan reflect the experiences and admitted social injustices, as pointed out by the respondents. For instance, the results of the influence of the socio-cultural dimension always surfaces when people share all forms of suffering, tragedies and the personal traumatic experiences they have endured. Eitel (2008:290-291), exploring a case study on Sudan's civil war and conflict, views that trauma takes place within the social life context affecting individuals, families and communities. Each person's theological understanding and constructs are impacted by life experiences, and the stories shared during the interviews of local community members. The way chiefs are only bound by tribal laws, as well as the civil society in their struggle to assist in awareness and peace activities, many times hindered or restricted, or even cancelled their endeavours to bring people together in dialogue; most admitted the many social injustices.

4.7.2 Confronting the reality, denying others and hidden agendas behind the scene

The conflict resulted in multiple traumas, i.e. losing parents, family members, orphans, being widowed and facing death, violence, grief, the concepts of anger, threat, living in fear, forgiveness, justice, hope and the love of God are all overwhelming in the cycle of misery.

Others, even their conceptualization of God, if it is presented outside the social and cultural context might cause many to withdraw from the churches and its teachings (Eitel, 2008:293).

4.7.3 Increasing gap between local societal-political leaders

There is an increasing gap between the societal leaders, the church as the marginalized sector, and the state when it came to church related issues. Islamic dominancy, constant discrimination at different levels and inclusion which reflects their ideology in handling Christian matters that differ from the Christian ideology, favours cooperation in serving society and a more peaceful co-existence.

4.7.4 Failure when implementing agreements due to a lack of political will

In most Western countries, explicit state-sponsored discrimination against ethnic, racial or religious minorities largely ceased in the early 1960's and 1970's under the pressure and influence of the civil rights movements and human rights revolutions. Yet evidence of ethnic and racial discrimination remains visible in many societies, whether it is measured in terms of economic inequality, political underrepresentation, cultural unviability or social stigmatizations, which are restricted by the government (Kymlicka and Bashir, 2008:3).

4.7.5 Dominance and inclusion of one political faction to remain in power

One of the most difficult areas of post-colonial states, especially in countries like Sudan, are the forms of exclusion, suffering, past-historic injustices, no responsibility, no recognition and representation of the ethnic society will quickly turn into and become perceived as a form of domination by one group over another (Kymlicka and Bashir, 2008:5)

4.7.6 Ethnic-religious conflicts are easily exploited to win support for their cause

As Archbishop Desmond Tutu mentioned in 'Cheap Reconciliation,' South Africans should not pursue reconciliation only after injustices are first removed, in other words, cheap reconciliation sets 'justice' and 'peace' against each other as alternatives. Forgiveness is more than just overcoming anger and resentment; it always entails having rights against those who in some way have harmed or offended us. Justice goes hand in hand with, and is integral to forgiveness, but to reconcile, justice must be first. Then reconciliation will be a positive way to remove injustice, and if justice is impossible then forgiveness will not take place (Raymond and Roodney, 2001:35-39). Ethnic and religious conflicts are easily exploited by

factional leaders as mentioned previously, despite the many initiatives, values and sense of tolerance. Building relations is the core target to strengthen these nations though these issues continue to become obstacles to building trust among the key leaders.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter summarised the ‘people-to-people’ dialogue carried out by agents of the SPEC and the SCC. It focused on and incorporated aspects of dialogue in the missional ministry of reconciliation, and also explained the preparation of the leadership role and the participation of religious leaders as the people of God in people’s dialogue at local, regional and global levels. Furthermore, it also dealt with the role of intervention, including with ‘other faiths,’ with the aim basically being to enhance inter-ethnic and inter-religious relations as a means of strengthening values of intolerance and peaceful co-existence. The mediatory role played by the actors of both agencies facing violent conflict was also noted. The example of early mission as it started in Jerusalem, Samaria and Judea was also provided, demonstrating how it extended to people living at the grassroots, stretching across the different states, the country as a whole, and to the surrounding neighbours.

CHAPTER FIVE

SOCIO-RELIGIOUS DIMENSION OF PEACE AND RECONCILIATION INITIATIVES

5.1 Introduction

Sudanese people have experienced many injustices and endured considerable hardships, yet they long for and strive to live in peace and to maintain a peaceful co-existence, regardless of a difference in language, religion, colour and race. They do so in mutual love, even when facing various struggles, with wise voices calling for dialogue and openness to give room for deeper communication and responsibility towards achieving fruitful ends. This chapter reflects on the contextual meaning of what the target group has shared. People's expressions and activities, which begin with an analysis of the dimension of peace and reconciliation initiatives of both faith-based and non-faith based organizations at various levels are reviewed in sections 5.2 and 5.3. Dialogue as a contextual-ethnic response to conflict at the local, national and regional level is also considered here. Then, in section 5.4 the data collection methods are discussed, as well as the instruments used to measure the data.

The design sampling, criteria and techniques that are employed are also explained in section 5.5. Furthermore, the samples, its characteristics and charts are also discussed, followed by a description of the results, main trends and patterns seen in the data. The details of the research procedures then provide the method for data collection, capturing, procedures, analysis, and the rationale behind it. This outcome which is summarised by identifying some of the gaps in the data tries to answer the first research sub-question: "Whether and how the Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church (SPEC) participated in faith-based and non-faith based initiatives of 'people-to-people' dialogue?"

5.2 Post-colonial context and development of faith-based organizations

This section deals with the complex dimensions of peace initiatives amidst various conflicts. Their participation and responses were characterized by many failures despite the successes that were made. Here, I will specifically look at these initiatives and peace agreements at regional, national and local levels. The early 1960's was described as a "secular decade" and

was marked by both governmental and ecclesial development plans, which attempted to solve the problems of the third-world. This was a fairly optimistic decade (Bosch, 2010:365). However, during this time, other places like Sudan witnessed and experienced the longest civil war in Africa, maybe even in the world; this was before its independence. In particular, the start of the civil war in Sudan began long before its independence in 1956. Bor mutiny sprang out in 1953, marking the first phase of the civil war which begun in 1955. The signing of the Addis Ababa Agreement in 1972 ended the first phase of the second war, which lasted for seventeen years with waves of violations and violence. That phase ended with the initiatives and intervention by both the SCC and the All African Council of Churches (AACC). This agreement lasted for eleven years, which was considered the only period of peace within six decades. The third phase was considered the longest civil war in Sudan, which started in 1983 until the signing of the CPA in 2005.

There were outbreaks and conflict between the Hadendowa, which occurred sporadically in Eastern Sudan and the central government. The same prevailed in Darfur in the western part of Sudan, fighting continued, characterized by displacement and genocide, which eventually took its toll on the Nuba in the west and the central areas over the decades. The riverain Nubians were forced to relocate in the early 1960's after the building of the Aswan Dam in the name of development (Beny and Hale, 2015:xv).

In 1993, the Sudanese population census was estimated to be about 25.59 million (65% African and 35% Arabs) (Beny and Hale 2015:167). According to the 2007 census, the population was estimated to be about 39 million, consisting of approximately six hundred diverse ethnic groups or tribes who speak over 118 separate languages (Ahmed, 1984:12-16; Beny and Hale, 2015:207). With the cessation of the South about two hundred ethnic groups moved to the new state of South Sudan. Since then, Sudan will never be the same on the map of Africa again, as the world-map has shown a new and different "legless Sudan".

Presently, there are 7,000 languages in the world but less than 200 ethnic countries. The large majority of these languages are spoken by miniscule ethnic communities (Gat and Yakobson, 2013:18). In sub-Saharan Africa, there are around 3,000 different linguistic *ethne* divided among forty-seven countries. One third of these are based in only two African countries, Sudan and Nigeria, which holds the record of 250-400 languages (Gat and Yakobson,

2013:287), this is about one seventh of the world record. The fragile Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was officially reached in 2005, and in one way or another, affects almost every state in the north and south of Sudan. In addition to the numerous tribal differences that continue to be politicized are the oil related conflicts, which further exacerbate the problems and conflict.

There are fears that the conflicts in Sudan have the potential to trigger a regional war, drawing in neighbouring countries (Peace Direct).²³ These fears became true in less than a year when conflict began within the Sudanese States. Conflict began in Darfur in 2003 even before the signing of the CPA.

Then, in South Kordofan during the election of 2011, and in the Blue Nile during the popular consultation, conflict in neighbouring countries was triggered, e.g. in Djibouti, Somalia, Chad, West and Central Africa, and Eritrea (Black and Williams, 2010:50). The complexity reached almost each of these countries as is evident by what was happening in Libya and Egypt, the unrest in Syria, South Sudan, and so on. In fact, the relationship between contextual elements on the one hand, and ethnic and religious conflict on the other, is also complex.

The non-Arab and Non-Muslim people and culture of the south, west and east have been variously assaulted, through direct state of violence, state supported by private violence, or by malign neglect and attrition. The forms of direct and indirect assault have included forcible assimilation (forced Islamization and Arabization), driving men out, internal starvation, force displacement and relocation, indoctrination, rape and other gender assaults, aerial bombardment, militia raid, enslavement and malign neglect. These assaults on human dignity have been most evident in Southern Sudan and the Nuba Mountains of west and central Sudan; and more recently in Darfur, western Sudan (Beny and Hale, 2015:xvi).

Despite the complexity of the conflict, Christian-Muslim interreligious and interfaith initiatives have attempted to address both the ethnic and religious conflict. For example, in the north, the Arab group for Islamic-Christian dialogue which started in 1995 by a number of Arab elites through an initiative of the Middle East Council of Churches.

De Gruchy argued that the Islamic perception is essentially a lay movement. The 'Umma' term represents Islam globally, with a clearly defined sense of identity, but not an institution in the same sense as the Christian Church. This term is an expression used to signify one

community and followers of all prophets (Race, 2002:160). Ironically, more Islamic missions seem to be planted today in traditionally Christian countries, rather than vice versa. Alongside these developments, especially since the 1960's, there has been a remarkable growth in dialogue between Christian and Muslim scholars in search of mutual understanding and ways of cooperating in serving the interest of world peace and justice. This has mostly been sponsored by the WCC and the Pontifical Council for inter-religious dialogue, and much can be learnt by reflecting on its development (de Gruchy, 2002:128,129).

The ethnic Arab-Islam self-perception dominated by the ruling party in Sudan seeks to extend control over the state by means of assimilation²⁴ where it can, and by force where it can't, despite strong resistance from the opposition. The self-perception, however, is many-layered. The northerner, while speaking of himself or herself as a radical 'Arab' in all purity, denies their own biological connection to African origins and acts with varying degrees of prejudice towards southerners (those of black African origin).

The impact of the long civil war has massive influence on indiscriminate attacks. In addition, there was on-going tension in Darfur, and an outbreak of violence in the two areas in the south, the Blue Angassana Mountains and the South Kordofan of the Nuba Mountains along the border of the new state. Furthermore, the Sudanese society has never recovered from the diverse waves of colonialism and foreign intrusions that have punctuated its history (British, Ottmen, Arab, and British) (Beny and Hale, 2015:xvi). Instability inevitably led people to experience many atrocities and incredible devastation as a result of the long conflict over many decades. Tribal prejudice, tribal division, and enmity added another challenge to the mission of reconciliation.

In general, the church in Sudan has contributed and played a significant role in the previous peace-related initiatives. The role here refers to efforts invested in public life; this includes the spiritual, developmental, economic, educational and political involvement in peace processes and peace practice (Mading, 2011:24). Especially under the umbrella of the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC), since it was established in 1965, a year after the evacuation of the missionaries from the country, amongst others:

5.2.1 Sudanese Church-Addis Ababa Peace Agreements of 1972, 1998

The years from 1964 to 1972 can be seen as the most crucial and significant years in the modern history of both the Sudanese church and Sudanese state, characterized by civil war, decades of growing and escalating tension over issues of national unity, or as was perceived in the south. The perceived neo-colonial economic and religious–political oppression in the south finally reached a decisive and defining period in the direction of conflict and confrontation (Werner, Anderson and Wheeler, 2000:385). The Addis peace deal lasted for only eleven years before its abrogation in 1983, when the constitution was suspended and the Islamic Sharia law was imposed. The war continued until the signing of the CPA, which ended in 2005.

The church, especially under the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC)²⁵, which serves as an umbrella for about fourteen denominations, mediated and finalized the Addis agreement, which introduced the idea of regional autonomy, a referendum for the border areas and the sharing of wealth and resources. The agreement, which brought an end to seventeen years of civil war and fierce fighting came as the result of the ecumenical support involving the World Council of Churches (WCC), All African Council of Churches (AACC), and the role of Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia and his personal assurance of protection and security given to the southern armed forces (Jenner, 2000:12). But the time has come for the Sudanese churches to take on their mediatory role to speak with one voice. This conviction and need for peace is a worthwhile endeavour in the ways in which it brought both the government and the rebels in direct confrontation to sit in meetings face-to-face.

5.2.2 The evangelical Sudanese church

In the second civil war, the evangelical church tried once again to intervene and play her mediatory role among other churches. By June 1988, the Evangelical Bishop Council (ABC) formulated three issues from three Sudanese government programmes coming from seven observations:

- 1) The first involved the government's attitudes focusing on Islamization and the violation of basic human rights.
- 2) The second exhorted the Sudanese government to direct negotiations with the rebels as proposed by the SCC.

- 3) The third involved the government's interest in applying Sharia law upon all the Sudanese people, including non-Muslims. However, instead, the Bishop proposed that the government provide more space for human rights and laws for punishing criminals (Mading, 2011:33).

The Sudanese church in her prophetic role has accompanied the Sudanese people in times of peace and war. For example, after the CPA in 2005, the clear statement and stance of the SCC's first Position Paper indicates the seeking of peaceful living and urging all warring parties to end the war, as stipulated under the theme: 'Here we stand united for the peace and let my people choose'. This shows that our member churches have also been involved in addressing the issues affecting our society before, during and after the signing of the CPA. In the second Sudanese Church Position Paper, 'Choose life: a vision for a peaceful Sudan,' the current political situation is described and outlined, namely, in referenda and popular consultations in 2011 and beyond there was a clear request for urgent action needed to ensure a more peaceful future, this is the Sudanese Kairos moment, it is time to choose life as we do not have time to waste (SCC, 2010:2-3).

5.2.3 Church-facilitated meetings

Since 1991, the church has also facilitated serious meetings on war and conflict with the leadership of the various armed factions. The church's concern was for the suffering of the people in many places. The operative belief was that the unity of the leadership was linked to more positive outcomes in peace talks between the Government of Sudan (GOS) and the Sudan People Liberation Army and Movement (SPLA/M). These inclusive talks took place in Nairobi, Niavasha and Machackos between the years 1991-1993; there were also the Abuja talks between 1992 and 1993, which collapsed afterwards. This was in addition to many other previous agreements, such as Eretria, Asmara agreement 1994, Frankfort-1992, Geneva agreement 2001, etc.

5.2.4 Presbyterian Church of Sudan (PCOS) Akobo peace gathering, 1994

Here, the Presbyterian Church of Sudan's (PCOS) gathering in 1994 is noted. This church is a twin sister of SPEC respectively, with the same American missionary founders but its separate and independent administration. This church has facilitated the 'people-to-people' peace process aimed at resolving tribal disputes, given the traditional ways of working

through the conflict. Through the involvement of both the church and traditional leaders, there were over 2000 local people present at that gathering (Jenner, 2000:14).

5.2.5 Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church (SPEC)

The Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church (SPEC) is a national and vibrant church, and is an active member of the SCC. It was formally an extension of the Evangelical Church of Egypt and part of the Nile Synod.

The SPEC in particular played a major role in helping and sustaining the church, despite persecution, facing many hardships and sacrifices in everyday life. The focus of the church and its major task is to restore social harmony and to assist in the recovery process, co-existence, and existence of peace; it also helped in peace-making, skills-building, conflict resolution and efforts of reconciliation. The church members prayed, advocated and actively participated in important matters, some even represented Sudan a number of times at the International Peacemakers Conference in Louisville, Kentucky. The year 2003 was marked by the signing of the ceasefire draft, and at the same time launched the start of the CPA peace process. The SPEC started peace-desk in the General Assembly, No. (209) in 2005. A peace desk committee programme consisted of five members with the task and commitment of being fully engaged in post-peace processes and practices, as well as being mandated to:

- 1) Make all efforts to support peace building.
- 2) Looking forward to seek all potential needed for post-peace.
- 3) Commitment to conflict resolution inside and outside the church.

After signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) on the 9th of January 2005, many plans were set in motion and several individual efforts were organized, namely, the SPEC executive committee arranged a huge celebration for signing the peace deal. It was a large gathering held at the Gerif West compound, and was addressed telephonically by commander: Wani Egga from Rombeik. Representatives from the government and SPEC's different churches also attended the celebration.

Peace and reconciliation is a gift from God through Christ, this was the festival's message. Peace is a gift that is given, and is achievable, although not easily. Reconciliation is a gift, a

privilege bestowed on believers and a ministry given which requires great potential and effort to work it out. The church played a great role and made much effort in the peace process, although the churches were only given seats as observers during those peace talks between the years 2003-2005.

5.3 Peace and reconciliation of non-faith based related initiatives at regional and country level

The main idea of this section focuses on the efforts of peace and reconciliation initiatives at the level of faith-based bodies. Eitel, describing the case of Sudan, in viewing the impact of war and its influence, clearly stated that as result the socio-cultural dimension often surfaces when people share all forms of suffering, tragedy, and even personal traumatic experiences. Trauma takes place in the context of social life affecting individuals, families and communities. The stories of each person's theological understanding and constructs are impacted by life experiences (Eitel, 2008:293).

Stories are shared by local community members during the interviews, native administration is in such a way that the chiefs are bound by tribal laws only. Civil society, as well in their struggle to assist in awareness and peace activities, even personal initiatives is many times hindered, restricted, or even cancelled out by their endeavours to bring people together in dialogue. Most of the participants admitted the social injustices, others detained and imprison these regional and local initiatives, and these include:

5.3.1 Inter-Governmental authority Agency on Development (IGAD)

'People-to-people' dialogue is one of the many grassroots 'peace-making' and 'peace-building' initiatives in Sudan (see heading 4.2, p.103). It started in the peace-building processes and programmes of the 1980's and late 1990's as an initiative of faith-based and non-faith based organizations that were involved in these processes. In the south, the 'people-to-people' dialogues preceded the current national talks. The impetus behind them had more to do with south-south reconciliation, southern unity and the immediate economic survival of the communities involved (Bradbury, 2006:6).

Norma, drawing on Coetzee's 'development is for people,' extended her approach of Development and Intervention Strategy (DIS) on development issues as an effective means to overcome local obstacles to achieve sustainable development (Coetzee, 2001:511). Norma described the dialogue as a dialogical encounter between all 'knowers,' or as community dialogue including the researcher as a 'knower' among all the people in the society, emphasizing the reality based on social meaning.

The IGAD is a regional grouping in the Horn of Africa. Its members of state include Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya and Uganda. It also focuses on conflicts between local groups and communities. The agency was originally created to assess matters of desertification, conflict, peace-building and the processes of programmes, beginning in 1994. The agency sets in dialogue socio-economic development as one of the two tracks, the other focuses on conflict between local groups and communities. This tract is:

... a process of 'building cooperation between communities in conflict with each other through dialogue and development'. But it has also had a religious dimension, with key events in local peace processes in Southern Sudan being sponsored by church organizations and employing the ritual language of Christian and indigenous belief systems. During the 1990s in Southern Sudan this support for local peace efforts took the form of sponsorship for a continuing series of meetings known as people-to-people conferences (Bradbury, 2006:51).

5.3.2 Peace from within and peace settlement initiatives–1997

One of the initiatives by some factional leaders with different views and new plans for the peace process was the Dr. Machar party, which is one among many who envisioned new avenues for approaching the north government with peace settlements. The issue, however, was related to his own political survival rather than any lofty goal of bringing peace to a war-ravaged country. The reasoning behind this was because he and his organization were denied a seat at the IGAD talks. The government in Khartoum welcomed the venture and crafted the famous Khartoum agreement in 1997, which collapsed two years later (Jenner, 2000:15).

5.3.3 The organizational programs and the theories of change

The Non-Governmental organizations (NGO's) are considered more receptive to the experiences of those in the field. Christian Aid and Pax Christi are examples of faith-based agencies that participate and promote community dialogue in general, 'people-to- people' dialogue and dialogue between leaders for the sake of reconciliation and justice. Pax Christi

in the south supports community dialogue in general. Christian AID supports the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC) founded in 1989. The NSCC specifically sponsored ‘people-to-people’ peace dialogue in the south of Sudan. Similar humanitarian NGO’s served in the north as facilitators rather than implementers, for example, World Relief, Church Ecumenical Action on Sudan (CEAS) and Sudan Emergency Operation Consortium (SEOC), among many others.

5.3.4 African Union–AU

The African Union (AU) Liaison Office in Sudan (AULOS) has been mandated by the AU Commission to monitor and assess the implementation of CPA outstanding matters and to ensure successful implementation of the decisions of the signed agreements between Sudan and South Sudan, this includes, amongst others, assisting and facilitating all activities of the African Union High level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) in outstanding matters and post referendum matters.

It is also mandated to organize meetings with Civil Society Organizations (CSO’s), religious leaders and notable personnel in the society that could facilitate reconciliation and peace-building. The overall aim, especially in these two areas, including local community and faith based organizations, is to share experiences and proposals that may be useful in mitigating the current conflict and its effect on the population (AU Peace Forum, December 2013, Blue Nile region, Damazin State).

5.3.5 Women’s initiatives

Sudanese women had one of the first and most active movements in Africa and the Arab world. The Sudanese government admits that women’s rights are entrenched in Sudan: “In comparison with women in many African and Middle and Eastern countries...Sudanese women have become relatively well represented in public life” (A statement in the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, 2008). They have been involved in national politics since the mid 1940’s, and secured votes in 1953. There have been several women ministers in the Sudanese government since the early 1970’s. Samia Hamza was appointed in 1963 and we have a lot of women judges, about 67 out of 800, compared to the Arab countries. Farida Ibrahim was appointed as a judge in the criminal court in 1972, and was later appointed as Chief Justice of Khartoum in federal Sudan. In terms of social

responsibility, Sudanese women are the backbone of the society as they farm, raise children, train and raise the children. They therefore play a key role in the awareness of empowerment campaigns; they can help other women to participate in decision-making and support the community peace initiatives.

Particularly, in March 1996, expert northern Sudanese Muslim women initiated and sent a request to Lillian Harris, the wife of the British Ambassador to Sudan to hold a similar meeting like the group of South Christian women to enter into dialogue on “peace and development”. Out of this initiative came the Women’s Action Group (WAG), their concern is to enter into each other’s experience in a spirit of acceptance, compassion and at the time, of confusion, repentance and forgiveness. Seminars of WAG members and wider circles of women followed. Particularly, significant workshops were held at Ahfad University in October 1996, under the title: “The Differences Which United Us,” which has since been adopted as the motto of WAG. The group realised that deeper healing and reconciliation would come as they engaged together in compassionate service to people in need, and various small scale shared activities in children’s education and health care have followed (Werner, Anderson and Wheeler, 2000:625).

Despite these facts, during the conflicts, civilians became victims of numerous human rights violations, primarily at the hand of the government and pro-government militias. Much of the violence perpetrated in the Darfur conflict has resulted in grave human rights violations against women and girls, including abductions, rape and forced-displacement. The only real protection being provided for women and girls in Darfur has been from the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS), despite restrictions infringed on its capability.²⁶

Despite the Sudanese government’s extent of atrocity against Nuba and the people in Darfur, the awareness is accounted through various human rights groups, media reportage, and the reports of NGO’s. The concept adequately developed is ‘ethnocide,’ to interpret the way the women are severely affected in some of these areas, including Sudan. This includes enslavement, rape, forced marriage or concubinage, as well as separation from children and/or families (Beny and Hale, 2015:205).

Johnson (1998) affirms that, “There is no question that slavery exists in Sudan today and that it is fed by slave raiding developed as a tactic of war” militia known as *murahalin*. Pressure was placed on the CIS and the American Anti-Slavery Group to enforce the controversial program of redeeming southern slaves from their Arab masters, as the practice provided ample evidence in modern Sudan. However, instead of condemning they only blamed the government for the practice, nor was the practice deemed a criminal act; neither were those who committed these acts held liable for their crimes or disarmed. As a result of the pressure, the government decided to create a Committee for Eradication of Abduction of Women and Children (CEAWAC) (Beny and Hale, 2015:274). As I mentioned earlier, commission for ‘abduction’ never saw the light during the 2005 peace process even until now, this lies behind all these pending and unresolved issues, till the present day (see Table 5).

In the middle of these waves, the Sudanese voice of active women groups in the struggle to be heard was finally recognized. One of the peace projects, ‘Engendering Peace,’ is unique, involving only women and working with groups in the north and the south funded by the Dutch government. ‘We had enough war we want peace,’ states the Sudanese Women Association in Nairobi (SWAN). The idea of working together has been a key factor allowing bridges to be built across factional lines, and embracing Sudanese women from the north as well (Jenner, 2000:16).

The armed-conflict has greatly affected the lives of women and completely changed their roles in the family and community. This breakdown and disintegration of family community networks has forced women to assume new roles. A large number of female-headed households have been created where the men have either been displaced, detained, disappeared or are deceased. Women invariably have to bear greater responsibility for their children and their elderly relatives when men in the family are gone.²⁷

This was an urgent appeal and a call for the Sudanese government to condemn human rights violations, especially in the rich oil regions of Sudan, and to open these areas for organization and humanitarian assistance. “Women have to fight more to get a job and enough money,” women of the Presbyterian Church of Sudan cry out, “We had enough, we want peace,” in their appeal for the partners and other people of the international community and worldwide to intervene and get involved by putting pressure on the warring parties to respect the

convention for the protection of human rights, as well as to effectively promote and support peace initiatives and processes in Sudan (PC-USA, Worldwide Ministers Division, 2002:12).

5.3.6 Co-existence initiatives

The last fifty years of the nineteenth century witnessed a good relationship between Christians and Muslims, evident in the building of trust, consultation and understanding. There were close relationships with government authorities. The cooperation with the Muslim Caliph of Istanbul gave the missions the right to erect churches, teach and preach all over Sudan, even to non-Muslims (Werner, Anderson and Wheeler, 2000:207). But in the last fifty years of the twentieth century, this relationship has soured, even more so than during the time of testing Mahdiya. The Catholic Archbishop Gebrial Wako of Khartoum published a booklet and pastoral letter *The Truth Shall Make you free* on the issue of discrimination, and stated clearly that in spite of the repeated declaration and assurance by the government authorities that all Sudanese have equal rights, “we see that the reality is different” (Werner, Anderson and Wheeler, 2000:623). This booklet commemorated the visit of the Pope to Sudan.

Recently, in 1992, the hostile situation followed an assault on Catholic property and the size of the catholic club by the authorities, and was turned into a Mosque. Another letter was on inter-faith dialogue in 1993. The very same year, in February, Pope John Paul II visited Khartoum together for the beatification of Blessed Sister Bakhita, from Darfur, sold in markets of Elobied and Khartoum as pointed out by the Pope that she was a slave before she was brought to the Khartoum slave-market by a Christian master, however, it seemed that this reference to her offended the authorities (Werner, Anderson and Wheeler, 2000:623)

Since Christian theology is a theology of dialogue and spirituality as well, this requires Christians to live and be at peace with one another, even with their enemies. This is the love that is manifested by Christ; is it normal to only love those who love us? Even evildoers do the same, so do tax collectors! But Jesus Christ Glory to Him asked all of us why should God reward you if only love people who love you and your friends? An example given by Fr. Philosawos’s (2007:2) wisdom words of this famous Orthodox Priest, thieves always stand together, if any of them are caught or taken to prison, other thieves stand in solidarity with

them. This means that if you love only good people, have you done anything out of the ordinary? Even pagans do this?

Co-existence requires from the Christian believer to accept and invest in efforts to be at peace with everyone, not showing any racism but to contribute and provide for the needy, and to do good to others. Peaceful co-existence calls for cooperative and inter-religious dialogue, a call for organizing sessions to debate even to enhance the values of cooperation among the religious leaders, civil society and various groups. In this regard, the issue of peace-making, peace-building and dispute settlement is a major concern, which requires the collaboration of all the peace promoters, supporters and facilitators to apply their energy and effort to address core factors, activities and programmes to bring about lasting peace, security and stability.

Christian-Muslims in their hope for mutual respect and to encourage strong relations, in reaction to the government organized two international conferences on Religious Tolerance and Peaceful Co-existence, one in April 1993 (Barsella and Guixot, 1993:83-87) and the other conference was held in October 1994. These were attended by a number of organizations and many regional conferences. Worth mentioning here is a seminar held in Amman in 1997, as mentioned above (Werner, Anderson and Wheeler, 2000: 624).

Through the inter-religious council efforts and within a very short space of time, the council was able to build a considerable degree of confidence among various religious leaders, and managed to extend the bridge of communication between various groups in the country. As a result, the council managed to intervene and leaders were able to settle some problems that continued to be the source of tension and misunderstanding. In addition, leaders were able to establish useful and fruitful relations to support and enhance the council's co-existence, dialogue, programs and activities in general. In the next section, the method for the empirical fieldwork will be explained, including how the data is displayed, its method and procedures.

5.4 Data collection and capturing

This section discusses the practical fieldwork processes and measures used for the data capturing. For the empirical analysis, the researcher primarily used data from the notes and qualitative empirical fieldwork that was carried out and conducted in Sudan. This nationwide

representation was audio and video recorded, and collected between August-December 2013 by means of face-to-face interviews (personal in-depth and focus group semi-structured and open-ended questions) and quantitative data from both SPEC's archive and the SCC constitution. The choice of purposive sampling was selected using free ordinary conversation, snowballing and quota sampling for the targeted Sudanese participants only. The first stage sampled consisted of in-depth interviews with nine personnel representing influential key church leaders and practitioners, nine in total among them—eight men and one woman.

Most of the participants that represent the faith-based bodies have a Christian view of life; others are from non-faith-based bodies, all aged eighteen and over. There were variations concerning their biographies, experiences and geographical background. The second stage sampled represented other teams, which included ten homogenous focus group participants, both male and females, in total between 90-230 respondents based in different states of Sudan. The questions were grouped into three groups; the first (A) and second (B) covers the personal and organizational information; the third group (C), are specific locations experiencing events of peace processes and practices.

5.4.1 The focus group interviews

The focus group interviews consisted of ordinary conversations inquiring about both facts and meaning. The research question was fairly broad asking overall descriptions of the subject matter. Here, the researcher joined the discussion and shared in the free flowing argument that had no specific guidelines for participants to express their views and ideas.

5.4.2 The open-ended questions-facilitated focus group

This item list takes on a guided interview approach that is much more formal, specific and focused. Here, the researcher uncovers the story behind the participants' experiences and gives them more freedom to express their opinions so as to obtain more information, followed by a research question which has the same degree of depth, detail and richness. The first five main research questions in the interview schedule look for clarity, understanding and knowledge. It also explores the meaning of immediate matters and investigates the meaning of importance.

In addition, it places earlier responses within a broader context. Sharing in experience helps organize the data when reflecting on beliefs and attitudes of how to relate and respond, and get more insight related to work, culture and the processes of those involved. Questions six and seven concern empowerment and the church's efforts; question eight inquires about indigenous local knowledge, whereas questions nine and ten focus on the impact of the ministry of SPEC and other organizations as mediating structures of peace and reconciliation. The last question has to do with programme policy making.

5.4.3 Personal in-depth interviews

This item list explores ideas, concepts and issues in greater detail as in groups (A) and (B). A follow-up conversational interview is carried out with professional and influential leaders who handle patterns in different areas of mission, vision, policy-making and implementation among focus groups who represent church officials and local leaders. The 'River and Channel' and 'pick up the twigs' sample are used to obtain more detail and further explanations for the unanswered questions by the dominant groups in the main branch of the tree neither by the river and channel model (Mason, 2008:124-125). The numbers below shows a sample of questions from group (C) as mentioned above.

7 - How have religious leaders participated and facilitated the programs of faith-based and non-faith based organizations in 'people-to-people' dialogue? Describe the involvement of religious leaders in the faith-based and non-faith based 'people-to-people' dialogue.

8 - What key roles has the influence of religious leadership had on appropriating important aspects of 'people-to-people' dialogue in SPEC? And what is the role of religious leaders in appropriating important aspects of 'people-to-people' dialogue in SPEC?

9 - How can indigenous local leadership influence the role of (the) conversation with other forms of help to discern opportunities for mission practice as transformative religious contributions to 'people-to-people' dialogue? How can the indigenous local leaders influence mission practice as transformative 'people-to-people' dialogue?

10 - How can 'mission as ministry' in SPEC mediate peace and reconciliation structures beyond its institutional context in the following three areas:

- a. Global-faith organizations of 'people-to-people' dialogue?

- b. Regional level of ‘people-to-people’ dialogue?
- c. National level of ‘people-to-people’ dialogue?

5.4.4 Categories, codes and explanatory logic

To make data presentation meaningful, some steps are needed for sorting and organizing principles of data sources and methods. The individual and focus group responses were coded using thematic coding: themes and patterns were used to correlate them. They were then placed in a chart and grouped or labelled into families and categories, such as ‘peace-experience-challenge-tension-plan-activities’. The data organization and integration shows how different parts are linked at various levels to form the construction of families and super families or themes by using the Atlasti-7 for data analysis.

5.5 Data measurement

This is the dynamic section of identifying the measurements and procedures used to gather data related to the main concepts. The concepts are then operationalized, turning them into measurable variables to test the research hypothesis and specify the meanings of these variables. The research interest and analysis type are as follows:

- 1) Language characteristic is an interactive process in ethnomethodology as it mirrors the culture with regards to its process of discourse and conversational analysis.
- 2) Discovery of regularities as an identification of elements and categories of their connection to thematic analysis and grounded theory.
- 3) The comprehension of meaning action is through interpretation and discovery of themes (case study) in life history, oral history, organization history or the interventions.
- 4) Reflection uses reflective praxis.

5.5.1 SPEC’s objectives outgroup participation in peace dialogue initiatives

To operationalize the role and participation of SPEC in both the faith-based and community initiatives of peace dialogue, depending on the three phases of contextual, institutional and theological factors of the interconnected themes, examples of activities from the interview schedule with the focus groups and practitioners were used as an indicator. Applying

Mason's (2008:123) principles of conversation to my context, ordinary conversation enabled open free flowing informal conversation for the participants to share their life-oral history and their main activity in the later years after the signing of the CPA (2005). Respondents were also asked to share information about their neighbourhood, where they live, as well as describe conflict related events and how it happened. The first three questions on ordinary conversations helped them to share their ideas and experiences:

- 1) Tell me about the neighbourhood that you live in now?
- 2) What happened during the last five years of the conflict?
- 3) Can you describe in detail how this happened?

The second question is concerned with the way in which religious leaders have played a role in promoting peace and bringing about stability. The third question is about how key religious leaders have influenced and appropriated important aspects of 'people-to-people' dialogue in SPEC and what the role of religious leaders are in appropriating the important aspects of 'people-to-people' dialogue in SPEC? Responses were audio recorded for all in-depth interviews, and video recorded for the various focus groups.

5.5.2 SPEC's perception of outgroup key participation in the mission of reconciliation

To measure perceived outgroup, a single indicator is used to find out how reconciliation is handled within other ethnic-cultural groups in Sudan.

5.5.3 Intergroup contact at local, national and global level

To assess intergroup contact, one item indicator was employed to inquire from respondents how mission as ministry in SPEC's mediating structure for peace and reconciliation can be developed and extended beyond its institutional context in the following levels:

- a) Non-church related initiative–global.
- b) Church involvement–national.
- c) Community dialogue–local

5.5.4 Perceived group threat, issues of power

The concept of ‘perceived threat’ is commonly defined as ‘anticipation of negative consequences due to the presence of outgroups (Stephen and Renfro, 2002a:197). The theory considers anti-out group attitudes to express explicit preference to deny “individual or groups equality of treatment which they may wish” (Allport, 1945:51). Thus, the theory conceptualizes perceived threat as immediate predictors of more explicit and discriminatory anti-out group stances.

To assess ingroup attitudes driven by both theories, two mediating variables need to be included and two item indicators used to reflect on the experienced threat on the group’s interests in the domains of political power, cultural customs or religions that control the lives of the respondents. Respondents were asked to respond on how they were affected by being discriminated against and treated differently, rather than the same as others; and to indicate if there was any underlying tension between ethnic and religious groups and the legal system. Intergroup contact was then measured, reflecting on the respective occupational domain of intergroup contact (Schlueter and Wagner, 2008).

The common background variables were also considered in the in-depth personal interviews. The following background variables were measured and included in the semi-structured model: gender; profession; age (measured in years, ranging from four degree options for possible responses); organization details for both faith-based or non-faith based, and department of work.

Schneider (2008:55) explains that in empirical tests there is the so-called ‘familiarization’ effect of ethnic minorities, which boils down to the idea that a society gets used to certain groups that are high in numbers. The effect of familiarization is based on a dynamic perspective, focusing on change in the relative outgroup proposition, which is in line with the ethnic competition theory. To assess the respondents’ level of age, five options or categories were provided, as well as straightforward measures for gender, denomination and occupational status.

5.5.5 Control variables

At the contextual level, in terms of participation, to control the relationship between the individual level and the intergroup contacts, which includes both the national and regional level, takes measures of those who participated or not. Several individual level variables in line with previous research have been found to affect peace dialogue processes and practices with regards to the perception of ethnic threat and intergroup contact theory (Putman, 2007; Schneider, 2008; Gesthuizen et al., 2009).

5.5.6 SPEC's identity is shaped by sharing with 'others' to discern more opportunities

To assess the quality of witnesses and the knowledge of local religious beliefs and practices, local leaders and civil society activists were asked one question on how indigenous local leadership can influence the role or conversation with other forms of help, to discern opportunities for mission practice as a transformative religious contribution to 'people-to-people' dialogue. How can indigenous local leaders influence mission practice for transformative 'people-to-people' dialogue?

Schreiter (1991:92) notes that mission is God's initiative, Sanon (1991:85) also sees Christ as the Master Initiator. The term is described by Anselme Sanon (1991:85), that Jesus is suggestive and related to His Jewish ancestral experience, like a chief initiated by the ancestors to be initiated into His role as a mediator, or as Jesus initiated into His Jewish tribal community completed with the cross and resurrection. The community members described their religious leaders and how they interacted with community members. This showed their encouragement through prayers to discern opportunities for missional practice by the people of God in 'people-to-people' and community dialogue.

Before turning to the data analysis, a distinction is to be made between world religions as an area of speciality. The similarities and differences among religions become increasingly important and a challenge to Christian witness. The issue of readiness and the ability for Christians to give answers and reasons is the hope that they have (1 Pet. 3:1 and Rom. 8: 24, 25). Significant questions will be asked here, for instance, what is the theology of religion as a discipline? What is the relationship and difference between the Christian concept of God and the view held by other religions? Is salvation only found in Christianity? Theology of religions is the term used to delineate the field of Christian studies that aims to give some

scope and shape to a Christian reflection on the theological implementation of living in a religiously plural world, though the designation gained an established status as a general field of study. A distinction should be made between a theology of religion, both ‘singular’ and ‘plural’ (Kärkkäinen, 2003:20). This will be described in the next section.

5.6 Theology of ‘religion’

The Christian theology of religions is the name given to that area of Christian studies that aims to give some definition and shape to Christian reflection on the theological implementation of living in a religiously plural world. The title has gained an established status as a general field of study. The word religion is derived from the Latin root ‘*religare*,’ which means to bind, a bond, abiding with the supernatural or a binding with God. Nokaneng (2000:21) described life as God-centred, since all of life has the creator as its source in Christianity; Judaism and Islam are based on a direct relationship between God and mankind. According to Knitter (1985:99), religion is the state of being grasped by an ultimate concern, a concern which qualifies all concerned as preliminary, and which itself contains the answers to the question of the meaning of life.

Theology of religions (plural) is the discipline of theological studies that theologially accounts for the meaning and value of other religious. Christian theology of religions attempts to think theologially about what it means for Christians to live with people of other faiths, and about the relationship of Christianity to other religions. However, during the Middle Ages, ‘religions’ were never referred to as religions until the seventeenth century. Only then came the word ‘religion,’ which meant a system of belief and practice (Bosch, 2011:274).

Theology of religion (singular) asks what religion seeks in the light of the Christian faith; it further studies the relationship between revelation and faith, faith and religion, and faith and salvation (Kärkkäinen, 2003:21). As a separate field of study, theology of religion is a rather recent phenomenon and fairly new discipline in theology. It first emerged in the Catholic circle beginning with the radical reorientation of Catholic theology as a result of the Second Vatican Council. It soon spread to the Protestant sphere, as well as many of the other traditions. Although theology of religion did not hold a prominent place in theology until the 1960s, it can be traced back to influential voices from decades earlier, for instance:

- 1) Ernest Troeltsch: The great German liberal thinker “father of Pluralism.”
- 2) William Hocking: The American philosopher, “re-thinking mission.”
- 3) John Farquhar: Scottish Protestant missionary to India.
- 4) Karl Barth: Protestant theological giant.
- 5) Paul Tillich: Theological giant.

Alan Race (1982:136) commented that the future of Christian theology lies in the encounter between Christianity and the other faiths. If they are correct in this, then the Christian theology of religion needs to present no apologia for adding one more specialism to the Christian theological enterprise as a whole. Rather, it ought to rejoice at being the frontier to the next phase in Christian history. The giant theologian, Paul Tillich, predicted that the future of theology lies in the interpretation of systematic theological studies and the contact of religious historical studies within the history of religion (Kärkkäinen, 2003:23).

Since Christian theology of religions is a theology of dialogue, Paul Knitter (1995:30) on correlation theology argues, “If Christians are open and bordering on a necessity that ‘there are so many true and saving religions’ and Christianity is one among them, only then authentic dialogue can take place and Christians enter the forum of inter-religious dialogue”.

The World Council of Churches (WCC) issued a historic turn in 1979 in its guidelines on dialogue, insisting that interreligious dialogue is not a pleasant luxury for Christians but a necessary “means of living out our faith in Christ in service of community with our neighbour” (WCC, 1979:16). It warns that dialogue should not be a “secret weapon in armoury of an aggressive Christian militancy”. It even urges that Christians are to avoid “positions of superiority,” lurking in such notions as “anonymous Christian” (Fulfilment model), “the Christian presence” (No Christian witness), and “the unknown Christ” (Hindu) (Knitter, 1985:139).

In the Old Testament other ‘religions’ are viewed as gods, idols or ‘religions’ of surrounding nations; cults and pagan ‘religions’ are all indications and judgments of those practices and the symbols they follow. In respect of these many views, my understanding is to have the opportunity to share and reflect on the value of the Christian faith, life, testimony and

theological studies, and seek a prophetic community approach. The next section introduces models of church attitudes towards world religions.

5.7 Models of church attitudes towards other religions

The study of world religions, similarities and differences among religions, becomes increasingly important and a challenge to Christian witness. The issue of readiness and the ability for Christians to give answers and reasons for the hope that they have is to answer important questions like: “What is theology of religion?” And, “What is the relation between the Christian conception of God and the view held by other religions?” “Is salvation only to be found in Christianity?” Paul Knitter (1995) identifies the three models in his book titled *One Earth, Many Religions: Multi-faith Dialogue and Global Responsibility*. Knitter presented four models of faith, these are indicated below:

5.7.1 Inclusivity Model (as Fulfilment)

This section introduces the church’s traditions throughout Christian history, namely, inclusive, exclusive and pluralistic models, the Mainline Protestant; Roman Catholic; Christocentric; Christ within the Religions, as (Christ above the religions) (Knitter, 2007:80-86).

5.7.2 Pluralist Model (as Mutuality)

Theo-centric (Christ together with the religions), which denies Christian uniqueness (Knitter, 2007:109).

5.7.3 Exclusivity Model (as Replacement)

Conservative Evangelicals; Mainline Protestant; Ecclesia-centric (Christ against the religions), this model is divided into:

5.7.3.1 Total Replacement (No value in other religions)

There is neither revelation nor salvation in other religions.

5.7.3.2 Partial Replacement (*Dialogue yes, Salvation no*)

There is a possibility of shared revelation “cosmic,” but no salvation in other religions. Through inter-religious dialogue there is access to an exchange of ideas regarding social concerns and also sharing in God’s truth (Knitter, 2007:19-26).

5.7.4 Acceptance Model (as Postmodern)

‘Modernity,’ which indicates that all are same, and the ‘Postmodernity’ “value of difference” (Knitter, 2007:173-221). In other words, the modern era was viewed as ‘The idols of the West’. Editor Raymond G. Halmic (2007) classified the principles as building blocks of the modern age:

- 1) Scientific revolution.
- 2) Philosophical enlightenment.
- 3) Political liberation.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter reflected in depth on the participation of the SPEC, the role it played in those initiatives, and its stance amongst the leading faith-based and non-faith-based organizations. In addition, the researcher also considered its involvement at the local, national and regional levels, as well as engagement in community peace programmes, and mutual and prophetic dialogue that can lead to a ministry of peace and reconciliation. Knitter’s (1985) modern model of ‘Theo-centrism’ and paradigm aims for holism in religion. Bosch (2011) stated, “... when everything is equally valid nothing really matters any longer”. Similar voices have elaborated that the Christian faith is by the grace of God, freely given and freely received, and through the love of God, Christians are obligated to share and show love towards their neighbours from other religions.

CHAPTER SIX

ANALYSIS OF EMPIRICAL DATA

FOR INDIVIDUAL AND FOCUS GROUPS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the empirical data from both the individual and focus groups. Talking about practice is not a matter of providing a description of the event and level of narrative experience only but also gives it more meaning and places it in context (Torres and Eagleson, 1981:14). In Mason's (2008:173) view, research begins by organizing the data (section 6.2), then analysing or explaining the data (section 6.3), and supporting the data by using different methods to display feedback from the participants (section 6.4).

The core task builds on the practical element, so the contextual and theological interpretation in my qualitative analysis builds on the practical aspect of peace and reconciliation in the churches. This interpretative task brings one back to the theological interpretation and the different elements in the theory of change and the dimensions where this happens. Praxis is always about change, in section 6.6, this is the reason why I coded both of them. So I started by drawing together the main missiological and theological themes and theories. I closely summarised the feedback and reflected on the presentations from the people and their responses to the struggle. The effects and consequences of the ethnic threat are given in section 6.8, and I finally conclude with an analysis of the supplementary data (section 6.9).

Here, the researcher seeks to have more insight and understanding on how people go about their daily lives. Through their interaction they create meaningful categories for themselves and others and seek to learn more about their experiences, as well as from their own perspective, as theories help us to understand what has been done. Now is the time to focus on what that means in light of the events experienced during the struggle and long-term conflict. Reflection on the communities as the broader society can also trace what has been developed from previous research to assist us in our pursuit of conflict resolution, stability and lasting sustainable peace. Mason's (2008:149) reflexivity seeks to explore one's role, responses and perspective in the process of data generation and interpretation.

6.2 Data organization

This section organizes and summarizes the feedback from the fieldwork, combining the responses to make sense.

Nothing stays the same, change is inevitable whether we like or not, this is evident in process of change. Social analysis helps us to see the dynamics of the social reality, and enables us to respond effectively (Holland and Henriot, 1980:30-31). Using the Atlasti-7 coding system and in accordance with the ethical considerations of this study as well as endeavouring to maintain anonymity, as referred to under heading 1.10, the researcher made use of coding abbreviations and pseudonyms, as well as numbers and categories to refer to the individuals, groups and locations who participated in this study.

To make meaningful sense of the data it needs to be grouped it into sections, namely: the socio-political dimension of the targeted individual-focus groups and interventions. Looking for meaning is also connected to words, signs, symbols and the images they use. The socio-economic dimension specifically consists of possibilities and challenges from the ABC analysis and consists of three elements: which stands for the (A) ‘challenges,’ (B) ‘causes,’ and (C) ‘consequences’ or effects. ‘Challenges’ are the conditions and real problems of the targeted individual-focus groups. ‘Causes’ are the reasons behind the groups’ living conditions. ‘Effects’ or influences are referred to as the consequences of the conditions, especially on the socio-political and ethnic-religious life of the people; this will be explored in more detail in this chapter. There are two major overarching themes that emerged from the data: ‘intergroup contact’ and ‘perceived ethnic threat’ (see heading 3.4.3).

Codes and quotation numbers were used to refer to both components, first 09:00 to refer to various in-depth respondents and 10:00 to refer to various focus group respondents. The individual and group representation geographically covers the Greater Khartoum state, which has seven provinces: Gadarief state in eastern Sudan; South Blue Nile state; and the Greater Kordofan states. The churches involved were all among the seven reformed churches (see heading 4.2.1). The language used is local Arabic, which is familiar and widely spoken in everyday communication by the majority of respondents.

6.3 Method of data analysis

This section seeks to provide an appropriate means of data analysis in a qualitative manner. The qualitative research approach is defined as procedures in which people give descriptive data in their own written or spoken words and observable behaviour.... It's a way of approaching the empirical world (Tylor and Bogdan, 1984:5). This qualitative interpretative and reflexive method is useful in ethno-historical and ethno-graphic studies and is helpful to know the culture and the targeted groups, which uses participant observation to collect the data, and then proceeds on to data analysis, using causality and arguments to make predictions (Mason, 2008:173).

The data was translated, transcribed, and then organized, placed in order, filed, cross-referenced, coded and categorized. Based on this nature of qualitative-empirical research and the coding process (Babbie, 2004:299-302) both thematic content and document analysis was used. The thematic content analysis involves a way of looking across the data set rather than at just one case. It helps move across the data and looks at respondents' own experiences and is similar to that used in 'interpretative phenomenological analysis' (IPA), as the early stage of grounded theory. Grounded theory undertakes thematic analysis, develops abstract concepts from the themes, and then builds and constructs theories from these concepts (Seale, 2012:367).

It focuses on the event or what social interaction looks like to indicate the individual's interests, interactions and experiences, and express what it feel like (Seal, 2012:377). The framework approach is increasingly important and is used to manage qualitative data analysis for thematic content analysis (Mason, 1996:382), conventional thematic content analysis, the way the data is summarized in charts, concept maps to suit the data and research questions, as well as literal, interpretive and reflexive indexing (Mason, 2008:155-166). The numerical indexing matrix column is used to reference the themes and cases of the people interviewed. The aim of developing a typology is to highlight the differences between the events and behaviours of people depending on the context (Glaser and Strauss, 1964; Mason, 2008:380).

6.4 Data presentation

This section displays the feedback and responses from the intergroup leaders and their insight on the conflict. This includes a general view about the ethnic and religious conflicts in the peace processes and practices, and the degree of involvement of the target groups in the program. Empirical research approaches have been based on fundamental research in missiology for decades with the purpose of analysing and explaining social phenomenon using scientific methods. Sharing and expressing their own experiences provides an opportunity to use a critical lens to emphasise the importance of what ought to be going on, to seek ‘prophetic discernment’ and God’s will to assist in confronting the present realities (Osmer, 2008:133).

The responses that emerged from the participants were linked to the role of intergroup leaders and how they perceived injustice, power imbalance and inequality. A number of views emerged from the study project on the form of injustice experienced by the participants and how they responded to these challenges. Most formal dimensions of the normative task or ‘prophetic discernment’ used the following three forms of approaches: theological-interpretative, ethical-reflection and good practice (Osmer, 2008:139).

6.5 Results and discussion

The results and discussion draws together the themes using the case study, theory and feedback from the fieldwork in order to explain the influence of the religious-ethnic diversity of the targeted community. By combining Osmer’s interpretive approach and method in the process of empirical research in practical theology and missiology, the researcher began with a clearer understanding of the context (Osmer, 2008:139). The researcher also used the ‘perspectives’ approach in practical theology consisting of the A.B.C (antecedent, analysis and practice) steps to answer the research question/s and hypothesis, and selected an appropriate methodology.

The (A) indicates the ‘causes’ of the key problem and the situation emerging from this problem links the issue of injustice and the absence of peace. This involves how the research idea or question influences the choice of the research method and methodology. The research

ideas, problems and questions are connected to current and envisaged outcomes that are the ‘behaviours’ (B), which include the practices, actions and perceptions or attitudes of individuals and groups leading to the final step. The ‘consequences’ (C) for the individuals and groups also propose and develop the conflict experience and final praxis as an intervention based on grounded theory, seeking practice as an intervention for faith-based and non-faith based communities.

Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006:80) described thematic analysis as a form of pattern recognition within the data with emerging themes becoming the categories for analysis and the process that involves a careful and more focused re-reading and review of the data. Document analysis is a systematic procedure for evaluating, reviewing or evaluating documents (Bowen, 2009:32). As a method in qualitative research it requires data to be examined and interpreted in order to gain understanding, elicit meaning and develop empirical knowledge (Corbin and Strauss, 2008; cf. Rapley, 2007). The next section focuses on that and explains how respondents shared in the struggle as they mirrored, reflected and expressed their own views:

6.5.1. SPEC’s participation in peace dialogue initiatives

To operationalize the role and participation of SPEC in both faith-based movements and community initiatives of peace dialogue depends on the three phases of contextual, institutional and theological factors of the inter-connected themes. Examples of these activities are from the interview schedule. The focus groups and practitioners are used as an indicator. Opening the floodgates allows for open and free, ordinary and informal conversation, which helps the participants to orally share their life history and main activities in the later years after the signing of the CPA deal in 2005. In addition, respondents were asked to share information about their neighbourhood, where they live and describe in detail the events of the conflict and how it happened?

1. The first three questions concern ordinary conversations and helped them share their ideas and gain clarity in their understanding and share their own experiences, with regards to these questions:
 - a) Tell me about the neighbourhood that you live in now?

- b) What happened during the last five years of the conflict?
 - c) Could you describe in detail how this happened?
2. The second question: In what way have religious leaders played a role in promoting peace and bringing about stability?
 3. The third question: What key role has religious leadership and influence had on appropriating important aspects of ‘people-to-people’ dialogue in SPEC? What is the role of religious leaders in appropriating the important aspect of ‘people-to-people’ dialogue in SPEC? Responses were audio-recorded for all in-depth interviews with the key leaders and video-recorded for the various focus groups. The challenges they faced are highlighted below:

6.5.2 Experience of injustice and lack of peaceful co-existence

As mentioned under section 4.7.1, the issue of conflict in Sudan has been described as the result of many forms of violence and injustice. The definition of violence is referred to by Kärkkäinen (2013:322) as “harm done to another human being, groups of people or even the whole of humanity with evil intentions or at least without thinking of the best of the other, it includes killing, abusing hitting or even speaking badly of a neighbour”. The following responses from the individual and focus group discussions show that it has affected their daily living and activities (in both the religious-political and socio-economic aspects of their lives). For instance, voicing these injustices and sharing their experiences, the focus group participants’ had this to say:

10:12 We have experienced various forms of injustice, mistrust, doubts, dictatorship, lack of human dignity, religious differences, no equal access to development, fraud, child trafficking, legislation, divide and rule, even classifying many as rebels, even if you don’t hold guns or visit your home areas for decades, just looking like you are of African origin your considered rebel, and finally, that CPA is commercial peace.

10:6 The reality of our daily living helped us to stand united in solidarity as one team to serve our people, though we were away from our areas, as we live in a big displaced prison, despite fear, sufferings, family break ups, and the absence of many needs.

10:54 *There is nothing good in this world! But we should learn two important things: Christ's advice was to be wise as snakes and simple as doves, and His assurance was not to be afraid or troubled. Being a believer from an Islamic background is a big challenge. I was detained and interrogated for more than five hours. They continually interrogated me trying to find out what they give me that caused me to change from the Islamic faith. 'I will answer if you tell what Jesus gave you,' I told them, 'Christ gave me eternal life, what you are claiming is a lie!' There is no eternal life there. If there was eternal life we would be the first ones to believe in him. Don't you know this war and what the rebels are doing is because of Christianity? I was then released later.*

10:9 *I have experienced no peace and I don't see the meaning of all these contributions made as some parts have been at war for more than three years with no meeting points but there is always an increasing gap between people and the state.*

Personal responses to the first question

9:10 *After the CPA was signed, a year later a team of civil societies organized to hold a conference in South Kordofan, unfortunately we were detained in 2006, but there was still mistrust there. We then realized with the help and intervention of many NGO'S but we were obligated to sign a commitment not to leave town for three months that automatically meant the conference was cancelled. In 2008, we managed to open our office in Kadogl, and did many courses on voter education and trained many for the 2010 election. Later the war broke out in mid of 2011 and the office was looted and totally damaged; up till now we have not even been able to visit the area again.*

6.5.3 Leaders role in the ethnic-religious conflict

A qualitative method is useful in an ethno-historical and ethno-graphic study on the cultural identities of people (see section 1.6). A participatory methodology, as an example of qualitative research is relevant for research that empowers the participants and communities in contexts of conflict (Swinton, 2006:227-229). Through informal conversation it reduces the social distance and use of techniques aimed at facilitating collective dialogue and engagement.

The participatory method recognizes diversity and plurality, and values local knowledge alongside other forms of scientific-technical knowledge. A ‘participatory approach’ is likely to capture the complexity and richness of ‘people-to-people’ dialogue in mediating peace and reconciliation but is also a ‘dialogical-spirituality’ approach. Though, the key leader’s role is easily exploited to win support for their cause and political support as mentioned earlier. The important aspect is the informal relation that exists between people, groups and organizations in networking. The model of the well-connected community plays an important role in helping others, as well as with awareness and empowerment (Taylor and Gil-Christ, 2011:1-2). These relations can shape the life of the community and move beyond geo-political boundaries and barriers. These are some views and debates of the respondents on the role of the religious leaders. Both are personal and focus group responses to the second question:

10:51 *Many tried but there was no real role. Only after the CPA did others debate that point. There were some positive roles, as well as the opposite. In one sense they were marginalized and failed to perform proper awareness because some who were selected were weak representatives and were only at the personal level, but some were recruited for commercial election or jihad advertisement. Some thought they should be represented at the high state level but were not involved in politics or holding political posts.*

10: 17 and 10:28 *We are still at war; in a debate some played a great role as benefitters wearing two hats - one for personal and the other for political interests, others persuaded and calmed people during the time of dispute. Their presence was non-existent and isolated, waiting for others to give them ready-made solutions. The SCC participated to some extent even denying the statement of truth but they were focusing on their financial crisis and conflict among the religious leaders themselves, so if they were unable to handle internal problems, how are we expected to solve these at the national level? At the human rights level, how can they ask and demand rights that are not within the constitution? For many, peace is theoretical due to the lack of implementation and failure to bring about co-existence. Many are still traumatized; others are accommodated in certain posts.*

To draw a difference between the wars, in World War I, 90% of those killed and wounded were soldiers, followed by 40% in World War II. In the last decade, 90% of those killed and wounded have been civilians (Rothfield, Fleming and Komesaroff, 2008:48). In the twentieth century, 430 violent conflicts have been witnessed, including civil wars and bloody coups, massacres and riots in 109 different countries, most ended in military defeat (Rothfield, Fleming and Komesaroff, 2008:45).

Schreiter (1992:9) commented on waves of violence across the African political map, which began to take shape since the Berlin conference without any Africans present at that time. Political boundaries cut through ethnic territories dividing some groups into two and three countries and throwing them together with long-standing enemies as new civic bedfellows (Schreiter, 1992:9). The results have been tragic in Africa with ethnic rivalries regularly boiling over into civil wars that waste the precious human resources of those countries resulting in seventy military coups against African governments in the first thirty years of independence.

The *Guardian* (2013) reported on: ‘How to predict high risk military coup?’ The answer shows vulnerable countries at risk. Sudan was listed second among the first eight and South Sudan numbered twentieth among thirty countries. Liberia was listed last in the index after successfully anticipating events in Mali and Guinea Bissau in 2012. In fact, most countries in the top twenty landed there either because they are poor countries, have competitive authoritarians or partially democratic political regimes, a poor economy or slow development growth. Unsurprisingly, coups also turn out to be a recurrent problem; the risk is higher in countries that have experienced other coup attempts in the past several years. This is a common factor for the top eight countries on the list—Sudan serves as an example. Active insurgences also increase the risk of a coup. This is another challenge for co-existence, living in harmony with the neighbours and handling disputes and making peace with one another, as well as the difficulty of living in isolation.

6.5.4 SPEC’s participation in the mission of reconciliation

To measure perceived outgroup, key leaders were asked ‘how they handle reconciliation within other ethnic-cultural groups in Sudan?’ Peaceful co-existence in a dominant-Islamic state is an increasing challenge to stability, social harmony and the mission of reconciliation.

Because of the inseparable nature and relationship between religious institutions and the state, what is sacred and secular? According to the Islamic doctrine and contrary to Christian teaching, the consequence seems to deeply affect the building of relationships, and the maintaining of contact with friendships and cultural issues.

Regarding religious differences in the context of Islam, the majority 'we' and Christians as the minority 'they' become sensitive to the patterns of injustice and discrimination. This is about identity theories and about the construction of identity within Christian-Muslim relations. In identity construction, one needs to ask, to what extent does it really facilitate or mediate an outcome to reconstruct the level of trust in the SPEC? Other conditions make it very common or routine. The challenge left no room for most religious and key leaders to be effectively engaged in voicing their prophetic stand as key religious practitioners.

Therefore, theories of trust can do well but not to the opposition. In searching for a theory, one needs to engage with it and build a new direction with others pointing to how the minority of Muslims construct themselves as an output among themselves. But this is not an issue at the moment, there are many theological texts that summarize these processes in a single page, and construct a theory. One of the theories applied is the majority-minority theory. I have read between the lines and identified recurring concepts and ideas, for example, the construction of 'us-them' in individual and group narratives.

The construction of 'us-them' as an intervention, works negatively when people talk about ideas and practices of forgiveness. Despite some of the numerous and broad perspectives, the researcher is interested in the steps and processes that can lead to forgiveness, reconciliation or justice. This is what de Gruchy (2007:29) proposes, namely, that reconciliation is about the processes and practices of restoring justice. From this point of view there are real issues of forgiveness which are often difficult to achieve. Others search for actions which can trigger certain responses that are reasonable and achievable. Below the researcher presents evidence indicating that the responses given by the participants on religious roles concern their involvement. Some respondents debated what the roles were and are.

The following personal and focus group responses on the third question illustrate some of the issues discussed above and below:

9:21 *We cannot simply say there, peace! And it is not easy to handle reconciliation among various groups; it is very difficult because if the wider country has no peace, how can you expect parts of it to have peace?*

9:16 *The concept of reconciliation is very mixed; for some it means forgiveness only, but to me it is more than an internal act; it should be followed by many processes and steps that mean justice must be done to remove the resentment and to remove the damage. In reality, the issue of reconciliation, the way to live it and apply it in Sudan is very difficult. For the victims to restore their previous relationship with the other part must accept responsibility and pay restitution, then ask for forgiveness.*

9:26 and 9:33 *Respecting one another is the first principle and accepting one another even if it is difficult sometimes to do so. Building relationships that allow for co-existence and harmony, you need to start from your church, then open up to the rest of the community.*

9:28 and 9:52 *Reconciliation must be some kind of agreement with all. Yes, there are many injustices but at our level it is best to accept others and first seek peace. What is the result of continuous fighting? Is it not mass displacement? People were scattered all over the country, which affected every aspect of their lives. We are living in real anxiety, with no education and no good health system.*

The government must carefully handle these injustices. First of all, the Nuba's are marginalized, we must first seek clear answers to our demands, but I think recently our president acknowledged, albeit indirectly, admitting these injustices. If you believe in God, you will try your best to live in harmony with any neighbour of another faith. Having many ethnicities in Sudan is a blessing and not a curse, as many have assumed.

God said: "His kingdom will be from all tribes, nations, tongue". If that picture is God's plan to be maintained and will continue until heaven, why is it impossible here? We should start from here and march to the future. If anyone is against ethnicity it is resisting God's will, also we have to co-exist with one another, accepting and respecting

each another. Religious diversity is also the flexibility of how to convince one another without contradiction or division, while witnessing to our deeper conviction.

9:52 *Christ restored our relationship with God, and has given us the mission of reconciliation, which also includes restoration of both man and nature, other creatures and reconciliation among humans themselves and is helpful in removing all kinds of tribal, ethnic and religious differences. We are in Christ, despite our gifts and colours, building on love to make a unified body of Christ.*

We can live in harmony with our neighbours and co-exist in peace, building relationships and exchanging visits on various occasions. You can't live in isolation from people, especially as church leaders hold our unique message and their role is to reach out even to non-believers, but saying that doesn't mean that the work is smooth sailing, because there are those who stood against our ministry but this is not a major issue of not serving others, we do this through the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC).

6.5.5 Intergroup contact at local, national and global level

To assess intergroup contact, one item indicator that was employed asked respondents: "How can mission as ministry in SPEC's mediating structure for peace and reconciliation be developed and extended within and beyond its institution?" This was reflected on in the following contexts and their accompanying levels:

- a) Non-church related initiative at global level
- b) Church involvement at national level.
- c) Community dialogue at local level

Both individual and group responses

10:42 and 10:47 *SPEC-North is one of the pioneers and is widespread in over eighteen states. It is a vibrant national church in the history of Sudan with its main message of peace, forgiveness, and their mission is reconciliation. Her mission and role is for the possible mitigation of conflict, creating awareness and accepting responsibility, as well as to serve the needy. They are alert even before a crisis occurs, and very active in reaching people, even during the time of conflict and are always a part of any peaceful initiative, advocating*

and networking with others. SPEC is also part of the SCC and is an active member in our institution's syllabus, which should be directed at and express our lives. Our education, health, politics even religion are no longer adequate to address the challenges we face today. It needs continual redesigning to cope with the new changes and visions for the future because of continual transformation. There is a lot of confusion among the leaders and members because of mixed ideas and roles to preach in pulpits and be involved in political issues. It has the capacity to fulfil the task, according to various gifts and talents bestowed on the members.

10:40, 10:23 and 10:46 *In the constitution, all parties come together in agreement and unity welcoming all as Sudanese citizens, accepting our reality of diversity, multiplicity and to promote peace. Yes, this is possible - don't think they exist, but may be very few. It is quite a challenging task to make peace in the midst of many divisions, including the church itself. If we value others more than ourselves, we value ourselves and the group's interest will be above that of the individuals.*

6.6 Professional and influential key leaders

Here an effort is made to properly understand the role played by the influential and professional key leaders who handle patterns in different areas of a mission, vision, policy-making and implementation. SPEC and other leaders were asked to respond to several questions related to individuals and focus groups that represent the church's official and local leaders. This section describes SPEC's role in mediating peace and reconciliation. Nine different respondents' views reflected that.

6.6.1 Mission

The SPEC's mission grew out of the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America's (PC-USA) mission in Sudan, and was according to the Word of God. They share, as many other evangelicals believe, that the canonical Scriptures are the Word of God and the infallible and inerrant rule for faith and practice. It is also viewed as the highest authority for both doctrine and morals. Divine revelation is found in the canonical Scriptures of the Holy Bible, both the Old and New Testaments, and constitutes the bottom line of the decision-making process (Davis, 1993:3). This section describes SPEC's key role in mediating peace

and reconciliation. The different views of the respondents reflect the answer to the question that follows on what is needed for peace: “I would like to know why some of the efforts needed in bringing and maintaining peace have not been successful?”

10:27 and 10:44 and 10:34 *Some played positive roles; many even attempted to be peacemakers, and at the same time were recruited to destroy others. Failing to build peace in their own household, how will they be able to build it in the community or the church?*

9:49 *Stop the war, (repeated three times) as the first step, then followed by a long interim period to pave the way to remove the doubts, bitterness, and also examine and build trust, providing equal opportunities for all parties to prepare and campaign for national governance. In 2010, I attended a voter education course and was trained to supervise the election. But when the day of election came, what we learnt was contrary to what was implemented on the ground. Peace was imposed on people and the root cause of the conflict was not treated and handled correctly. The issue of the constitution always meant to serve some and neglect others but when we have a constitution that is inclusive and safeguarded by laws fitting all the people, this CPA will not be commercial peace.*

6.6.2 Development activities

Sudan is thought to be the “world food basket” for many reasons one of them being, its multi-natural resources; but that dream has turned it into a crisis. One of the most crucial areas that have contributed to the new outbreak of conflict and tension is economic marginalization. This is one of the root causes of the civil war in Sudan. For anyone who knows the geography of the country, development is concentrated mostly in Khartoum and some parts of the central state, and not the vast states and regions of the country (Beny and Hale, 2015:28). Marginalization in Sudan occurs in many forms, for instance, the marginalization of schools, hospitals, infrastructure, industry, universities, to name a few. Considering these developmental activities, the practitioners who are influential figures had to elaborate on and contribute to performance, particularly with regards to peace processes and practice. “Are the planned development activities the best ones for enhancing their performance in peace-building and peace-making in Sudan?”

9:9 *There is unequal access to development. This is behind all of the problems, exacerbating most of these, even till now. Even in some places you will not see any sign of development. The second thing is the centralization of all facilities in the capital of Khartoum - universities, big hospitals or clinics (but no specialists), as well as the level of employment and also infrastructure are all centred in the federation of Khartoum state, and other states suffer the worst. Third is the unequal power sharing and resource sharing which caused many to move and in live in other areas, including Ethiopian neighbours, especially here in the eastern Sudan.*

10:12, 10:28 10:35, 10:40 and 10:52 *Of course we have seen all the injustices and inequality, it is a reality...in fact, if we don't unite our ideas as Nuba's among the marginalized and even leave advice for our younger generation to unite all Nuba's we will see many results of peace prevailing but among us there are those who encourage destruction and cause more division. We need to unite first and make agreements not to mix politics and religion; this caused the multiplicity of conflicts we are facing. The ruling party was proud of coming through the coup and challenged others to think and take over the same way, which is threatening the peace and security of people.*

9:15, 9:31 and 9:46 9:37 *The ideology of the political leaders; dominancy, which is related to fallen human nature; property; the nature and the identity of the state, which needs a whole comprehensive project of peace that cooperates with all aspects of life. The real problem of Sudan in history was full of original people from the land, their way of living independently and in tension with the outsiders who wanted to illuminate people and dominate their properties. The church is always accused as being an agent for foreigners, supporting rebels and covering up its opponents. One of the big challenges is that any revolution in Sudan when it arises seems discriminating and ethnic to some extent, it represents a certain location and up till now none are represented at the national level or including the whole of Sudan, therefore such a movement does not have any influence or a clear unified voice.*

6.6.3 Indigenous identity

Since 1922 there was a 'Close District Order,' closing the boarders of the south under British command. The south was administered independently between the years 1920-1947; trade

was only permissible by the “Permits to Trade Order”. This policy was intended to separate indigenous Negroids and protect the south from the slave trade and any cultural vacuum from the influence of the north (Benny and Hale 2015:11). Three memoranda explicitly stated the following:

1. The separation of the Negroid from the Arab territories;
2. The eventual assimilation of the south to the governments: “Governments of African possession, such as Uganda and East Africa;”
3. Islamic influence was to be kept out of the south by cutting off the southern “black” portion of Sudan... from the northern areas.

However, this was not only for the south but included native Nubians in the Nuba Mountains (see heading 3). This brief history has explained the identity issues of the Sudanese people and how these shaped the whole country, including their way of life and thinking. Failure of the British ruler’s to succeed with the separation policy and trade between both sides led to the northern Graduates’ Congress in 1942 to raise the slogan of “One Sudan” against the will of the colonial rulers. By the time of the Abboud coup between the years 1958-1964, it was clear that the policy was to undo the pieces or to reject the colonial plans that the British accomplished in the south and replace it with the northern one (Beny and Hale, 2015:14).

This was the reason behind the expulsion of the missionaries in 1964 and the inter-weaving of the country’s identity until the signing of the CPA in 2005. In fact, even now there is still a paradox in the identity of the Negroids and half-Negroid ‘Arabs,’ however, they identify with their fathers and exclude their mother from their consciences. It seems because of the mother’s incarnate ugliness and physical appearance they may be ashamed of their “monkey brothers” as the pre-Islamic heroic poet A’ntra noted, but this is still vague when negotiated (cited in Beny and Hale, 2015:29). The question is: “How are peace process matters related to the indigenous community and negotiated in the current Sudanese situation?”

9.21 *To me the 2005 deal was our hope to treat the root cause of the conflict but the CPA is not comprehensive because many were not included, they were excluded during peace talks, like the civil society who represents addresses and raises serious and immediate societal cases that need to be resolved. There was an inactive reconciliation commission in the CPA. It should be real and very active to remove the resentment and all differences*

during the interim period, like the one in South Africa, where is that now? It remains on paper and nobody talked about it after signing the CPA.

We reconcile most of the time to keep an interest, at the same time we compromise for the sake of peaceful co-existence, people prefer to reach some solution, which is sometimes not honoured by the authority and may end in deepening the conflict. I think if the top leadership should really allow the grassroots people to talk and come out with what they see and think the solution would be I think that will solve the current situation but these people have not been given a chance. For the case of the two areas, there is a popular consultation. I think it was not even given a chance because many people are already saying that this popular consultation is already dead.

10.52 *Because there is no seriousness or willingness, no commitment to the agreement they will say one thing and do another. Confusion, dispute, lack of love for others, hatred, drawing lines between (we-they) and (you-I). It is very difficult, I seriously don't know! In this world it is risky if we do not understand right now but maybe later; Christ will surprise us one day! Another reality is that all efforts were directed to divide the people and cause separation by which we lost the valuable part of South Sudan.*

6.6.4 Policies and strategy

A strategy describes the steps that will be taken to accomplish the goals or outcomes. It includes the practical programs, methods and activities that are likely to build on a situation to accomplish one's vision. It grows out of a vision and an understanding of the situation and works toward achieving the vision (Plueddemann, 2009:168, 190-194). When searching for a peace-building strategy one may note the efforts made by the United Nations (UN). These mediation strategies began in 1974 to settle any civil war by means of negotiations. Global effort was targeted and aimed at ending the colossal horror of violence and injustice caused by the civil war, genocide, dictatorship and large-scale poverty. The aim was to replace this with justice and prosperity instead. It seems a few managed to move towards that goal, encouraging many countries to get involved in the struggle and establish human rights, a rule of law and democracy (Philpott and Powers, 2010:3).

A way to transform the conflict in an innovative way is by engaging with religious actors, NGO's, civil society, and activists who work for peace-building, even post-peace building (see the narrative report: Appendix D) targeting areas of inequality and misuse of power; they are regarded as a wealth of resources. After the signing of the peace deal in 2005, I am still to ask the Sudanese people to share their views on pending issues of the post-peace stage. There were a series of connected players, practices and activities during those years through the cause-effect strategy but it doesn't seem that any of it worked for the good. I am still wondering what went wrong when implementing peace policies and not achieving sustainable peace. "How do you go about implementing new policies, moving from peace building to stability?"

The biggest problem is imposing laws on people from the ruling party. Another is the ideology, mainly, the Arabization and Islamization, which exists and continues despite any signed agreements, whether people like it or not because it is the state policy; the issue of superiority and priority; dominancy; the constitution which is not fitting for all; legislation that protects and stands its ground for all citizens.

9:19, 9:36, 9:22 and 9:30 *Our priority is targeting religious leaders to use their pulpit to generate awareness, a culture of peace, healing from trauma, and reunion of separated families. We also target women, as well as work with the youth. We train and give Native Administration sessions on legislation and the constitution, and many courses to accelerate justice in the community. It is a clear holistic national project, addressing the causes and roots as one package and not piecemeal. We educate people on how to live and maintain peace, and also to be a part of the mission of reconciliation both inside the church and outside in the community. We train them to handle their own problems before reaching to people of other faiths, collaborating as a ecumenical body in forums, conferences and advocacy networking. We are unable to go back to evaluate the damage, but we hope to see some change on the ground and to be able to look for new ways in our ministry.*

6.6.5 Issues not addressed

There is always a hidden agenda and secret agreements (mostly verbal) around peace talks, with mainly compromise and compensation by those who signed the agreements and negotiations. These remain hidden from the grassroots people and the public. This has led to

a feeling of bitterness for southerners and many feeling as if they are second-class citizens. This led to the cessation of the south and has widened the distance between politicians and the public (see headings 3.4 and heading 4.3.6). “What are you doing now to resolve problems not even addressed or dealt with, compared to what you had done before?”

9:18

It is the hidden agenda that is behind the real cause of instability. Conflict will not stop repeated three times, and will not end, and the problems will continue in those areas. There is always a hidden agenda or verbal ones around peace talks about compromises and compensations among those who signed the agreement but the people at the grassroots do not know this.

Bishop

In Sudan, for example, the distribution of land and the landless, sharing of wealth and natural resources, increasingly brings more serious conflict. Thus, power according to the experience of the religious leaders and many ordinary people is political authority at the level of decision-making. There are few people who are involved in decision-making at state level, the rest don't even know what is happening? And I think from this perspective it is a misrepresentation.

This comes to the fore again and brings about the issue of the constitution making it a key issue for good governance. Once you have a good constitution in place, then everything falls into place. The country should be run according to that document and these policies which have been agreed upon by everybody....and I think to me this is the key issue. There are some areas, which need to develop and also need to be taken into consideration.... power sharing is one of these issues!

Because this conflict we are having today in Sudan, is just like that in Darfur; why are they complaining? Because there is no equality! Why are the two areas of the Blue Nile and South Kordofan, because there is no equality within the power sharing, that is why people are saying ‘we need our rights; we need to be given our rights in power sharing, and the same with wealth sharing’.

SPEC, like the ESC and many other churches, can't operate alone; it has to work together with other churches. We have been asked by other churches to work and give our vision concerning these matters. The combination of all these visions when they are grouped together form the church's contribution. They can bring one shared vision for the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC), so peace is a number one priority in order to address all these small issues I have mentioned and should be maintained if they are not achieved, otherwise peace will not be possible. Regarding these concerns and issues of inequality, if the resource that God has provided us with is divided equally by the system it will bring forth peace (see section 6.7). One needs to work towards the vision and continue in earnest prayer.

6.7 Inequality and lack of access to development

The theme of development and dialogue in a post-conflict context is a historical-contextual challenge that may lead to peace and the mission of reconciliation. Imbalance in economic development stems from the colonial times up to this present day and plays an important role in desertification. This resulted in widespread famine (adapted from material by Christian Aid, United Kingdom). The power balance between the different actors in development planning, i.e. between politics or state control versus participation is complex. This complexity is exacerbated by the various levels and styles of the participants (Abram and Waldren, 1998:5). Hence, inequality always affects those on the margins more than others. Sadly, this has led to a long struggle in the Sudanese context. Bradbury (2006:26), for example, pointed out that:

Faith-based organizations and other non-faith based organizations cannot assume that poverty is the only or sometimes the major underlying cause of ethnic and religious and other forms of conflict, and that the socio-economic development leads to and supports grassroots peace-building. It is possible that 'Conflict can arise from exploitative and extractive forms of development. And when elites are pursuing their own economic advantage conflict and instability can be means to maintain power.

The term 'development' is described as the process of social transformation. It involves awareness, motivation, the behaviour of individuals and relationships between individuals, as well as between groups within society. The people themselves have to analyse their problems, identify causes, acquire knowledge and plan how to improve their situation for a better future (Burkey, 1993:36, 48).

Dialogue refers to normal conversations between two or more persons with different views, the primary purpose of each participant is to learn about the other so that both can change and grow (Swidler, 1987:6; see heading 2.7). The ‘dialogical interventionist approach’ (DIA) is rooted in a specific view of humans and their living together in society. It sees the social reality as meaningful in the sense that both the constitution and revision (reconstruction) of the institution depends on the meaningful action of those involved (Coetzee et al., 2001:512). As Crotty (1998:10) clearly puts it, “To talk about the construction of meaning is to talk about the construction of reality”.

The respondents’ views were to contribute to the power balance and access to development by enhancing the equality and quality of human dialogue. The discussion of the changes and the impact these had on their life, as well as the ‘dialogue-development’ approach, is seen in the responses below:

The famous late bishop Philip Gaboush gave as an example a tribe called “Attoro”. You can imagine, no one among them gets a salary from the government. So the problem again lies with the issue of development. I think is human nature and selfishness to control and only look after their own affairs neglecting others, merely depending on loyalty rather than experience, specialty and capacity.

On wealth, there may be resources, most of these resources are natural resources, particularly oil, it comes from these areas but people are not benefiting from this, these are the things that bring conflict. Once you have proper wealth sharing and power sharing, all these should be inserted within the constitution. So again the constitution is the first priority; if it is placed right then everything again falls into place. So I think all these issues really need proper attention. If you’re really going to have a comprehensive peace agreement (CPA), and complete peace, these things really need to be addressed properly.

The inter-ethnic or inter-cultural elements on the one hand, and a commonly shared concern on the other hand, would be the only basis for unity and peace. The respondents’ views were to contribute to development by enhancing the equality and quality of human dialogue. The people-to-people conferences and meetings became a foundation for grassroots community peace-dialogue. Participatory projects are activities that can have a very important impact on

power sharing amongst different groups. It increases how people learn in daily life. It includes the involvement of adults, children, the community and wider society, and helps to strengthen community relations through inter-generational dialogue and shared experiences (Percy-Smith and Thomas, 2010:172).

I propose that the dialogue of socio-economic development must exceed the current efforts and direction set out by the IGAD, and the new term of “‘people-to-people’ development dialogue” (PPDD) as a possible way of resolving conflict, as well as long lasting sustainable peace. In addition is the proposed approach of “‘people-to-people’ prophetic dialogue” (PPPD) as an approach to eradicate ethnic and religious conflict and tension. As a means of building a connection with Sudan, Figure 3 below illustrates the proposal of an ethnic-religious diversity and reconciliation causal model.

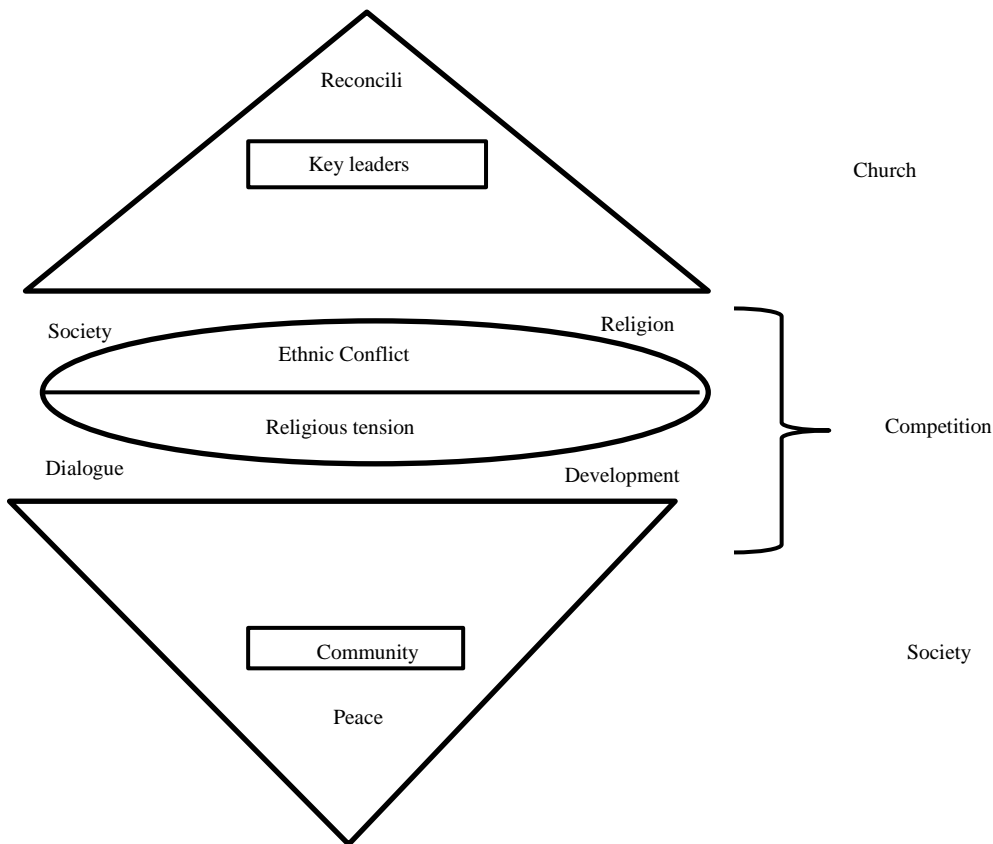


Figure 3: ‘People-to-people’ Prophetic-Dialogue Development and Reconciliation (PPPD and PPDD) generative causal model.

6.7.1 Signs and key facts at a glance, child at risk at worldwide

There are shocking records of painful realities, events and situations about the vulnerability of poor and marginalized children, for instance: child sexual abuse, mostly by the child's caregiver in the West; the massacre of street children in Latin America; the cruel exploitation of indentured child labour in India and Pakistan; the tragedy of drugged child soldiers in Liberia and Sierra Leone; civil war; or the criminal abuse of child prostitutes in Bangkok and Manila through sex tourism. Considering the following facts, African countries are exceptional:

- Abortion: every 40 million or 29% of all children conceived are never born but aborted (UN).
- Child-prostitution: it is estimated that 10 million suffered forced prostitution, and one million a year become prostitutes (World Vision).
- Malnutrition: kills 35,000 under the age of five every day (World Vision).
- Street children: over 100.000.000 live and work on the streets of the world's cities (UNICEF).
- War victims: over 1,500,000 children were killed in wars between the years 1984-1994, a further 12,000,000 were disabled, maimed, blinded, brain damaged and 12,000,000 lost their homes. During that period, 35 nations are known to have forcibly recruited children into armed forces (Save the Children-1994).
- AIDS victims: over 1,500,000 children were known to be infected with AIDS in 1993 (UNICEF-1994); since then the number has risen markedly.
- Slavery and child labour: between 100 and 200 million children estimated to be involved, often in very bad conditions (UN Children's Fund), (Johnstone, 2000:252-253).
- The two graphs in Figure 4 below illustrate the signs and key facts of conflict (consequences at a glance, child at risk worldwide).

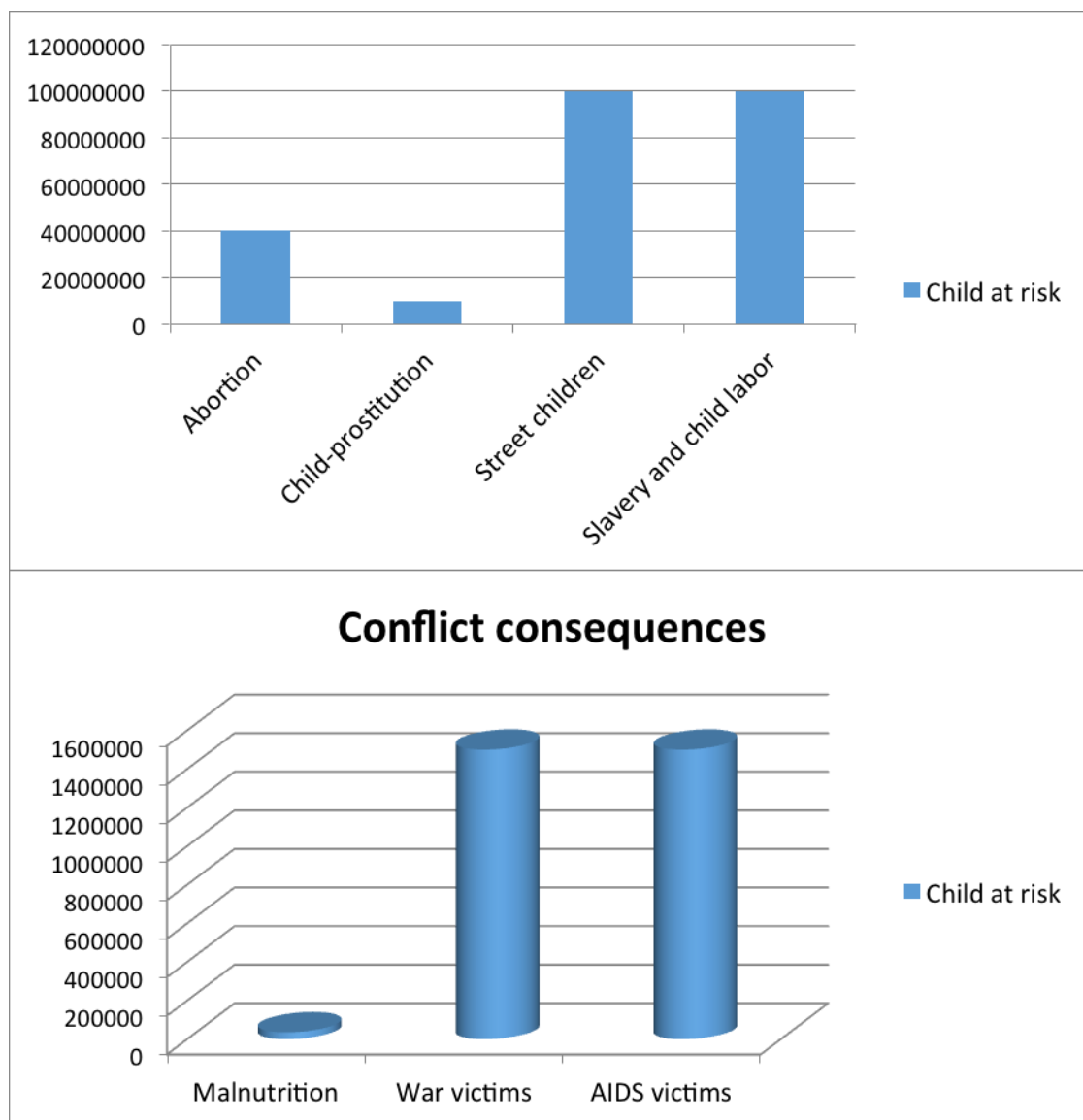


Figure 4: Signs and key facts of the consequences of conflict at a glance, children at risk worldwide

6.7.2 Signs and key facts at a glance in Sudan (2002)

Considering the key facts, it is necessary to assess and analyse the causes of the conflict affecting all people in their daily life and own situation. This will provide more insight on how to overcome the challenges and enhance an evaluation project. In an effort to understand these causes one may look at these realities at a glance:

- Three generations have lived through war, there has only been a decade of peace since 1955.
- More than two million have died since 1993 because of war.
- Ninety two percent of the population lives below the poverty line.

- Eighty five percent of South Sudan inhabitants are displaced at least once every 15 years.
- Sixty percent or only one quarter of the population in the south has access to safe water.
- Frequent denial of access affects the delivery of humanitarian assistance to more than one million people.
- At least one in ten children die before the age of five, this figure is closer to one in five in the south.
- Landmines are estimated to have injured or killed 70,000 people between the years 1983-1999.
- A major part of the government's expenditure is the military: at least 246 million dollars per a year.
- At least 6,000 women and children have been abducted since 1993; and there are 17,000 child soldiers in southern Sudan. (PC-USA, 2002:5).
- There are approximately 4.5 million internally displaced people (IDP) with 400 thousand more refugees abroad.

6.7.3 Signs and key facts in Darfur

Well-documented (estimated) figures do not reveal the severe violence and its relationship to the conflict in Sudan when compared to the reality on the ground; nor does it reveal the economic exploitation and devastating effects of environmental degradation. The concomitant pressure on the use of resources is seen as continually contributing to the conflict (Beny and Hale, 2015:207). The total population of Sudan is about six million, broken down as follows:

- 3.4 million who have been affected by the current conflict;
- 1.8 million have been displaced;
- 200,000 fled to neighbouring Chad;
- Over 70,000 have died (some have estimated these figures to be 340,000);

The abovementioned challenges and evidence reveals the clear and painful realities related to the ethnic-religious conflict in Sudan. Respondents were able to view these as a threat to their

well-being, peaceful living and stability. The two figures below describe signs and key facts at a glance in Sudan.

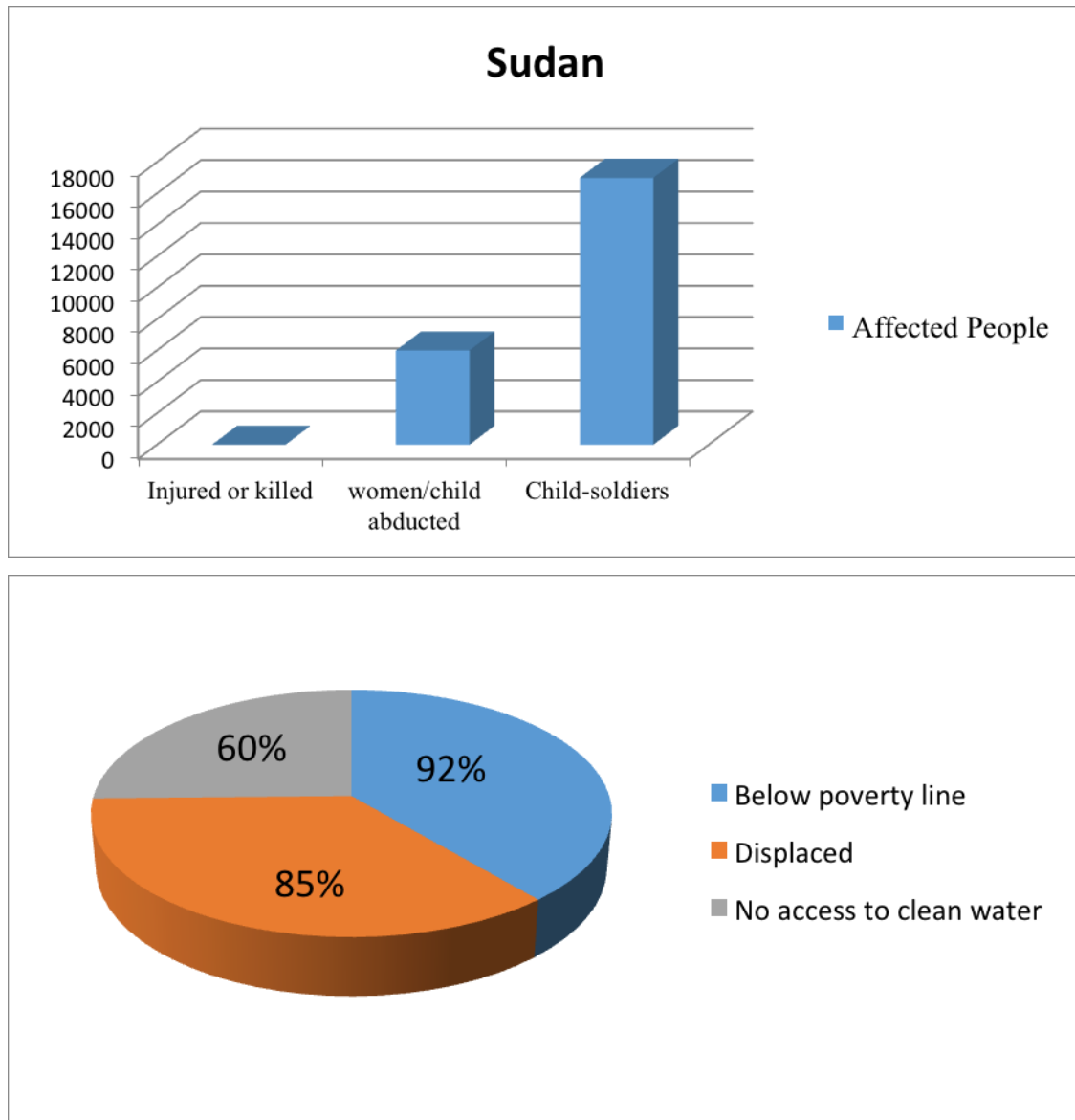


Figure 5: Signs and key facts at a glance in Sudan (2002)

6.8 The consequences and effect of ethnic-religious threat

This section devotes much time and effort to provide information on the consequences of the continual conflict, and also reflects on the targeted areas. The concept of ‘perceived threat’ is commonly defined as the “anticipation of a negative consequence” due to the presence of an outgroup (Stephen and Renfro, 2002a:197).

The group threat theory considers anti-outgroup attitudes to express the explicit preference for denying “to individuals or groups equality of treatment which they may wish”. Thus, the theory conceptualizes perceived threat as immediate predictors of more explicit and discriminatory anti-outgroup stances (Allport, 1954:51, cited in Schlueter and Scheepers, 2010).

Situations emerging from the above findings reveal the basic challenges to peace and reconciliation as the respondents view them. They also reveal basic and crucial causes of the misery of the long conflict in the target groups.

6.8.1 Perceived group threat and issues of powers

To assess ingroup attitudes derived from both theories, we first need to include two mediating variables and use two item indicators to reflect on the experience of threat for the group in the following domains: political powers, cultural customs or religion. Respondents were first asked to react if there is any underlying tension between ethnic and religious groups and the legal system? And then state how they are affected? Are they being discriminated against and treated differently than others? Secondly, I measured intergroup contact, reflecting on the occupational domain of intergroup contact (Schlueter and Wagner, 2008). The respondents’ views contributed to the power balance and injustice by enhancing the equality and quality of human dialogue. Below I will discuss the changes and the impact of these on their life.

6.8.2 Tension and personal responses:

9:24 and 9:32 *Our normal relationship seems normal, the way we shake hands but there is still bitterness and resentment hidden inside and many are traumatized, others untold. Yes... in reality they have two different religions or more, this is the truth we face every day and is quite different in all aspects so it is not easy because religion is now misused by religious people themselves to win their cause, for personal advantage or for the sectors they belong to.*

9:17 *The Sudanese people generally love peace and are ready to live in peace. But we admit there is a constitution and legislation without implementation, the mix of these two issues may come out of ignorance most of the time or wrong use by the media due to personal interest, even at the top level of leadership in the country.*

9:51 *This is recorded, and is very difficult to say as well. Sudan is generally tribal in nature, and looking around, where is the development centred? Imagine the rulers since independence that have been in power since? Including even those in higher positions? They all belong to one direction and ethnicity yet other tribes are marginalized and even excluded in all things.*

9:53 and 9:45 *We face many challenges but the solution lays in the hands of a few, our president and the state, even though they recognize and acknowledge all but they won't confess and admit or reveal the truth. The injustice is obvious and everybody now claims their rights but as long as they bury the truth, any agreement will not achieve its goals or succeed easily unless they come to their senses and accept these realities, aim to remove these injustices, and negotiate and resolve them.*

Bishop stated: again, for the religious leaders as religious groups, you know for the Christians it is very clear who the church leader is but on the Muslim side, it seems it is not clear cut who the religious leaders are. When you talk with the religious you find yourself talking to a politician and I think this sometimes is not really clear to me, I think if a religious leader is somebody who, what the people call, are those calling for prayers, the Imams who should have nothing to do with politics, then this should be the people to talk among themselves with pastors, with bishops and Imams. If they could be given a chance to talk among themselves and give the politicians what they have agreed, I think it will be the same case as like it is with the grassroots communities.

6.8.3 Discrimination: individual and group responses

10:19, 10:37 and 10:16 *Discrimination is all behind the war and the way of treating people, it generates many feelings that results in fear, bitterness, suffering, violence, insult and denial. The family of Jacob is a good example, even if the father favours one it means creating hatred in all. It is debated that some see if someone favoured me, it will feel good because we are humans after all, living and interacting with many sharing a lot of common things.*

Most families are polygamous in nature, if the father discriminates against his children because of the two mothers, then conflict starts among the brothers. Such ways of treating others always brings many disputes.

9:43, 10:33 and 10:50 *It is very difficult to accept or tolerate, many are angry, disgraced and bitter. M. Ghandi's famous statement reads: "I love Christ but hate Christians". This is widely practiced even inside the church. It has badly affected us; it is a very hard experience to describe, you feel like responding violently to the way you have been insulted, mistreated, discriminated and humiliated in many ways, for example, to maintain your official documents, i.e. identities, medical aid, level of education and schools certificates and in public transport even to hire an ambulance to carry a dead body.*

10:26 *Anything seems bad if it is connected to Christians. (Respecting one another is the first principle and accepting one another even if is difficult sometimes to do so. Building relationship that allows co-existence and harmony, starting from your church, then opening up widely to the rest of the community).*

We also need to consider common background variables in the in-depth personal interviews. The following background variables were measured and included in the semi-structured model: gender; profession; age measured in years, ranging from four degree options as possible responses; organization details of faith-based or non-faith based, and department of work. Schneider (2008:55) explains that the so-called 'familiarization' effect of ethnic minorities has been empirically tested and basically boils down to the idea that a society gets used to certain groups that have higher numbers. The effect of familiarization is based on a dynamic perspective focusing on the change of the relative outgroup's proposition in line with the ethnic competition theory. To assess the respondent's age, five optional categories were provided; straightforward measures were used for gender, denomination and occupational status.

6.8.4 Contextual and individual level variables and the impact on peace

Here, I will measure the effect of ethnic diversity at both the national and regional levels. Reflecting on the contextual and individual levels, characteristics of two explanatory variables were previously found, the effect of peace processes and practices, as well as

mediating variables (e.g. Schneider, 2008; Gesthuizen et al., 2009). Moreover, I took into account several individual levels in the analysis, which turns out to influence social identities and mediating variables (e.g. Musick, 1997; Schlueter and Scheepers, 2010; Savelkoulet et al., 2010).

Although these levels are important, it is rather difficult or even impossible to find valid data at these levels for the whole country because of the ongoing fighting in the Darfur region and renewed tension along the border of the newly formed state of South Sudan. The two areas, namely, South Kordofan state and South Blue Nile state got a chance to be involved in two important events: (1) they participated in a Peace Forum led by the AU in the Blue Nile state in December 2013, and (2) they attended a workshop of the Africa Leadership And Reconciliation Ministries (ALARM) on Reconciliation and Peace-building in November 2013.

Drawing on both competition theory and intergroup conflict contact theory, and in line with the findings of Scheepers and Schlueter (2010), on the one hand it is found that people living in the regions are more experienced with integration over time (Blalock, 1967; Schneider, 2008), including unfavourable contact with outgroups at the individual level. On the other hand, this process will reduce people's level of perceived ethnic threat, based on intergroup conflict contact theory, as will be seen below when I discuss the characteristics of the individual level.

6.8.5 The individual level characteristics

The research has shown that those with fewer socio-economic resources (low education, low income or unemployment) and those with strong religious attachment are more inclined to perceive the outgroup as a threat to the ingroup's interests (Rosenstein, 2008:1130-1146). It was also found that threat is seen as being posed by the outgroup on one's personal self-interest (individual threat), which might motivate the ingroup to choose a hostile stance against outgroup minorities (Stephan and Renfro, 2002a; Pettigrew et al., 2007), even when ingroup members see their personal self-interests as not being threatening or affected by ingroup competition. Current studies on intergroup contact focuses on the characteristics, outcomes and analyses at the individual level. Therefore, to understand which source (other

than individual self-interest) increases perceived group threat and unfavourable intergroup attitudes, we need to take the contextual level into account.

6.8.6 The contextual levels characteristics

Focusing on the outgroup as the ethnic minority in the threat group approach, and considering the purpose of this study, personal experience is the most relevant and crucial indicator of actual intergroup competition (Blalock, 1967; Coenders, 2001; Quillian, 1995, 1996; Scheepers et al., 2002a). It is commonly defined as the percentage of outgroup members relative to the total population in a given geographical context (minority group increases hostile intergroup attitudes, and is expected to rise).

Even though both Scheepers et al. (2002a) and Schlueter et al. (2008) found empirical evidence for this assumption, very few studies have investigated whether the relationship of outgroup minority with ingroup attitudes can indeed be mediated by perceived group threat. Evidence of the full mediating process linking the objective outgroup minority to discriminatory attitudes via individual perception of the size of the outgroup and perceived threat is only beginning to emerge.

Given that it has been long argued, investigating the intermediary mechanism operating between the objective condition and individual outcomes facilitates the understanding of the multi-level relationships (Van den and Huttner, 1982). To safeguard the results of these major hypotheses against potential bias further influences individual and group level variables across the municipalities (Snijders and Bosker, 1999). Here, the researcher reflects on previous research that has investigated whether being male, older, poorly educated, unemployed or more religious has had any influence, depending on the three phases (contextual, institutional, theological factors) that are related to perceived group threat and unfavourable intergroup attitudes (Scheepers et al., 2002b) and perceived group threat and intergroup contact responses. Previous work on group threat theory specified several antecedent conditions for perceiving an outgroup as threatening (Coenders, 2001; Stephan and Renfro, et al., 2002b).

6.9 Supplementary research data

This section uses mixed-method studies and the secondary research to complement the analysis by combining both qualitative and quantitative research techniques, which includes documentary analysis. I have obtained three selected sets of archival data on the SCC's mission and vision for a peaceful Sudan, and SPEC's constitution. These selected documents are very important, and are discussed below:

6.9.1 Choose life: A vision for peaceful Sudan, May 2010

As referred to under heading 5.2.1, the churches have united, especially in the last decade, to be effective as a voice to promote peace and justice, and the rights of all marginalized people in Sudan, regardless of race, religion or gender. The positions of the churches have been stated in various documents and forums on a wide range of issues affecting Sudan, such as justice and injustice, peace and war, freedom and slavery, human rights and abuse of these rights, reconciliation and continued hostilities, security and aggression against civilians, rehabilitation and development, self-determination and good governance. Two seminal papers are presented in the booklet [See Appendix L on the influential role the church has played in promoting peace and justice in Sudan: 'Here We Stand United in Action for Peace' (1996, revised 1999), and 'Let My People Choose' (2002)]. The document is signed by both the SCC's executive and general secretary.²⁸

6.9.2 Gender and human rights

As referred to under heading 4.3.5, women are considered among the marginalized in the Sudanese society and are not considered part of the human rights paradigm, though they are not the minority (Disch, 2009:656). The experiences they faced during the struggle helped them to break their silence and raise their thrust for peace and stability. This is because of their many loud cries for peace and their call to speak the truth boldly. The theme or 'gender and human rights approach' is an emerging voice in this long struggle. The UN's famous treaty, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was adopted in Vienna in 1979. The bill was set to protect women's rights and provide a basis for achieving equality.²⁹

Jenner (2000:16) reported that involving women in engendering peace is unique in the process and practice of peace. The issue of injustice and the reality, feeling of inequality, exclusion and religious silence affects every aspect of their lives, including participation in peace initiatives. A post-peace document states: “We had enough, we want peace” (May 2002). (See: Appendix L).

6.10 Conclusion

The activities and historical background from an ethno-religious, socio-political and economic dimension shows how it affects the targeted community. It also indicates how SPEC and other organizations have been involved in supporting, promoting and facilitating peace at the following levels: contextual, institutional and theological. These are described below:

1. Contextual level – here, they are actively involved in peace dialogue initiatives and peaceful co-existence by means of enhancing equality and human dialogue.
2. Institutional level – here, the organizations and developmental activities are intended to assist in many aspects of their social life and improve their well-being. Expert roles lead to grassroots peace-making and building.
3. Theological level – here, by means of the roles of key church leaders, the spiritual lives of people have been touched. Endeavours are also made to resolve the conflict and active engagement is pursued in order to mediate peace and reconciliation beyond geo-boundaries.

CHAPTER SEVEN

INTERPRETATION OF EMPIRICAL DATA FOR INDIVIDUALS AND FOCUS GROUPS

7.1 Introduction

This chapter will focus on the analysis and interpretation of the data from the individuals and focus groups. When reflecting on peace processes and practices, one may search for the meaning of the word peace (as was described in chapter one). Osmer's (2008) first phase, the descriptive-empirical phase, calls for interpretation of contexts at different levels. The aim is to assist the researcher to learn to analyse and interpret the text in light of contemporary lives and practices as a "living human document" (Osmer, 2008:32). This is essentially viewed as a discerning task in the practice of ministry and mission, rather than simply as gathering information.

It is a matter of attending to what is going on in an individual's life, a "spirituality of presence" in a particular episode, situation and context (Osmer, 2008:39). Osmer makes use of the terms 'attending' or 'listening,' which can be formal, semi-formal or informal. The term attending means to relate to others with openness, which may open up unique opportunities for creating relationships in which others ultimately know their uniqueness and otherness, creating space for the truth and the presence of the Holy Spirit (Osmer, 2008:34, 37).

Re-reading the data, analysing what has been recorded and trying to capture its complexity is a crucial step in the process. Judgments about these measures cannot be made unless the concepts that demonstrate the end product are managed and how to achieve its outcomes are determined. Therefore, the concern involves ontological and conceptual clarity, a research strategy translated into a meaningful reality, and a relevant epistemology (Mason, 2008:188).

This chapter focuses on the main findings obtained from the empirical research and the data generated from the individuals and focus groups. This is to be interpreted and the implications thereof will be discussed further. Here, the researcher critically reflects on the newly acquired information, highlighting the main results of the research (Mason, 2008:149, 173).

It also follows an explorative approach, experimenting with the distinct and alternative dimensions of peace and reconciliation, as well as possible outcomes. The aim is to see if this is in accordance with SPEC's ministry of mission as mediating the structure of peace and reconciliation, and whether it does or does not deviate from doing so, providing reasons for such. As the 'themes' emerge from the social life, oral and organization histories. The researcher continues to reflect on these interventions and suggests possible meanings and actions. This takes us back to the research design and main research question (Mason, 2008:203). From the statement of the great African hero, Nelson Mandela (2004)³⁰ in a famous peace speech noted:

“Peace is not absence of conflict; peace is the creation of an environment where all can flourish regardless of race, colour, creed, religion, gender, class, caste or any other markers of difference. Religion, ethnicity, language, social and cultural practices are elements which enrich human civilization, adding to the wealth of our diversity. Why should they be allowed to become a cause of division, and violence? We demand our common humanity by allowing that to happen”.

This is taken from a global conversation on peace and non-violence given at the International Day of Peace (New Delhi, 31 January 2004). Johan Galtung, the founder of the discipline of peace studies and peace research (1964), proposed two important distinctions between 'negative' and 'positive' peace (Barash and Webel, 2014:4). 'Positive' peace denotes the simultaneous presence of many desirable states of mind in society. 'Negative' peace has historically denoted the 'absence of war' and other forms of large-scale violent human conflict (Barash and Webel, 2014:4). For sustainable peace and stability to become a reality is no easy task, especially in a long-standing conflict situation.

Peace-building at the academic circles is described as a means of preventing the outbreak, reoccurrence or continuation of violent conflict, as well as emergencies in a wide range of the political, developmental, humanitarian and human rights mechanism (Kingsley, 2010:136).

Peace as *shalom* is more than the absence of war. If it is formulated negatively, it includes the absence of alienation, material needs and oppression in the society. But if it is formulated positively, it indicates the state of comprehensive social harmony and material well-being in the society (Nürenberger, Tooke and Domerics, 1989:121). To create such an environment, we need what is called: 'contextualization,' which is not only the sharing of cultural and religious values. It is the ability to share with commitment your own religious values, engage

with the community, and share with the ‘religious other,’ while maintaining our Christian identity, even if we are considered the minority.

The term ‘war’ is derived from *werra*, meaning ‘confusion’. It is perhaps derived from an ancient Greek verb ‘to go to ruin’. The modern English noun for ‘war,’ according to the Webster’s Dictionary means ‘confusing’ and/or ‘ruinous’. The first is a state of hostile and armed conflict between political units as states, countries and nations. While the second is a more general state of conflict, opposition and antagonism between ‘mental, physical, social or other forces’ (cf. Barash and Webel, 2014:36). Quoting Albert Einstein³¹, “You can’t simultaneously prevent and prepare for war” (cited in Barash and Webel, 2014: 289). The term ‘war’ from a biblical perspective is a result of mankind’s sinful nature. The ultimate cause is not to be found in the social and economic circumstance external to mankind, but within mankind (Davis, 1993:208).

In fact, the dichotomy of the ethnic-religious conflict as the longest on-going armed conflict between North and South Sudan has affected both sides; the effect of the colonial and neo-colonial era has impacted both sides. The complexity of the socio-economic, religious and the historical dynamic of the ‘Arabs’ versus the indigenous ‘Africans,’ as stated by Black and Williams (2010:40) is that the dichotomy surfaces in most debates concerning Sudan, including Nuba and Darfur. The geographical dichotomy and the notion of rule-divide-displace between government controlled areas and liberated areas need to be identified as rebel control has widened the distance between varying groups. The polarity of ‘us-them’ has deepened the roots of hatred and prevented the possibility of cultural and religious diversity and peaceful co-existence in Sudan.

7.2 Interpreting two samples of the empirical data

Documents in general contain words that are referred to as ‘social facts’ that take a variety of forms. For example, two sample choices I have made when interpreting the empirical data. The first is a piece of dialogue from the interview schedule, and the second is from the SCC constitution and vision statement as part of the research process. To demonstrate the interpretation of the data in the methodological selection, the purpose is to find a way to analyse the data using an analytical lens in the reflexive sense, and to read the data from an

alternative interpretative perspective (Mason, 2008:192). This is briefly illustrated considering the following two examples of techniques for enhancing this demonstration of the data: firstly, taking an excerpt from a piece of a dialogue in the interview schedule; and secondly, selecting a broad section from the document on the complexity of the conflict, namely:

7.2.1 Dialogue sample (1)

For the group responses, see heading 4.4.4. Here, I reflected on the contextual expressions and echoed the contributions from the participants by means of representations, discussions and by displaying the data. Using cross-sectional indexing categories, I took a further step and selected specific and purposive segments of the conversations from the interview schedule script using the cause-effect strategy and tried to ‘re-read’ between the lines, and construct and develop an explanation. The conversation guided by the researcher and the participant sample includes the individuals and leadership personnel who were confronted directly and asked questions regarding the issues of threat and power, and how they perceived this and if there are any tensions underlying the ethnic and religious groups, as well as the legal system. And then to indicate how they are affected, whether they are discriminated against or treated differently than others.

10:19, 10:37 and 10:16: *Discrimination is all behind the war and way of treating people generates many feelings which result in fear, bitterness, suffering, violence, insult and denial. The family of Jacob is a good example even if the father favours one it means creating hatred in all. Debates between the groups resulted in certain views where some felt if they were favoured, they felt better. This reduced negativity amongst the group because they felt they were humans after all, living and interacting with many sharing a lot of common things. Most families are polygamous in nature, if the father discriminates between his children because of the two mothers, then conflict starts amongst the brothers. Such ways of treating others always brings many disputes.*

The main focus is the state of social interaction, identity sharing, their understanding and experiences related to community actions and responses. The reactions, tension and divisions of many individuals or groups in terms of their behaviour indicates how the relationship was

fairly expressed in ways of treating each other, or may become a source of change to correct their misconceptions.

The debate was clearly expressed on the basis of favourable-selectivity as a way of treating others discriminately as “us-them”. Some viewed this favourability positively, as a privilege of being just human, who even value other people or things from their outward appearance, while others saw this as room for stirring hatred causing a negative image of other people. The social composition of polygamous families and the example of Jacob’s family was practically traced as a seed for discrimination and showed that conflict can even start amongst siblings in the same household, how much more from the smorgasbord of diversity within the Sudanese context.

Limouris (1990:16-20) profoundly described the reality and the effect of the worldwide search for peace and justice. In a way, many people experience these threats in areas where they search for peace and justice. However, they experience a troubled history and this threatens their own concrete situation. He summarizes twelve points indicating these forms of injustice in the world we live in. These injustices and their accompanying threats to peace provoke cries for healing and restoration. In brief:

- Acknowledging we are part of the world in which all people, cultures and traditions are inextricably interconnected;
- Manifestations of injustice are directly threatening our humanity and are gradually leading to the potential destruction of God’s creation;
- The irresponsible and thoughtless misuse of natural resources creates a condition which we have identified as the “hot-house effect;”
- Military injustice, encouraging all nations to continue to save the national budget for the production of arms;
- The phenomenon of Christians participating in war;
- Economic injustice marked by unjust distributions of goods, more particularly, power;
- Concentration of wealth in the hands of a few, resulting in increased poverty and greater disparity between the rich and the poor;
- Institutional injustice of social life, these threats led to the rise of human and social problems;

- Injustice against people, manifested within and among nations, many suffer forced displacement even in their homelands or live as refugees;
- Religious persecution and religious intolerance have not disappeared among us in spite of decades of ecumenical activity;
- Continuous proselytism in many places like the Middle East and Ethiopia, amidst crisis situations;
- Lastly, are the threats of nuclear war and destruction.

From the above, the effect is always reflexive and contextual, leaving opportunities for others to judge through an analytical lens, enabling deep insight in a reflexive sense (Mason, 2008:192).

7.2.2 The SCC vision statement (2)

The purpose is to examine the leadership role and its impact based on the vision of the agency as described and contextualized by the data collected during the interviews. The motto for the SCC is: “WE ARE FOR THE GLORY OF GOD” and can be read on the cover page (see heading 6.8.1). As I mentioned earlier in the introductory chapter, I came across their mission/vision statement. My interest is on the ‘vision statement’ in the 2007 Constitution and By-laws of Article (5). This clearly states: “A just and peaceful Sudan inspired and transformed by Godly values towards holistic and equitable development of all people” (see heading 2.2).

The overall vision is inspiring words for the present and future ministry in Sudan, seeking to be transformed by godly values covering all areas and aspects of integral living, sharing equally in the development of all humanity. The language used for that transforming value is the main source, the Word of God, targeting number of areas of our life. It is important to have the involvement of God in all aspects of our lives. We need to keep on knowing, understanding and interpreting God’s Word, allowing it to shape the way we perceive things. God’s Word is alive and His presence continually speaks to us when we observe the Law and believe what we hear. We only need to hear it in a new way to shape us, keeping it in memory when we don’t possess God’s Word.

It is faith seeking understanding, because if we turn our focus from God as we worship, the focus will change to worshipping ourselves and in turn becomes self-righteousness. That is why Jesus' words and in His teachings from the beginning stood against all forms of self-righteousness because it only creates and generates violence. Words can bring people back to life when we remind them of that person, and he or she speaks again and again. This insight is part of this research undertaking, and complements the other research method, 'stand-alone analysis' (Yin, 1994), which uses an intensive case study to produce a rich description of a single phenomenon as the vision above (Bowen, 2009:29). Triangulation in the study includes both a combination of in-depth interviews and observation.

The vision statement from the SCC data source is necessary for this study designed within the interpretative paradigm as a hermeneutical inquiry and historical research undertaking. Document analysis provides background information valuable to the knowledge base of the SCC's core ministry and to understand the historical roots of the agency. It also provides the context, in addition to the questions that are asked, as well as supplementary data, a means of tracking change, development and verification of findings from another source. Documents can be the most effective means for gathering data when events can no longer be observed or when information is missing details (Bowen, 2009:30-31).

The study proposes a prophetic spirituality calling for mutual dialogue as mission practice for short-term and long-term peace and reconciliation between individuals, groups and communities from various ethnic-religious backgrounds in Sudan. It also explores and reviews some possible related issues of local communities and religious leaders of other faiths and their contributions for the sake of stability and peaceful living among various communities. It also highlights the efforts, initiatives and challenges that face faith-based organizations to understand local communities in diverse contexts.

In the quest for spiritual liberation, people all over the globe strive for spiritual liberation, searching for the meaning of life and life after death, under various names. It could be an ultimate concern, faith and divinities to some may be power encounters or ancestors seeking safety and protection while trying to understand things and events beyond their understanding in the so called "spiritual realm".

At Jesus' birth, as the king and Prince of peace, a true light shining in the age of darkness, many political powers collapsed, many thrones were threatened, and many others were shaken. The Magi who were considered foreigners travelled very far for almost two years in search of the one in their message: "We saw his star in the East and we have come to bow before Him" (Matthew 2:2). They risked whatever it may take for them to witness this scientific and miraculous sign, and all the events they experienced.

Christian spirituality, particularly the following dimensions: commitment, openness, vulnerability and boldness (Bosch, 2011:501; Bevan's and Schroeder, 2004:438), are challenged by the complex relationship between contextual elements on the one hand, and ethnic and religious conflict on the other hand. Paul urges the church in Ephesus to a life worthy of the calling they have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace. 'Transforming spirituality' requires:

1. Commitment to a life worthy of calling:

Paul's ministry is to 'present every man mature in Christ'. This maturity is a gradual process to grow physically and spiritually, as well as naturally: it is a different goal and has a greater depth. There is obviously some overlap between the different spheres of maturity and Christians have to be careful because Christian maturity takes place within our humanity and not in isolation from it. To be mature is to be like Christ, spiritually and humanly (Stott, 1977:143).

2. Humble, patient and gentle

Stott (1994:322) argues that it requires a change of the inner human being into a new creation, by putting to death what belongs to the earthly nature and putting on the new self, which is being renewed in the knowledge and in the image of its creator. With regards to a renewed mind, the first appeal is grounded on the mercies of God. The second appeal is ethical and relates to our transformation, according to the will of God (Stott, 1994:323). Thus, transforming and liberating spirituality is the result of putting off falsehood, deceitful desires and speaking truthfully to one's neighbours.

3. Bearing with one another

Renewal of all the churches needs a study of the renewing biblical worldview and the practice of spiritual warfare. Van Engen, Whiteman and Woodberry (2008:125) have pointed out that conflict has three important and major dimensions: The first is the Christological dimension, as it proclaims and realizes the victory, power and Lordship of the living Christ; the second is the diaconal dimension as it helps people suffering under the attack and influence of evil spiritual forces and to fight structural evil in the world; and third is the missiological dimension as it draws people to Christ in faith, sets the captives free, and is a prelude of the coming kingdom.

4. Efforts to keep the unity of the Spirit

There is nothing to search for other than real freedom and liberating spirituality. For a better understanding of spirituality and the gift of spiritual blessing, one ought to begin with Christian spirituality. In fact, Christianity is never without faith in God and is never without accepting the manifested act of our Lord Jesus on the cross by the power of the Holy Spirit as the Bible clearly states, because without holiness none will be able to see the Lord.

Bevans and Schroeder (2004:33) point out in their book *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* that Christianity is never without faith in and theology of Jesus as Christ, and never without commitment to understanding the community it calls the church. Therefore, as Stott (1986:55) argues, there is a trinitarian dimension to the human personal response: ‘It is the Father who gives His supreme gift of His Son Jesus Christ for the life of the world.’

Mission history exposes painful points of tension, polarity, foreignness, competition and exploitation. There were conflicts, national interest, human rights, missionary affiliation, theological differences and economic concerns (Bevans and Schroeder, 2004:203), as well as oppression, moral corruption, heresy, bureaucracy of the church, a growing cultural gap, rapid secularization, division and complex change—these all point to a number of painful realities. It is pointed out in chapter eighteen of the Gospel of Matthew that Jesus knew about the weakness and sinful nature of our humanity. He also knew about the conflict that would arise among His followers that would threaten and destroy the new community He was building. Right from the beginning He gave guidelines, instructions and direction on how to handle our disputes and disagreements, and that is by first addressing our differences

privately and then if need be, publically. To find out what ought to be going on in a specific context one first needs to discern God's will for the present reality. In Marguerite's (Kraft, 1995:124) summary, the following is noted:

Worldviews beliefs related to spiritual powers are important to allegiance encounter, power encounter and truth encounter. When one declares allegiance to God instead to the world, another spiritual power, self, or the family, worldview changes will follow. Power encounter shows God's relationship to other spiritual powers. When there is considerable spiritual activity in conflicts and power encounter will follow. Believers are strengthened as they see God at work subduing the powers.

Worldviews are lenses that help us to perceive and shape our surroundings, although they can also change as they are limited to our own view and can thereby assist us to respect other perspectives. William Carey, a dynamic and innovative missionary society movement, uses "Scripture as a means to spread the good news of Christians to the non-Christian world" (Walls, 2002:16). This requires: understanding local communities in diverse contexts and Christian expansion needs theology to be revisited; the body of Christ rediscovered; mission history requires re-evaluation; Christian expansion needs reconsideration. When reconsidering the history of the expansion of Christianity, according to Walls, it is possible to implement Lattourette's three criteria of Christian expansion with more theological significance than he perhaps realized:

The Church's sign: as the remnant and movement of reformation, renewal and devotion spring up to challenge it and channel Christ's influence to the world. The Kingdom's sign: as the emergence of communities of people who worship God, acknowledge Christ, and confess His intimacy. The Gospel's sign: resting on one event, the death and the resurrection of the divine son directly or indirectly to Christ victory over evil through cross and resurrection (Walls, 2002:25).

When reviewing Osmer's four tasks, James Woodward (2010:410-412) made a good connection throughout the text and appropriate use of experiences in a case study. He noted that his intention was not merely problem-solving, but a mysterious adventure. He elaborates, "My goal is teach you a way of approaching the situation... good ministry." Osmer's model refers to 'prophetic discernment'. The prophetic office is the discernment of God's Word to the covenant people in a particular time and place' (Osmer, 2008:133). He also used the Bible to provide insight on how to handle the past Christian tradition, to reflect on what ought to be going on, seeking God's will for our present realities. The term 'prophetic

discernment' uses three different methods to discover God's Word for the present time. These are:

- 1) Theological interpretation.
- 2) Ethical interpretation.
- 3) Good practice and normative reflection.

Theological interpretation focuses on interpreting particular 'episodes, situations and contexts' using theological concepts (Osmer, 2008:139). Ethical interpretation focuses on using rules, guidelines and ethical principles to guide actions towards moral ends (Osmer, 2008:147). Good practice draws on the models of the past or present to reform and transform the congregation's current actions and practices (Osmer, 2008:152) by using the logic of contextualization, interethnic, inter-religious and inter-cultural influences to deal with the problematic context, and contact theory reduces ethnic-religious violence. Here, the researcher plans to look at some steps intended to deal with conflict, working towards problem-solving:

7.3 A case study on the process and practice of peace: empirical problem-solving

An in-depth case study is used to explore, provide and develop a detailed description of events and activities. Sudan consists predominantly of Muslims (95%), whereas Christians and traditionalists are in the minority. The question remains: "How can the problem of ethnic and religious violence be resolved?" This has to do with 'action planning' and the way forward is to use the explanatory mechanism function of the class of a problematic context: to produce or design a solution statement.

The CIMO logic was used to address and solve the problem related to peace, reconciliation and justice. The impact of conflict theory defines the 'context variables' as tools, including all issues involved in the ethnic and religious conflict, the dialogue and development, dialogue of spirituality and patterns of practice, meanings of social factors and human nature that influences behavioural change, and specific events.

To interpret the results using interrelated ethnic-religious theories, namely, the inter-group contact theory and the realistic conflict theory, the researcher asks, “Which theory?” Theories are a number of systematic and interrelated statements intended to explain some aspects of social life that shape and direct research efforts, and point towards likely discoveries through empirical observation of interesting patterns of social life (Babbie, 2004:43). Plueddemann, writing on leadership described a theory as a mental picture of why things work the way they do. It explains why the world works the way it does. “Excellent theory must grow out of good theology and be echoed in actual practice” (2009:171). MacRaild and Tylor (2004:4, 5) argue that theory can help explain the events, social change and deal with the complex nature of the problem, but essentially it involves an expansion of the historian’s range of concerns beyond the activities of social and political elites.

A theological worldview informs both science and theory, which in turns influences the research practice. The results showed that inter-group contact is essential to explain the effect on the ethnic-minority. The ethno-religious, political and socio-economic dimension of the targeted community perceives the in-group’s attitude towards the out-group as a threat, which causes tension that leads to competition over scarce resources and an anti-group attitude, fostering discrimination and social isolation. In addition, perceived ethnic threat can mediate the effect on characteristics at the contextual and individual level. For example, in line with the comments made by Schlueter and Scheepers (2010), at the municipality level characteristics like occupational status, age, gender, etc., are mediated by contact theory.

The term contextualization means the efforts of a community of faith to live out the gospel of Christ. In this effort there are at least two cultural contexts involved, that of the community and that of the gospel. Therefore, the effort of contextualization always includes intercultural and inter-contextual encounters (Wijssen, Henriot and Mejía, 2005:75). Contextualization needs to open up to the mutual-community and prophetic-church dialogue and be integrated into the experience of conflict on the ground. It interprets, as well translates the value of culture and the ‘religious other’. It also encourages and integrates the role of science, theology and philosophy from a religious background to understand peace, reconciliation, and justice, which is very important.

From this point on, my argument is to engage with the theories of change, context and community, and add to them my own rationality; this will enable me to move on and explain with commitment and awareness, as proposed by the post-foundationalist perspective. Here, I reflect and concentrate on crucial roles and interpret the experience and role of tradition in shaping religious values (Huyssteen, 1997:3; Mason, 2008:192).

My aim is to develop a contextual theology for culture and religious diversity related to peace, reconciliation and justice. The community and church are considered as significant institutions working to restore peace and stability, as well as social harmony and reconciliation. These institutions require adequate change, I therefore critically reflect on these processes and take into account the proper understanding of the political, socio-economic and religious-cultural dimensions, as well as the mechanisms that are needed to eradicate hatred and mitigate or ease tension. The workable research approach focuses on self-understanding and always creates and raises the level of awareness among various communities. Self-identity creates a sense of belonging and assists in building healthy relationships. Learning from various past and present experiences, building trust, truth-telling and program skills creates more room for empowerment and mobilization.

The purpose is to pursue action planning to end the conflict and finally to reach a peaceful co-existence and find stability. In the process of doing so, the priority is to concentrate on the contextual, institutional and theological factors related to the main themes of ‘reconciliation’ and ‘dialogue’. The focus is on the role, response and participation of mission in everyday life. The idea is to express these realities through an open attitude, which requires the skill of listening and constitutes the kind of attention that prayer speaks of. This way the hoped for outcome is to show how dialogue can enrich spirituality with its discipline for living more creatively. Spirituality in turn offers a context and provides a vision for dialogue that enables it to come to full maturity as a continuous encounter with the reality of God. Moreover, spirituality must be understood and defined.

Banathy and Jenlink (2005:78) described dialogue as a normal conversation, as well as a social reality. However, it might be more of a way of relating to the world and has implications for all levels of society. Therefore, dialogue may be seen from this perspective as relating to spirituality, perhaps even a form of spirituality (Banathy and Jenlink, 2005:71).

The reason behind the ethnic-religious conflict becomes an ever-increasing challenge facing our daily lives, existence and sense of belonging in Sudan. The intention and the concern here is to explore aspects of dialogue and relate it to prophetic-spirituality and spiritual practices.

To deal with these problematic tendencies, solutions should start with various levels of the context and the structure of institutions that reflect it. Confronting the challenges in these renewed conflicts, the final praxis for church ministry requires a faith-based and community intervention. This means that our institution requires change and transformation, and needs to be envisioned. The society needs to be redesigned, and the church needs to deal with their many internal conflicts.

It can only be solved through inter-ethnic and inter-cultural, critical and comprehensive dialogue to enhance the quality and equality of human dialogue. Human ‘peace-dialogue’ needs a deeper understanding, more engagement and ‘awareness-campaigns’. The reality is that ‘peace-participatory’ projects will have an impact on building ‘empowerment’ skills and ‘spiritual-prophetic’ dialogue leading to real ‘transformation’. These are essential for the well-being of mankind and improvement of the human condition, including intergenerational dialogue as a means of nation-building.

Problem solving is suggested as an intervention ‘action taking’ proposed as PPPD (see heading 2.5.3) and PPDD (see heading 6.6.6). The following collective and comprehensive approaches will be looked at in more detail below:

- 1) Inter-ethnic dialogue as a new direction to deepen understanding (awareness)
- 2) Inter-developmental dialogue across-culture (empowerment)
- 3) Inter-faith prophetic dialogue (transformation)
- 4) Inter-generational dialogue (building-relationships)

7.3.1. Peace dialogue-contextual factors: social intervention (engagement)

Reconciliation and dialogue are social realities; they grasp the richness of history and a variety of traditions. As a broad contextual response, people begin to narrate and as they engage and learn to tell their biographies and real stories of current events that are taking

place, they use mutual and spiritual dialogue as a religious response. When they meet, they begin to understand and share their insights by explaining the process of doing things. As they meet together at work, they develop an advanced level of dialogue that raises their awareness working towards a dialogue of exchange and decision-making that may lead to more reflection and action.

Reconciliation as a main theological theme consists of theory and practice related to both ethnicity and religiosity. Its theoretical aspect deals with foundation or creation, and the interpretation and analysis of our reality and practice by means of faith experiences. Church and community efforts are needed to pursue peace but mere individuals or groups can't address this; it requires full engagement and collaborative efforts from the wider society. Although dialogue and spirituality are forms of conversation, if they are connected to the skill of reflection it enables the person to see new things that may even be hidden by means of listening. Once you participate, you become richer in experience and make space for the truth. This may be even greater when religion, diversity or gender is added to the exchange; thus, participating becomes more than sharing information (Banathy and Jenlink, 2005:78).

Although religious leaders, the church and civil society have always participated in and accompanied the struggle, when it came to decision-making they were always restricted and muted by pressure from structural powers and the rules of the dominant culture.

This voice of intolerance denies other voices including those of women, youth, children and all who are marginalized. In this reversal context, this sounds to me like the unwillingness to engage with others. I found this a form of oppressive language and a violation of peace dialogue in Sudan. Reflecting on and interpreting the reality may lead to new knowledge as mentioned above, but in our case, the aim is to speak tenderly for peace and not violently. Unlike the severe feeling of injury, discrimination, loud cries of injustice and exclusion, unless all are fully engaged and maintain a unified mutual and prophetic voice for peace dialogue at the grassroots levels it is unlikely that the people will be reconciled to one another and live in peace.

President Barak Obama, recorded a direct video message to the Sudanese nations after the cessation of South Sudan at the time of the outbreak, spread and increase of violence along

the borders. Reminding all and the leaders of both states, he said: “It is easier to start wars than to end them”. By this, he urged both the presidents of Sudan and South Sudan to resolve their differences peacefully through negotiations. He even encouraged those still fighting in the two areas of South Kordofan and the South Blue Nile to recognize that no military solution will achieve real and lasting peace. “You will never be at peace if a neighbour feels threatened, and will not see any development progress if your close neighbour refuses to be your partner in trade and commerce. For those willing to walk the path, peace will not be long and America will be a steady and strong partner” (Jackson, 2012).

7.3.2 Peace program-institution factors: decision-making-(involvement)

Various institutions serve as mirrors reflecting and translating all societal activities. The ‘dialogue-development’ approach is a way of being involved in promoting, facilitating and supporting peace programs and activities, empowering and mobilizing various church groups, as well as the society by strengthening these institutions through training programs and capacity building. From the abovementioned, for example, available resources may not be an obstacle, but unskilled personnel and the lack of access to development among the churches or society may reduce the chance of improving their well-being. This will directly affect the development of life and their involvement to change the reality facing their daily living. Moreover, economic conditions may take a strong turn, empowering and enabling them to gain more experience (Rossi, 1985:189). Coleman and Collins (2004:78) agree with the suggestion made by Grace Davie on issues of difference and social integration, and allowing wide participation within the society, that “...we can’t view religious institutions as free standing entities. They are institutions that cooperate with society and are subjected to external pressure which inevitably shapes but don’t entirely determine the life of these institutions”.

7.3.3 Influence of peace and theological factors: taking action (practitioner’s role and participation)

The participation and the influence of the key practitioner as a religious agent in the ‘mission as ministry by the whole people of God’ resulted in the transformation (prophetic dialogue) of the religious other. Religious leaders lead by example. This is a valuable statement and has direct meaning for the follower. Leadership seeks the truth and reflects on the common

purpose of the society, building the very fabric of that society and the capacity of God's people to be free agents and to freely contribute to its common purpose (Nokaneng, 2009:56).

The quest for peace and safety has a biblical meaning. The absence of peace has brought immediate destruction to the lives of many in Sudan. The consequence has affected almost everyone, some have responded with illness, weakness and even trauma. For example, the exile image in Isaiah 40 reflects a similar reality as that which we are experiencing today (see: Appendix P). The book always offers comfort to God's people, as well as future hope. Being banished from home and dominated by other rulers, it describes the experience of our present life and long history of conflict. People are alienated strangers because of broken relationships, being in diaspora and living as refugees in many neighbouring countries and beyond, as well as the mass internal displacement of people (IDP).

A sense of grief, illness, even traumatization and uncertainty may lead us to ask: "Does God have any connection to these chains of events in our lives and the ongoing fighting and suffering that is still happening in Sudan?" "What about our sense of identity, and to whom do we belong?" The text creates a story from the life events of God's people in exile, a voice of one calling "cry out" in the midst of waves of violence.

In all of this, God is our comforter. The distinctiveness of His voice can be heard here even through other humans who speak to us in our wilderness, on our journey home and provide us with a sense of belonging. Looking closely at our situation, considering our indigenous identity and diversity where knowledge and literacy means power, but being wise only comes through the experience of being touched by "the soul of one's community" (Nokaneng, 2009:69). The Apostle Paul testifies in II Cor. 5:18, "In Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself". The strong 'ministry of reconciliation' theme and call comes as an invitation, evoking an awareness of who we are and how we are to exist in the world. It is the power of God that flows out of our deepest identity as a people of God (Lutz and Folk, 1983:119-123). It is only when people are able to accept one another and their reality as genuinely a part of the entire human race that they are free to participate in life. Such people can freely enjoy the aspiration and success of others without being threatened by them (Lutz and Folk, 1983:124).

The great theologian Karl Barth in *Church Dogmatics: The Doctrine of Reconciliation* argues that reconciliation is in life and work open to those who respond to Jesus in faith. Christ acted on behalf of humanity as a whole (GunTon, 2003:93, 94). Concerning Paul's theology of a remnant of Israel in Rom. 9-11, Forsyth and Dr. Rae (2003:6) argue that in Christ, God reconciles the world, not an aggregate of individuals. We are not isolated individuals but a people of God whom He loves, addresses and saves (GunTon, 2003:6, 100). Paul's theology of grace mentioned that salvation comes through Christ alone. To all who believe and call upon His name and by no other means, that way of faith is not conditioned by the atonement, nor reconciliation, but rather by means of Christ's faithful obedience to God in service of humanity "once" and for all. The objective reality of reconciliation and atonement is completed and accomplished once and for all (GunTon, 2003:103).

I explicate the implications and the process to understand the ethnic-religious identity and the components of the groups in order to accompany the church as it proclaims Christ and serves the community as a people of God who belong to God. The privilege of setting the church apart for ministry is that her holiness by virtue is not our own but is rather set by God, because holiness is a matter of grace. That is why Paul in II Cor. 5:18 argued, "In Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself," not counting their sins against them. There is no condition mentioned, our human response is in faith, he continued to speak of responsibility that we now bear in consequence of what has already been accomplished (GunTon, 2003:103).

Mbiti and Shenk (1983:34-39) mentioned three closely related means to recapture aspects of lost harmony and enhance the sacredness of life: progeny, hierarchy of life and sacrifices offered from an African perspective. If the implications of the sacrifices and animal blood had any significance, the innocent animal that was offered according to the book of Genesis to clothe our first parents, Adam and Eve, would be enough to return to God and maintain previous lost fellowship. Many today still practice these ceremonies and continue to offer animal sacrifices on a yearly basis.

If that is true and enough to restore harmony, it should have reunited Adam and Eve with God in the Garden Eden to once again enjoy the same fellowship they previously had with Him. However, if that were true, then we wouldn't have any trouble whatsoever concerning

what we are experiencing today. Therefore, God's plan to save humanity is only through Christ's blood. Reconciliation is thus offered to all, including lay groups as a whole people of God in the ministry of mission to proclaim, testify and bear witness to serve that community. He continued saying that that whosoever responds in faith to the person and work of Christ does not aid Christ in His priesthood (GunTon, 2003:105).

Schreiter (1992:41) contributed to the central themes of inter-cultural ethnic and religious exclusion, and inter-religious dialogue and prophetic ministry by constructing a narrative of truth that symbolizes a sense of safety and of a self that can overcome the suffering caused by the violence. What has been done and caused by the violence threatens the well-being of all of humanity. The traumatized memory needs to be reconstructed through true and real reconciliation. True healing comes when we are able to overcome and separate those bad memories from acts of violence. The result as pointed out will never be the same again; it will bear scars of its history, a way to regain our humanity (Schreiter, 1992:39).

In this way, this study shows how the new reconciliation model for the church and ministry has conformed and become the operational basis for the *missio Dei*. If we opt for mission as a 'ministry by the whole people of God' to accompany the church's ministry as it proclaims Jesus, it will draw on all the aspects of previous mission models in all contexts and aspects of culture, religion, dialogue and connected themes as a part of a new model (Schreiter, 2013:13). This can only be achieved when we search the heart of the gospel and seek mission as reconciliation, where it takes us to the heart of the Bible. The message of II Corinthians is the indicator here because it reflects spirituality and a change of worldview, not a program or strategy.

The results showed an interconnected relationship between events of the targeted group and the role, activity and responses of the SPEC. Like any tool, it has strengths and weaknesses; still, some gaps remain in the data. Honestly, the political pressure by the authorities and exclusion became a 'taboo' to many people. That always resulted in a lack of freedom, freedom of speech, press releases and open conferences, as well as developmental and environmental pressure, more especially, red-lining of legislation to protect their own interests. Consciously or not they use religion to justify, legitimize and ensure the continuation of a system, which is to their advantage (Ramalho, 1980:101). That act might

silence the resisting people not to risk their lives, preferring to remain secretive avoiding the threat of detention and incarceration. Therefore, as long as there are hidden agendas and issues remain unaddressed, as well as prevailing favouritism, tribal superiority and other religions, we still have unanswered questions and untold stories.

There are also huge internal church conflicts that mostly create division and increase the tension within and among various churches, which always weakens their performance, the building of bonds and relations.

The voices of women and sensitive gender issues are denied, silenced or muted in a male dominated context, whereby most of the time they risk their lives to intervene in order to resolve conflicts. Engagement of religious leaders in politics is not well supported by the church. Insufficient access to development is one among many reasons. The following is a remarkable image of peace and reconciliation by an African bishop: “Peace is like a big tree with the roots on the ground. Peace and reconciliation cannot be imported from elsewhere. The only thing that can be imported is water, in order to strengthen the tree and make it grow green” (SECAM-CELAN, 2001:101).

How is witness and proclamation understood as “prophetic dialogue?” Witness is dialogical in that it is inspirational and never imposing. Witness is prophetic since it is often counter-cultural. Proclamation is dialogical in a sense that it is an answer to a question and it is done in a respectful manner. Proclamation is prophetic in that it is an authentic presentation of the good news and a call to personal and social conviction (Schroder and Roger, 2013:56). Proclamation is thus an invitation and call to people to repent and change. In other words, if Christians only talk and never listen, they are not very good Christians (Knitter, 2002:83).

The spirituality of denunciation has contributed significantly to cultural issues of dominancy and feelings of superiority of what is so called ‘third world’ churches, though highly valued in some circles. Andrew Walls and Paul Hiebert (1994:64), anti-colonialist writers, paint the picture of Westerners as servants of colonialism and destroyers of cultures.

Still, mission churches and many other agencies operate in an explicit or subtle colonial mode, a few begun the difficult task of moving on to deeper relationships of mutuality,

vulnerability and boldness with regards to individuals, groups from another race and cultures (Hiebert, 1994:54). Again, the Bible and the great commission call us to make disciples in all nations and that at “Jesus’ feet every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God” (Philippians 2:11). Those uttered confessions should be using all languages to express that.

Willingen’s image and conception of a trinitarian understanding played a great role and it was said in the final document that mission comes from the love of God in His active relationship with humanity rather than being anchored in the context of ecclesiology and soteriology (Bevans and Schroeder, 1986:285).

Mission as prophetic dialogue “calls people to conversation; it calls to deeper and fuller truth that can only be found in communion with dialogue’s trinitarian ground” (Bevans and Schroeder, 2004:285). It calls people even beyond conversation to honest dialogue among various denominations and mutual dialogue within the Christian church tradition. This is vital because Christian theology is also a theology of dialogue with openness, listening and respect, with purpose and willingness to share, and to speak out about the truth of God as a chance to practice what is preached.

Liberating and transforming spirituality is also a challenge that requires a change of the inner human being “into a new creation by putting to death what belongs to the earthly nature and putting on the new self, which is being renewed in the knowledge and in the image of its creator” (Romans 12:2). The first appeal of the renewed mind is grounded on the mercies of God; the second appeal is ethical and relates to our transformation, according to God’s will (Stott, 1994:322). Thus, transforming and liberating spirituality is through putting off falsehood, deceitful desires and speaking truthfully to one’s neighbour.

These points give rise to many questions concerning how Christians will participate in the *missio Dei*. How will and can we assist in transforming and liberating spirituality, while reflecting with God as co-workers to overcome these situations for both the church and mission society? Acting as a co-worker with God in the ministry of peace and reconciliation can be likened to a soccer team joining efforts in a team spirit. When they seek to score a goal their focus is not on the goalkeeper but on the goal, and when they succeed in achieving

the goal, the whole team is happy. Starting with the players, supporters and audience at large, our help and support comes from the Lord. Unlike losing the game, when experiencing the mission of reconciliation one never comes out the same, instead, you are totally transformed into a new person.

Spiritual-dialogue is prophetic ‘people-to-people’ dialogue, which is a liberative movement that goes to the deepest roots of a system, its structures and also its actions by addressing the thinking behind them. It provides a method that is equally applicable to an individual and a culture. The dialogue keeps alive hope-generating practices of the prophetic (liberation) and bridge-building (reconciliation) dimension of the gospel and faith-based organizations. It also recognises that full liberation and reconciliation continues to be a great challenge to all participants in mission and ministry in a post-colonial context and post-conflict situation.

In the new paradigm, as in the ‘people-to-people’ dialogue in Sudan, ethnic and religious identities are remembered and contextualized through an inclusive dialogue. It is a dialogue that narrates and admits the past experiences of injustice without creating new exclusive identities and promoting new injustices. Anthropologists and others define a ‘tribe’ as a group with certain characteristics in common (i.e. they are self-sufficient; they have their own distinct language, culture and sense of identity, including a shared mythology, taboos, heroes and a villain; they also have a defined set of relationships, including a clear hierarchy of power and a definite set of rules for behaviour; and a loosely defined territory utilized for hunting and gathering). Relations between tribes are often marked by competition and outright animosity, but the low level of technology reduces casualties and also minimises the frequent inter-tribal skirmishes (Christie, 1998:5).

7.4 Conclusion

Military minded regimes find their victory in blood shedding and they rejoice in the loss of lives. It is through the dialogue of spirituality, inter-religious dialogue and the understanding of local community traditions that would make them appreciate the gospel introduced to them and to people of other faiths that dialogue meets the hearts and not only the minds of people. It also provides a service and a chance to reduce the tension and end the violence. In addition,

the concept of a re-designed solution leads to a record of evolving processes, action taking and/or implementation. This is what we turn to next in chapter eight.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE MISSION OF SPEC

MEDIATING PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

8.1. Introduction

A description and analysis of the causes, effects and interpretation of the ethnic and religious conflict in Sudan was provided in chapters six and seven. The findings were in line with the sound theological viewpoints on the nature and causes of conflict, which were discussed previously (see heading 3.2 and heading 3.4). To recap, the following important points have also been discussed: dialogue and its development; the dialogue of spirituality; patterns of practice; the meaning of social factors; and the influence of human nature on behavioural change. Other specific events were also addressed, but a comprehensive list is too long to repeat here.

Lack of social harmony, instability and suffering resulting from injustice has had a significant impact on the daily life of the people. Multiple conflicts continue to be a hindrance to peaceful co-existence or any kind of sustainable development revealing these painful realities. The dynamics of power and inequality are the practice of injustice, negligence, denial, discrimination, misery, culture, tradition and inadequate manifestations of these views. All of these causes and their consequences have a direct impact on the attitudes of people, while the element of mission ministry by the whole people of God is to normalize, maintain and safeguard peaceful relationships, as a means of stability and restoration of social harmony.

The focus of this chapter seeks to meet the objectives of the study and to evaluate the role and responses of the ethnic-religious identities of the target community and other relevant faith-based and non-faith based organizations. It identifies challenges and opportunities, and also assesses the impact of the peace process and its practices. It also identifies the significance of the results and indicates the relevance and value of the study.

To achieve these objectives, the results of the semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions are presented, analysed and evaluated. The target areas of the theological assessment are ‘mission as ministry by the whole people of God,’ as well as mutual, spiritual

and prophetic dialogue in ‘people-to-people’ dialogue at various levels. In addition, this includes participation, appropriation and intervention, as well as the preparation of leadership roles and inter-group relations in these peace processes for the sake of reconciliation and justice. Furthermore, it also considers reconciliation as a transformational missional practice in the way it shapes the form and content of SPEC’s ministry and its life experiences so that it is able to resolve these problems. Attention was given to the historical background in the socio-political level, as well as socio-religious level, and the remedial measures that were taken to improve the quality and equality of life’s challenges were highlighted (see heading 5.3.1.). Its impact was both discussed and analysed using the criteria of cause-effect (see heading 4.3.4).

This chapter is basically guided by the overall research question of this study, which was formulated in chapter one under heading 1.4.1, “How does and can ‘mission as ministry’ in the SPEC context mediate the structure of peace and reconciliation within and beyond its institutional context through ‘people-to-people’ dialogue?” It focuses on SPEC’s context-based oriented approach and the role of leadership and inter-group relations in mediating structures of peace and reconciliation to confront the challenges of ethnic diversity. Finally, it concludes with an application of knowledge using grounded theory.

8.2 Assessment of SPEC’s program

This section turns to assess the impact of the peace process and practice of the SPEC’s ministry of reconciliation. The broad meaning of ‘evaluation’ is to fix a value on something or an object. The concept entails a description of the performance of the entity on the one hand, and some standards or criteria on the other hand (Rossi, 2004:2, 16). In other words, it is the consequence of actions, adjustments and modifications that need to be made. Evaluating research in other circles is described as the systematic application of social research procedures in assessing the conceptualization and design, implementation and utility of social intervention programs. This activity is devoted to the collecting and analysing of data. Interpreting information needs clear implementation, effectiveness and efficient intervention efforts to address social conditions and community life.

In another words, it involves the use of social research methodology to judge and improve the planning, monitoring, effectiveness and efficiency of health, education, welfare and other human service programs (Rossi and Freeman, 1985:13, 19). Program evaluation is the use of social research methods to systematically investigate the effectiveness of social intervention programs in ways that are adapted to their political and organizational environment and are designed to inform social action in ways that improve the social condition (Rossi, Lipsey and Freeman, 2004:431) (see heading 1.3).

The research identified the importance of listening to the ideas and voices of normal ordinary people in their struggles. It contributes to the framework of an emerging reconciliation paradigm and the ‘people-to-people’ dialogue, both faith-based and non-faith based, as a contextual response to ethnic and religious violence in Africa, and ultimately, nationally.

Inter-ethnic or inter-cultural dialogue on the one hand, and commonly shared concerns on the other hand, is the basis for unity and peace, which influences how people learn to live in their daily life. The specific involvement of adults, children, the community and wider society helps to strengthen community relations through inter-generational dialogue and shared experiences (Percy-Smith and Thomas, 2010:172).

In this regard, the ‘people-to-people’ dialogue conferences and meetings become increasingly foundational for grassroots communities because of their peace talks and dialogue. Participatory projects are activities that can have a very important impact on equality and power sharing with different groups to accept each other’s differences for the sake of peaceful co-existence.

So the relevance of using triangulation with its multi-disciplinary perspectives helps to capture various systems and all its differing levels. From this, one can derive a broad view of the events that are taking place, and that are shared and described by many actors. New discoveries and seeing things differently shapes the way we look at life experiences. Focusing on the events and using these lenses also shapes how we interpret situations subjectively from the way they are. God’s responses are different, but through Christ’s potential we can live in the world together.

Our capacity is to respond in either way, but by helping to build relations in a sense of community is not easy and can be very tough. The community and the role played by different parts portray the role of the reconciliation model. The interrelated functions of different parts of the human body is illustrated here to understand the function of the diverse community. As part of the body of Christ, a problem in one part influences the whole body (i.e. the church or wider community). Though the human analogy is about relations and does not literally mean a neural connection or one where there is blood. The biblical analogy shows that if any part of the body is sick, the whole body suffers.

In their book, *The New Language of Qualitative Method*, Gubrium and Holstien (1997) classify qualitative research according to the researcher's orientation towards the data. In particular, their focus on how each qualitative approach (discourse analysis or conversation analysis) uses specific analytical language to emphasise a particular facet of social reality. At the heart of this classification system is the division between substance and process, as qualitative research asks what associated practices are being studied, and examines how that reality is constructed and made habitual or routine. The analytical procedure shows the development of a typology which highlights the differences between people, events and behaviour related to ethnic-religious violence. This reveals how qualitative analysis makes sense of the data in a way that can be shared with others (Seale, 2012:381).

Document analysis is complemented when used in combination with the qualitative research techniques with the aim of drawing upon and using multi-methods to study at least more than one source. By triangulating the data, the researcher attempts to provide relevant or 'a confluence of evidence that breeds credibility' and reduces the impact of potential biases (Eisner, 1991:10).

The qualitative approach understands the historical context, and also makes use of the strategies of snowballing and quota sampling. In both, the individual and focus techniques are useful in obtaining rich information about the social problem. This cannot be done without conflict social theory, namely, the theories of change and the theories of social meaning that embody valid conceptualizations of the problem and an appropriate means of remedying it (Rossi, 2004:102). The impact theories consist of assumptions about change and the expected conditions after improvement. There are also criteria for causal theory,

described as cause-effect (Rossi, 2004:139, 141). In the same way, causal rhetorical devices always call for a causal narrative.

8.2.1. Impact

- a) Increase in number of people in peace campaign and awareness;
- b) Increase in number of people involved in empowerment;
- c) Increased retreats;
- d) Behaviour and discriminating language changed;
- e) Teachings on peace included in sermons and activities;
- f) Appreciating in peace programs.

8.2.2 Advocacy

Provide support for training in the states and in the country. The GOS, the SCC and the SPEC will lobby for international support, as well as the role of the churches and other faith institutions.

8.3 Special contribution through grounded theory-research application

Charmaz (2006:182-183) addressed creative ways of doing scientific and qualitative research, asking if the research categories have covered a wide range of empirical observations and strong links between the data, arguments and analysis. In this case, grounded theory needs to be understood in its historical context. Consideration and commitment is to be devoted to time, ability and resources. Strauss and Glaser (1967:223-230) advocated that through theoretical sampling a researcher might extend and broaden an emerging theory on the basis of a concept that has proven its theoretical relevance to the evolving theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1990:176). Such a strategy of theoretical sampling involves choosing cases to study, people to interview, and settings to observe, with the view of finding things that might challenge the limitations of the existing theory (Seale, 2012:395).

The researcher adopted the strategy of a zigzag approach that helped move between and across the data. The topic of peace and reconciliation is well studied in a variety of contexts due to the spread of conflict and violence in many African countries. The aim here is to construct a social meaning of public issues and phenomenon that are studied. In particular,

peace and reconciliation are related to long standing conflicts that may lack or require appropriate methods and research techniques suitable for data collection and analysis. Rossi (2004:102) stated that effective programs are instrumental for improving social conditions in a manner that is careful, objective and meaningful to all groups as far as possible, which helps to draw out the implications for diagnosis and structure effective intervention.

In fact, there is no single data set or source that can provide all information. This means, various sources need to be combined, especially multi-faceted sources. At the heart of the discipline of science, religion and philosophy, it is required that empirical data collection complements the textual, archival and documentary data, which is integral to grounded theory when studying problem-solving research (Bowen 2005, 2009).

Therefore, document analysis was a complementary data collection method in support of triangulation and theory building (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) in this study titled: “Ethnic-religious conflict and ‘people-to-people’ dialogue in Sudan: A Theological evaluation of Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church’s mission of reconciliation”. Social organization is an intervention and institutions are factors that manage them. An intervention takes... as an agency the social provides (Birks, Mill and Straus, 2008:31, 32).

The research fieldwork was conducted in Sudan. The study was carried out between September and December of 2013. Therefore, my research employed interviews as the primary method and means of data collection. For that reason, in the research a number of people were interviewed, approximately ninety-nine in total; ninety were from the focus groups. Nine influential, knowledgeable key leaders from the community groups were based in four greater states; each state consists of between five and seven provinces.

They represent civil society, native administration, faith-based and non-faith-based organizations. Those figures provided additional data clarity and deeper understanding on specific issues. Observation of the community condition and processes was included as a way to help determine what was being done. That helped provide and allow the researcher to develop a fuller understanding of how the ethnic and religious conflict affected the life of the community. Bogotech (2010:162) argues that focusing on the achievement (outcome) alone did not produce real opportunities to resolve public issues and poor populations. Instead, it is

suggested that social justice researchers ought to examine what people do or do not do, and then choose policies and practices with the intention of expanding people's actual freedom to take advantage of available opportunities.

The methodological research was relevant over several months and proved fruitful. The measures taken in this study employed both triangulation and the multi-method approach, making use of semi-structured interviews for individuals and focus groups, as well as participatory observation and documentary analysis, adhering to the principles of the methodology of grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1998; 1990). The researcher obtained two important documents: (1) 'Choose life: A vision for peaceful Sudan, May 2010,' a church position paper, and (2) women cry '*We had enough, we want peace*'.

Although data in most grounded theory studies come from interviews and observations, entire studies are conducted with only documents, archival material, text, and the constitution of the SPEC and SCC. In this study these proved to be rich and valuable sources of data. Tunner (1983) used similar material in a qualitative analysis of organizational behaviour with documentary sources being 'treated like sets of field notes.' In this regard, analysis and category generations was commenced at (the first paragraph) of the report and a theoretical framework generated which would handle the aspects of perceived to be the interest to each paragraph" (Tunner, 1993:342).

Documentary data that was analysed included both archival and textual material from the SPEC and SCC constitution. Documentary data, interviews and observation were analysed together so that themes would emerge across these three sets of data. The combination of the data sources provided contextual richness and background information that helped to understand the socio-economic, political and ethno-religious dimension of the targeted community. The archival documents also provided more information and supplementary data that was valuable to the knowledge base as part of the research process. Cross-sectional data employed, helped and guided the data analysis. Basically, the inductive approach helped to identify the patterns and discover the theoretical properties that were seen in the data.

In order to organize the data, codes and categories were grouped together into families, super-families and overarching themes. These categories were compared across interview transcripts to the feedback of informants and observational data. The selected document of

the UN's famous treaty Convention on the Eliminating of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was adopted in Vienna in 1979. The bill was set to protect women's rights. The convention contains measures and standards for women to live equal lives among the community.

As mentioned above, documents analysed as part of the theoretical sampling in the qualitative inquiry were extracted and analysed from the emerging data. Sampling was on the basis of concepts that proved to be theoretically relevant to the evolving theory. The groups and categories of cause and effect were chosen according to theoretical criteria (Strauss, 1967:45, 47). Constant comparison was used as a systematic tool to refine the theoretical categories and their properties, in addition to the strategy of theoretical sampling (Seale, 2012:397).

The recognition of theoretical saturation with no additional data being found was used to develop the properties of categories. I became confident that the categories were saturated when the evidence from the interviews, observations and documents began to generate a consistent picture of the way the conflict and ethnic-religious violence affected the community's conditions. I was satisfied that the process of data gathering and analysis were complete. Looking at some of the organizational reports, I have noted the effect of war on the various groups at differing levels within the community, especially women and children. There is therefore an urgent call to build trust, end the hostility and stop the war.

The recorded data, documents and key informants have confirmed the authenticity of the archival and documentary data. The research produced an impact theory and a case study including a profile of the target community. It provided the mechanism function of how people could respond in social, ethnic and religiously diverse contexts of peace and reconciliation. This depended on three phases along the interconnected themes of an emerging ecumenical mission, depending on institutional, contextual and theological factors. A thick description of the socio-cultural group phenomena was employed, making the theory of social meaning visible (Osmer, 2008: 51).

8.4 Challenges

As mentioned earlier, there were many gaps in the data, as well as in the study's findings, which increasingly shed light on the complex aspect of an internal and external crisis. There are real challenges facing peace-making efforts, peace building and the ministry of reconciliation in Sudan. Factors that fuelled the conflict even further include: dire need, intolerance, a sense of neglect, failing to acknowledge differences, rejecting others, and no respect for human rights.

1. Most of the time, those political leaders don't accept self-criticism or any other criticism for that matter, all these combinations create high levels of tension and hostility, which makes it harder to normalise situations and maintain stability.
2. Along racial and cultural lines, tribal superiority continued to threaten the group's identity. Tribal clashes and traditional authorities had limited and indirect rule, which encouraged the outbreak of violence and genocide in Darfur, and the mobilisation of large tribal and armed groups along the border.
3. The economic situation in general was difficult due to the continuous fighting and renewed conflict since the signing of the CPA deal. Underdevelopment and imbalance was more severe owing to economic sanctions for over twenty years. In addition, unemployment is a crucial issue, with the absence of job creation. Furthermore, mass migration of educated people searching for a better means of living complicated matters on the ground.
4. There also existed weak social services and infrastructures, as well as low public services, with no proper policies as a guideline. Additionally, institutions were weakened at various levels, especially the education system. The problem of high illiteracy rates were described by some as the 'death' of generations.
5. There is no longer trust and people are losing confidence in the regime in South Sudan. The paradox is that on the other side the opposition leaders, including armed groups in the north, are seeking regime change.

6. The mediation of the international community and their efforts are guided mainly by AUHIP facilitators to carry out unresolved post-peace pending issues through direct negotiations. The leaders are still urging and encouraging both regimes to engage in genuine negotiations to reach lasting peace. Serious dangers and risks of losing one's life face those involved in peace and reconciliation missions.
7. Religious affairs remain quite serious, for instance, the death sentence as the penalty for apostasy against a woman whose parents are of a different faith. Her marital status to a Christian husband is viewed as adultery, even her children are considered illegal. At that time, this was a very dangerous situation, and was also the first of such a case in the history of Sudan and its judiciary system. When applying Sharia law on a Christian woman, the punishment of the death penalty is often at the hands of family members, or even relatives. Fortunately, the appeal was successful and the sentence of execution was suspended; later the charges were dropped.

8.5 Opportunities

Despite the challenges, there are still opportunities amidst the conflict. These opportunities creates dialogue, which helps generate hope and missional practice to discern prophetic liberation and reconciliation as a bridge to the gospel, also transforming practice which informs and shapes the identity and role of the community. It also creates space for all participants in the ministry by the whole people of God in peace-dialogue and with those from faith-based organizations. Nation building is another opportunity to engage women, the civil society, youth and the wider variety of the spectrum of society.

1. At the political level, there are still two parallel rounds of negotiations in two different places. The first is in Addis Ababa with regards to two areas, South Kordofan and Blue Nile. The second is in Doha for Darfur where armed groups are waiting to reap the fruits of peace. Meanwhile, Mr. President Omer Al-Bashier initiated the national dialogue process on the 27th of January 2014. Earlier this year, Mr. President urged all people to join the peace talks during the 59th independence anniversary. Although it seems that during the past year this was not taken seriously

because of the insistence of the president and his party to hold elections in April 2015, without the national talks achieving their goals, not even in 2016.

2. Others valued this chance and opportunity to avoid bloody waves of violence. The dialogue committee known as (7+7) and many other factional leaders suggested that the election be postponed to give the national negotiations room, and in the meanwhile form an interim transitional government, so that they can hold inclusive dialogues for all Sudanese, including those still fighting. However, the president and his party did not welcome this idea.
3. The opportunity for participants to be involved in the process of peace and reconciliation brings new awareness and empowerment after receiving training and experience, leaving them more prepared to handle every step of the process more wisely. Openness to new ideas helped shape their understanding and formed significant changes in their present situation.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 The conclusion

In order to effectively draw the conclusions, the researcher refers to the research findings and the data, and makes judgements about the analysis and creative conceptualizations of the data (Corbin and Strauss, 2008:302). Reconciliation only occurs when people begin to acknowledge their past wrongs; in the same way, resolution only becomes possible when the players recognize that it is in each one's interest to end the conflict (Rothfield, Fleming and Komesaroff, 2008:21, 41). As part of the objectives, this study examined 'mission as ministry' in the SPEC as a contextual response to ethnic and religious conflict beyond individual and group experiences. It investigated SPEC's role and response to the ethnic and religious 'people-to-people' dialogue from the grassroots movement of the community and the practices of other organizations promoting peace and reconciliation. It examined the internal and external extent of SPEC's peace mediating structure, as well as peace-making and peace-building strategies, ultimately seeking local and national reconciliation.

The introductory section provided the historical context of the study. The importance of the study was also introduced and assessed, revealing both the nature and events of the multi-ethnic state. The core of the ethnic-religious identity of the indigenous people was also discussed. In addition, the study connected elements and patterns from the main theological and missiological themes, as well as comprehensively described the concepts of both 'dialogue' and 'reconciliation'. Salvation is thus an event and a process—as an event, God is always present to act, to heal, and to reconcile—as a process, the finished work of Christ continues in the church's missionary proclamation of the message of the gospel.

What it means to reconcile the people of God was explored further in the second chapter as a conceptual framework, a way to understand the people's responses from the perspective of 'people-to-people' in mutual and prophetic dialogue of peace processes and practices.

In the third chapter, the theoretical approach provided a general overview focusing on conflict, the broader concept of the struggle for self-identity, peace and justice, which has

always been a challenge to the believers in the various levels of ministry. Of particular importance here were the causes, dynamics, and its place within Sudanese relations. Its consequences and concerns were also addressed, namely, the lack of social harmony, instability and suffering as fruits of injustice in daily life, and multi-conflicts which become a hindrance to peaceful co-existence or any kind of development related to the individuals and group experiences in the ethnic-religious conflict.

The fourth chapter interrelates the context in which external actors interpret the conflict in Sudan. It handles the issue of mission initiatives, which completes the conceptual question of whether the SPEC has participated in those initiatives, a type of negative outcome during the conflict. Mission is viewed as God's initiative and Christ is viewed as 'The Master Initiator,' a term described by Sanon, explaining that Jesus is suggestive and related to experience. To illustrate this further, it is like a chief initiated by the ancestors and introduced into his role as a mediator, or Jesus as initiated into His Jewish tribal community, completed by the cross and resurrection (Kuster, 1999: 61; Schreiter, 1991:85).

In the fifth chapter, the ontological question is answered regarding how the church have viewed and incorporated the reality of 'people-to-people' dialogue in its own-based ministry. As explained, modern paradigms opt and strive for holism in religion (theocentrism), for instance, like Knitter's model, However, when everything is equally valid nothing really matters any longer. This means, there is no longer a distinction between what is worldly and the sacred. Many voices have echoed this sentiment (e.g. Bosch, to mention one of them) and pointed out that: Christian faith is a religion of grace which is God freely given and freely received and it find its center, to a significant extent, in the cross". It is through the love of God that Christians are obligated to share and show love towards their neighbours of other faiths.

Chapter six draws everything together and takes a closer look at the profile of the target groups. The activities and historical background from the ethno-religious, socio-political and economic dimension shows how it affected the target community as a whole. It also indicated how the SPEC and other organizations have been involved in supporting, promoting and facilitating peace at the various levels – contextual, institutional and theological.

1. At the contextual level, they demonstrate active involvement in peace dialogue initiatives and peaceful co-existence through enhancing equality and human dialogue.
2. At the institutional level, the organizations and development activities are intended to assist in many social life aspects and improvement of their well-being and proficient expert roles that lead to grassroots peace-making and building.
3. At the theological level, by means of key church leader's, they play a role in touching people's spiritual lives, and through their endeavours seek to resolve the conflict and actively engage in mediating peace and reconciliation beyond geo-boundaries.

Interpreting the data shed more light on the research topic in chapter seven. Military minded regimes found their victory in the shedding of blood and rejoiced in the loss of life. But the Christian message and spirituality is both prophetic and transformational: Prophetic in its message of mutual and spiritual dialogue that brings hope to people that could be reflected in the spiritual realm. Transformational in the way it seeks to achieve change in people's lives in the kingdom realm. It is through the dialogue of spirituality, inter-religious dialogue and understanding of local community traditions that makes them appreciate the gospel that is introduced to them and to people of other faiths. Dialogue that meets the hearts and not only the minds of people also provides a service and a chance to reduce the tension and end the violence.

9.2 Recommendations

In terms of the focus of the current study on the ministry of SPEC, I recommend that further research be done on the topic, and for academics, practical theologians, missiologists and researchers to conduct more studies within their own churches and across various denominations. In our current discussions of mission as reconciliation, we should talk of the religious dimension as a cross-cultural dogmatics, which means it becomes systematized from below. In other words, reconciliation in the Sudanese context must be done from the grassroots level, and not from a Western perspective (Schreiter, 2005:347).

Due to the reality concerning the on-going fighting in many areas, further research should double their efforts to work with those in 'close areas'. They need to make their voices heard to help complete the picture of the struggle. Attention should be given to issues that are

sensitive and kept secret out of fear of the political situation. The participants required significant protection to open up and speak passionately about the reality they are facing and the influence and impact of the war. They need to have the freedom to convey their reality so that they can assist the relevant parties on how to promote peace, despite the challenges they have gone through. The voices of these marginalized women, men, youth and children could be the only mechanism to achieve peace and promote a better future.

NOTES

¹ ‘People-to-people’ dialogue is a new approach in terms of organization sectors is annual program and office of Conflict Management and Mitigation (CMM). The United States-AID (US-AID) started it in 2004. The Humana ‘people-to-people’ international movement, established in 2013, is another form of holistic approach to development. In Sudan, the program is sponsored by faith-based and none faith-based organisations linked to the NSCC, established in 1989. The aim is to support local peace efforts through supporting a series of meetings known as people-to-people conferences. Titus Agwanda and Geoff Harris have a long history of involvement and have reviewed the work of NSCC (*Africa Security Review, Institute for Security Studies* 18(2): 44).

² The Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church (SPEC) is one of six reformed churches in Sudan. The others are: the Presbyterian Church of Sudan (PCOS); Sudanese Church of Christ (SCC); Sudan Interior Church (SIC); Africa Inland Church (AIC) and Christian Brotherhood Church (CBC). From here onwards, the acronym SPEC will be used to refer to The Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church.

³ The GOETHE Institute is a Christian theological institute based in Accra, Ghana. In their discussion on conflict, the question of “what has Religion got to do with it? An African-European Dialogue” is addressed.

⁴ www.Peaedirect.org .Supporting local action against conflict, Peace direct published by: peace direct: ‘Lasting change in the life of poor.

⁵ www.Amnestyusa.org/violence-against-women/shield-the-women-of-Darfur/shield-the....9/20/2008

⁶ Evolution of ethnic identities, as described by Beny and Hale (2015:267), refers to the dominant “Arab” ethnic groups as products of intermarriage between indigenous women and male migrants and traders over Centuries. This mixture produced an African-Arab racial group that resembles the African people south of the Sahara desert.

⁷ Influence of National Islamic Front (NIF) power, Muslim brotherhood sect.

⁸ ‘Sudan President Al-Bashir threatens to wage war in South Kordofan, saying that Abyei will “remain northern,”’ Sudan Tribune.com, 38717: www.sudantribune.com/sudan-president-Al-Bashir. (Accessed: 30 September 2013: 4/28/2011).

⁹ Here and in the rest of the dissertation, I cite from the 2011 (20th Anniversary Edition) text of Bosch’s *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, which was first published in 1991. Further references to Bosch (2011) are to this same source.

¹⁰ Sponsorships sustained local peace efforts, particularly a series of meetings known as ‘people -to-people’ conferences.

¹¹ “Final document 1” Second European Ecumenical Assembly (EEA2), Graz, Austria, June 23-29, 1997: www.Ccee.ch/ressourcen/download/20080529135416.doc. [Date accessed 29 July 2014].

¹² Mostly from the parables: Mat. 9: 1-16; Mark 1: 14-25; Luke 11: 6; Rom.14:17, etc.

¹³ 2012, *Missionalia*, 40(3): 260-261.

¹⁴ For the important theological changes (theological aggiornamento) after Vatican II, see Bosch 1991, pp.471: LG 33: ‘The apostolate of the laity is a sharing in the salvific mission of the church. Through Baptism and Confirmation all are appointed to the apostolate by the Lord himself’; AG 28 (cf LG 12): ‘the exalted duty of working for the ever greater spread of the divine plan of salvation to all people of every epoch and all over the earth.’; AG 21: ‘The Church is not truly established and does not fully live, nor is it a perfect sign of Christ unless

there is a genuine laity and working alongside the hierarchy.’; The Decree on the Apostolate, par. 3: ‘a document which describes the laity pre-eminently in terms of the church’s mission, having ‘the right and duty to be apostles.’

¹⁵ Bosch (2011:471) states: "Despite the fact that ‘Catholic missions have always had a significant lay movement’, the participation of ‘laypersons’ are taken as ‘auxiliary and firmly under the control and jurisdiction of the clergy’". Tension has increased with the formation of ‘base communities’ as the ‘critical congregations’ within the Catholic Church. In Protestantism, mission in Protestantism became an instrument of power and control in the hands of a few: the proclamation of the word as ‘cure of the souls’; It undermines ‘the community gathered around the word and the sacraments and sent into the world.’

¹⁶ Massive transportation across the desert or even boats along the river Nile carrying goods, sometimes slaves.

¹⁷ The Nuba represent 70% of the total population of the Nuba Mountains province. The province was abolished by the Angelo-Egyptian colonial administration in 1918, and was administratively integrated into Kordofan province (1910-1928), Kordofan region by 1993 and Kordofan state by 1991.

¹⁸ End of October 2015

¹⁹ Kritzinger’s developed methodology centred on the cycle of missionary praxis as basis for contextual approach to missiology.

²⁰ Resettled in a makeshift prison code-named “peace village” (See: Beny and Hale, 2015:99) and (Werner, Anderson and Wheeler, 2000:613).

²¹ Ecumenical team includes all churches that are members and work in collaboration with each other and the WCC. The Catholic Church is a member of SCC but is not a member of the WCC. Other partners include: Bread for the world, Dan Church Christian Aid (U.K.), Norwegian Church Relief and Australian Council of Churches, among others.

²² ‘Final document 1,’ 1997, Second European Ecumenical Assembly (EEA2), Graz, Austria, June 23-29, viewed from: www.Ccee.ch/ressourcen/download/20080529135416.doc. [Date accessed: 29 July 2014].

²³ Viewed online at: www.Peaedirect.org.

²⁴ To be completed – Assimilation

²⁵ Joint churches statement by both SCC’s-1999 in Geneva; clearly differentiate between slavery and abduction. Abduction is a traditional practice by some tribes and the government of Khartoum encourages that the term ‘slavery’ be replace by abduction. However an abductee is assimilated into the tribe that adopted him, and is considered a member of the tribe with full rights and responsibility and has role in strengthening the tribe. Inside Sudan: NSCC, Nairobi Kenya.

²⁶ Viewed from: [www.Amnestyusa.org/violence against-women/shield-the-women-of-Darfur/shield the...](http://www.Amnestyusa.org/violence%20against-women/shield-the-women-of-Darfur/shield%20the...) [Accessed: 9/20/2008].

²⁷ Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom: Violence against women in Sudan, Society for threatened people, written statement, 58th Session of the Commission of Human Rights, Item no.12a of the agenda, Geneva, March 2002. Viewed from: www.peacewomen.org/resources/sudan/threatendpeople2002.html [Accessed: 9/20/2008]

²⁸ See appendix J.

²⁹ See appendix K.

³⁰ Nelson Mandela foundation, www.mandela.gov.za/mandela_speeches/2004/040131_peace.htm

³¹ www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/a/alberteins137744.html

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LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Item list to Semi-Structure Interview

(Life-Narrative and Facilitated Focus Group)

The item list research addresses and contributes to ‘People-to-People’ dialogue and mission of peace and reconciliation in Sudan’s ethnic-religious conflict, with regards to individuals, groups of church leaders, organization official and local community leadership. The objectives and goals are how to understand, asses, evaluate SPEC responses, program and involvement in the community dialogue of peace process and practice.

The research main questions presents discussions which looks for answers that deals with effects and impacts of peace and how to understand the events from interviewee’s perspectives, some for clarity and others examples or evidences. Though they are few but covering areas of:-

- 1- Life histories: ‘traces the individual personal biographies’.
- 2- Oral histories: ‘explores how they experience historical events’.
- 3- Significant locations: ‘need for specific events.’

The information gathered will be uses fully and with due attention to academic purposes only. Therefore, the focus groups each composed of 7-12 participants and the research units of analysis are between 8-12 which includes the following:-

1. Church related initiatives in promoting and supporting the program.
 - a. Two organizations.
 2. Non-Church related initiatives in promoting and supporting the program.
 - a. Two organizations.
 3. Church involvement in facilitating the program activities.
 - a. Evangelical Church- 3 Presbyteries (North- East- West).
 - b. Episcopal Church.
 - c. Lutheran Church
 - d. Sudan Council of Church.
 4. Indigenous leadership power:
 - a. Local Community.
 - b. Civil society

APPENDIX B: Item list Semi-Structured Interviews

(Focus Groups-Interviews)

Ordinary Conversation (Item list) Focus Group

This item less is a normal ordinary conversation which covers both factual and meaning level. The research question is broad tour question asking overall descriptions but subject matters in which the researcher joins the participant's discussion and shares in the free flow of the argument with no specific guidelines to the participants in expressing their views and ideas, research questions like:-

1. Tell me about the neighbourhood that you live in now?
2. What happens during the last five years of the conflict?
3. Could you describe in details, how did this happens?

The Questions (Prepared Item list) Facilitated Focus Group

This item list is formal specific guided interview approach, focused, in which the researcher get the story behind participants experience and give them more freedom in expressing their opinions to obtain more information, follow-up research question with same degree of in-depth, details and richness.

It presents in the first five main questions which looks for clarity of understanding and knowledge. Explore meanings of immediate matters and investigates meaning of importance. Place earlier response within broader context. Sharing in experience helps organize in reflecting on belief and attitude of how to relate and respond on how to get more insight related to work, culture and process of those involved.

Question six and seven shows churches efforts and empowerment, question eight on indigenous local knowledge, nine and ten focuses on impacts of SPEC ministry and other organizations in mediating structure of peace and reconciliation, last on program policy making.

Kindly share with me some of the responses drawn from promoting and supporting community dialogue on peace and reconciliation?

- 1- "Be at peace with every one" seems to be popular notion, what is your understanding of it?

- 2- Would you like to share some of your experiences about the current on-going conflict?
- 3- Briefly, could you describe some of the challenges facing the peace building and reconciliation in Sudan?
- 4- How do you respond to strong statement: “when truth is denied, peace will not come”?
- 5- How are you affected being discriminated and treated differently rather than others?
- 6- In which ways have religious leaders play a role in promoting peace and bringing about stability?
- 7- I would like to know why some of the efforts needed in bringing and maintaining peace been not successful.
- 8- What are the positive aspects of indigenous leaders’ involvement in ‘people-to-people’ dialogue?
- 9- How can ‘mission as ministry in SPEC mediating structure for peace and reconciliation be developed and extend beyond its institutional in context into the following levels:
 - a. Non-church related initiative- International.
 - b. Church involvement- National.
 - c. Community dialogue- Local.
- 10- What are the best possibilities in promoting peaceful living in a multi-religious ethnic state?

1. Open-the floodgates:

Most common in a study, when the researcher initially is ‘naïve’ about the matters at hand but pretty sure the conversational partner is well informed. The goal is obtain broad overview.

2. River and Channel:

Suggests what need to be explored, the interview structure divides the research into equal parts and plan to cover each parts with a main questions a (branch). The focus is to know people’s skill, experience and training and link it.

APPENDIX C: Item list Semi-Structured Interview**(Personal in-depth interview)**

This item list explores focused on ideas, concepts and issues of in-depth details. A follow-up conversational interview with professional and influential leaders who handle patterns in different areas of mission, vision, policy making and implementation among focus groups who represents church, official and local leaders.

A. Personal data:

- 1- Sex: a. Male..... b. Female.....
 2- Age: a. 18-35..... b. 36-45..... c. 46-56..... d. 57-67..... e. Over 70.....

B. Organizational data:

1. Name of the organization:
 a. Faith-based b. Non faith-based
2. What Department or unit you are working at?
3. What is your position in the department?

C. Please respond to these questions:-

- 1- "Peace is often talked about but seldom achieved" is it possible?
- 2- Would you like to share some of your experience on-going conflict?
- 3- How is reconciliation handled with the other ethnic-cultural groups in Sudan?
- 4- How are matters of peace process related to the indigenous community negotiated in the current situation of Sudan?
- 5- Is there any tension underlying between ethnic and religious groups and the legal system?
- 6- Being involved in the peace process briefly describe, some of the challenges facing peace building and reconciliation in Sudan.
- 7- Are the planned development activities the best ones for enhancing their performance in peace making, peace-making in Sudan?
- 8- How do you go about implementing new policies, moving from peace building to stability?
- 9- What are you doing now to problems not even addressed or dealt with compared with what you had before?

Picking Up the Twigs:

Follow-up interviews with the same conversational partner, in which you ask more in-depth details or explanation, they are often a continuation of the first interview, they explain what the researcher's missing and gaps needed and see if they can fill in some of the blanks.

APPENDIX D: Narrative report

Damazin Peace Forum

Narrative Report

Location: Damazin – Blue Nile State

Logo: Joining Hands to Build a Peaceful Community for All

Objective: Support to Blue Nile and South Kordofan Peace Building Process.

Period: 6- 8 December 2013

Damazin is the capital city of Blue Nile State . The peace forum which held from 6- 8 December 2013 was attended by more than 200 participants from Khartoum , South Kordufan (Nuba mountains) and Blue Nile state who were drawn from Civil Societies , Religious and Communities leaders.

The forum provided a platform for citizens from Blue Nile and South Kordufan states to voice out what they believe to be the root causes of the conflicts in Sudan and in their areas and proposed solutions freely and frankly.

Four persons from ALARM Sudan participated in the forum who together with participants from SCC and other Civil Societies delegate from South Kordufan and Khartoum and the facilitators who were from Sudan University of Science & Technology – Centre for Studies & Culture of Peace were transported from Khartoum by two Buses and the trip is about 9 hours .

When the participants arrived in Damazin they were welcomed by representatives of the political parties and Civil Societies of Blue Nile State .

The participants from Khartoum and South Kordufan were accommodated in two hotels (Sedeig and peace) and the meetings were at peace hotel hall .

The meeting started by a recitation from the Holy Quran and a reading from the bible and throughout the forum both beliefs or religions (Christianity &Islam) were given equal opportunities. After the opening prayers the forum was addressed by representatives from Blue Nile Community leaders, Sudan University of Technology , SCC , delegates of South Kordufan State , African Union and the Governor of Blue Nile State .

APPENDIX E: Damazin peace forum (1)



Introduction

The AU Liaison Office among other things is mandated Organize meetings with Civil Society (CSOs), Religious and Notable personalities in society that could facilitate reconciliation and peace building.

This particular project is significant because it will provide a basis of collaboration between the AU and members of the civil society in the Two Areas aimed at supporting the overall peace building process for the two areas.

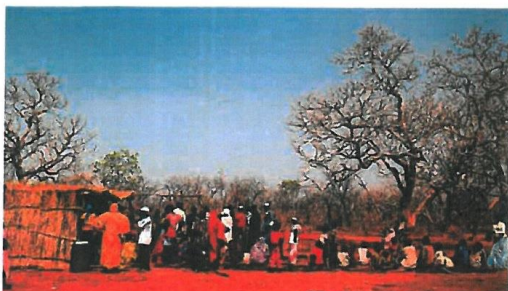
This is in the back drop of previous and current mediation initiatives between the GOS and SPLM-N by the AUHIP.

Objectives

There are five key objectives in regard to this project:

1. To provide a forum for all the stakeholders in the Two Areas, especially at the level of CSOs, including Community and Faith based organizations, to share experiences and proposals that may be useful in mitigating the current conflict and its effects on the population.
2. To initiate a broad representation of the constituencies including youth, women, ex-combatants and others, in the Two Areas, especially at the grass roots, in order to stimulate a multi-track approach to the current conflict in support of future mediation processes.
3. To identify basic humanitarian needs and trauma healing needs in locations within the Two Areas where there is relative calm from the conflict for possible mitigation.
4. To initiate a proposal from the grass roots perspective, on the key elements to a peaceful settlement of the conflict in the Two Areas especially in the area of Peaceful Coexistence and Reconciliation.
5. To develop coherence and synergy among the different stakeholders working in the Two Areas in order to stimulate and consolidate gains made towards achieving peace.

APPENDIX F: Damazin peace forum (2)



Beneficiaries

The direct beneficiaries of the conference are the Civil Society Organizations from the Two Areas with an estimated representation of 100 persons. However, since these SCOs, among them community and faith based organizations, work directly with various segments of the community including children, youth, women, the handicapped and generally members of the community affected by the conflict, the primary and final beneficiaries are therefore these mentioned segments of the communities.

It is estimated that there exists, GOS controlled areas alone, 180,000 IDPs from Southern Kordofan and 60,000 from Blue Nile in Sudan (Report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Mr. Chaloka Beyani dated 23rd May 2013). From Southern Kordofan mainly from the Nuba Mountains, they are located Kalugi, Talodi, Aleyeri, Harazaya and Keilak localities and from Blue Nile in the areas of Damazine and Kurmuk.

Secondary beneficiaries are the Local authorities and establishments including local administration, security agencies, health and education service sectors among others, who play a vital role in facilitating the activities of the CSOs and therefore are beneficiaries by virtue of their existence and mandate in the communities. The Movements including SPLM-North are the other secondary beneficiaries.



Expected Outcome

- 1 Formation of a multi- stakeholder network including Government agencies, UN other International humanitarian agencies, CSOs and Movement representatives, will be established to interface with the AU Liaison Office, the Mediation Team, Government and the Movements.
- 2 Formation of a nucleus team representing all Interest groups, including women, youth and other groups that resonate with the grass roots community, will be identified to elicit issues in their sphere of influence relevant to resolving the on going conflict.
- 3 Key social issues affecting communities that have borne the brunt of the conflict over the years, especially hunger, malnutrition among children, diseases, shelter and cases of trauma will be elicited for possible mitigation.
- 4 Monitoring by the local component of the established network, the agreed indicators in the Two Areas as well as compile information relevant for peace building for interface with in the multi- stakeholder network
- 5 An assessment of the challenges and opportunities faced by CSOs and strengthening their roles and effectiveness in peace building.
- 6 Building capacities of community leaders in order to address imbalances in making contentiously contributions on peace building matters.
- 7 A communications and information sharing strategy will be developed and implemented to maximize the use and effectiveness of outputs by different members of the multi- stakeholder network.

جامعة السودان للعلوم والتكنولوجيا - مركز دراسات ثقافة السلام
 Sudan University of Science & Technology
 Centre for Studies & Culture of Peace
 (SUST-CSCP)
 و
 مجلس الكنائس السوداني
 Sudan Council of Churches (SCC)
 بالتعاون مع
 مكتب اتصال الاتحاد الأفريقي في السودان
 AU Liaison Office in the Sudan (AULOS)

ولاية النيل الأزرق - مدينة الدمازين
 From: 6/12/2013 Till: 8/12/2013

Appendix G: SPEC Permission letter

Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church الكنيسة الإنجيلية المشيخية بالسودان
مجلس السودان الإنجيلي المشيخي

Date: May 19, 2013

Stellenbosch University
The Faculty of Theology
Department of Practical Theology and Missiology

Subject: Permission Letter - Re: Aida N. Weran

We the Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church accept to provide permission letter to the researcher with her research study entitled, "Ethnic-religious Conflict and 'People-to-People' Dialogue in Sudan: A Theological Evaluation of Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church's mission of Reconciliation" By Aida N. Weran of primary researcher and give our permission for the study to be conducted by Aida N. Weran, **at our Church.**

It is expected that the **findings and the result** regarding the study will be shared with our church after the completion of the study.

Blessings



Rev. Yahya A. Nalu

Moderator of Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church Synod



APPENDIX H: LCS Consent Letter



Monday, May 13, 2013

To: Faculty of Theology – Department of Practical Theology and Missiology

Stellen Bosch University

From: Lutheran Church of Sudan (LCS)

Subject : **Consent of Informational Interviews**

We the LCS have great privilege to approve the research study entitled "Ethnicity and Religious Conflict in Sudan – Reflecting on the Mission of the Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church" by Mrs. Aida N. Weran , and we gave consent for the study to be conducted through (LCS).

May the Lord bless you , and all the college staff.



P.O.Box Sudan 12923 – 12354

Mobile: 0912972828

E-Mail: lcs-yusuf@hormail.com

ص.ب السودان 12923 – 12354

جوال: 0912972828

APPENDIX I: ECS Letter of commendation



Episcopal Church Of The Sudan
Diocese of Khartoum

الكنيسة الإقفية السودانية
مطرانية الخرطوم

مكتب المطران
Office Of The Bishop

17th May 2013

Stellenbosch University
The Faculty of Theology
Department of Practical Theology and Missiology

Subject: Letter of commendation
Re: Aida N. Weran

We, Ezekiel Kondo, Bishop of the Episcopal Church of Sudan, Diocese of Khartoum here by highly commend the above cited and in providing permission letter to the researcher with her research study entitled, "Ethnic-religious Conflict and "People-to-People" Dialogue in Sudan: A Theological Evaluation of Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church's mission of Reconciliation" By Aida N. Weran of primary researcher and give our permission for the study to be conducted by Aida N. Weran, at our Episcopal Church.

It is expected that the findings and results regarding the study will be shared with our church after the completion of the study.

We wish her God's blessing and success with studies.



<p>P.O.Box 65 Omdurman - 135 Khartoum - Sudan E-mail : ecs_bishop_khartoum@kaxanet.org Fax : +249 187573072 Tel : + 249 153904550 + 249 187556931 Web : www.khartoum.anglican.org</p>	<p>ص ب 65 ادمدومان - 135 الخرطوم - السودان بريد الكتروني : ecs_bishop_khartoum@kaxanet.org فكس : +249 187573072 هاتف : + 249 153904550 + 249 187556931</p>
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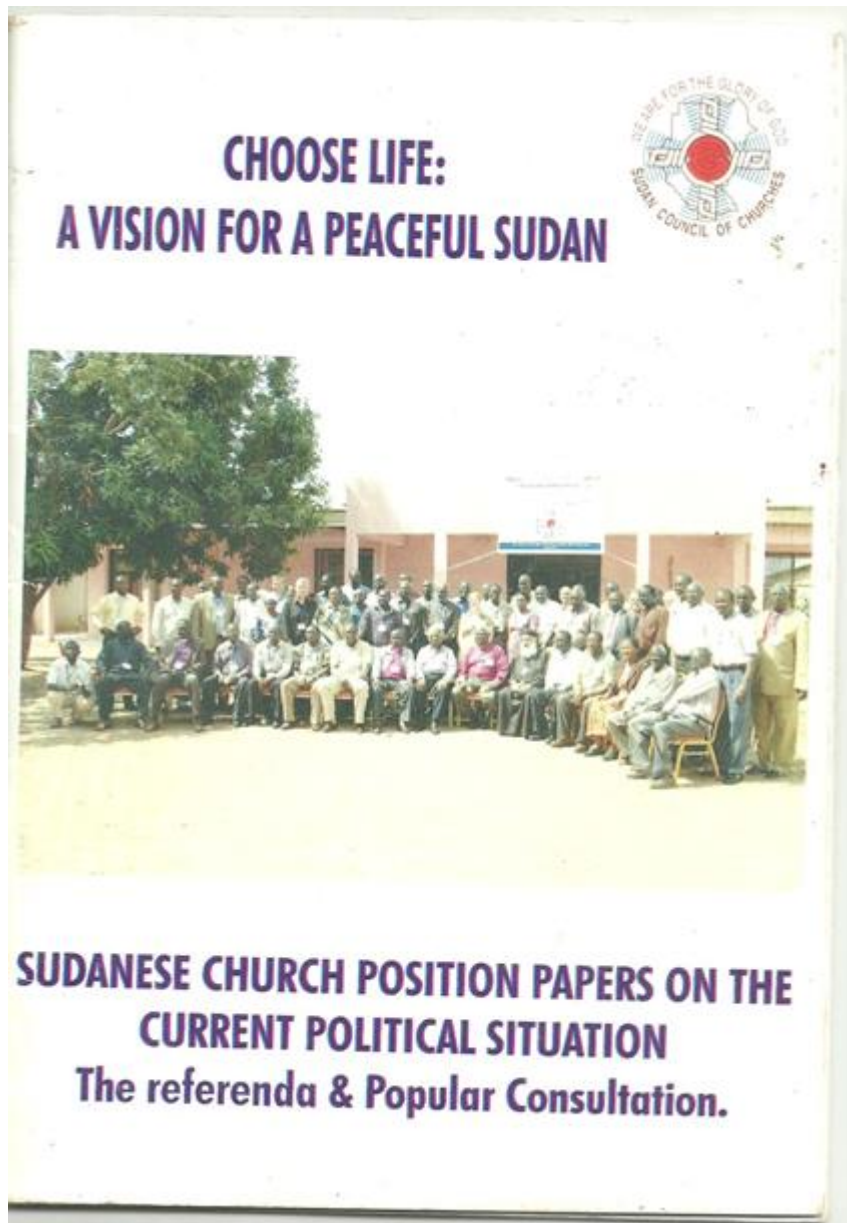
APPENDIX J: SUDAN MAP: JULY 2011



APPENDIX K: SUDAN MAP: JANUARY 1956-JULY, 2011



APPENDIX L: Choose Life



APPENDIX M: Ethical Clearance



UNIVERSITEIT-STELLENBOSCH-UNIVERSITY
jou kennisvennoot • your knowledge partner

Approval Notice New Application

19-Aug-2013
Weran, Aida A

Proposal #: DESC_Weran2013

Title: Ethnic-religious Conflict and 'People-to-People' Dialogue in Sudan: A Theological evaluation of Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church's mission of Reconciliation"

Dear Ms Aida Weran,

Your DESC approved **New Application** received on **29-Jul-2013**, was reviewed by members of the **Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities)** via Expedited review procedures on **16-Aug-2013** and was approved.

Please note the following information about your approved research proposal:

Proposal Approval Period: **16-Aug-2013 - 15-Aug-2014**

Please take note of the general Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter. You may commence with your research after complying fully with these guidelines.

Please remember to use your **proposal number (DESC_Weran2013)** on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your research proposal.

Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

Also note that a progress report should be submitted to the Committee before the approval period has expired if a continuation is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary).

This committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research, established by the Declaration of Helsinki and the Guidelines for Ethical Research: Principles Structures and Processes 2004 (Department of Health). Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly for an external audit.

National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC) registration number REC-050411-032.

We wish you the best as you conduct your research.

If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at 0218839027.

Included Documents:

Permission letters
Interview guide
Informed consent
Research proposal
DESC form

Sincerely,

Susara Oberholzer
REC Coordinator
Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities)

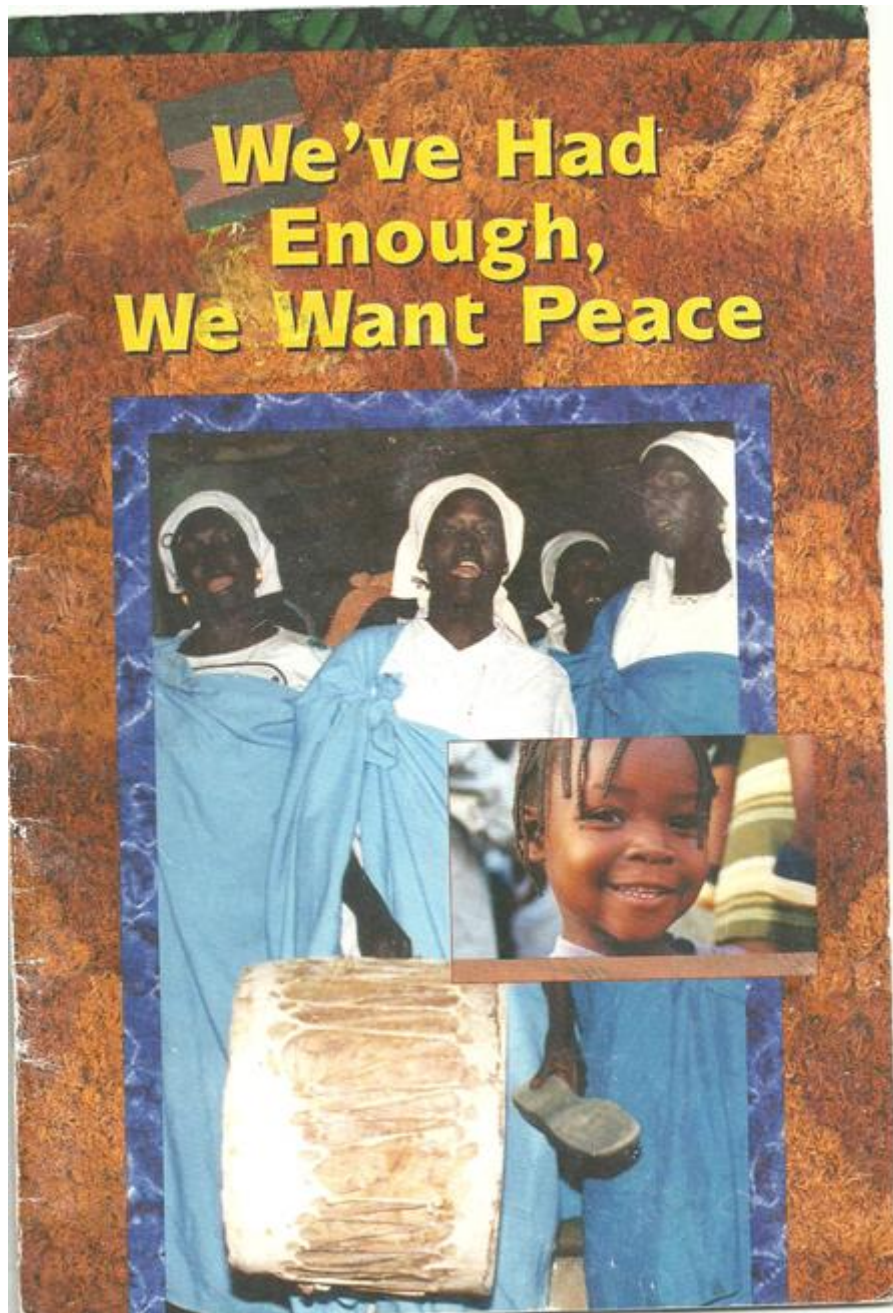


APPENDIX N: CEDAW: The International Bill of Rights for Women

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women defines the right of women to be free from discrimination and sets the core principles to protect this right. It establishes an agenda for national action to end discrimination, and provides the basis for achieving equality between men and women through ensuring women's equal access to, and equal opportunities in, political and public life as well as education, health and employment. CEDAW is the only human rights treaty that affirms the reproductive rights of women.

The Convention has been ratified by 180 states, making it one of the most ratified international treaties. State parties to the Convention must submit periodic reports on women's status in their respective countries. CEDAW's Optional Protocol establishes procedures for individual complaints on alleged violations of the Convention by State parties, as well as an inquiry procedure that allows the Committee to conduct inquiries into serious and systematic abuses of women's human rights in countries. So far the Protocol has been ratified by 71 States.

APPENDIX O: We Have Had Enough



APPENDIX P: Isaiah 40:1-11

Isaiah 40:1-11 (NIV) - Comfort for God's People,
Comfort, comfort my people, speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
And proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed,
That her sins has been paid for, that she has received from the Lord's
Hand double for all her sins.

A voice of one calling: "in the desert prepare the way
For the Lord, make straight in the wilderness a highway for
our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill
Made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rough places a plain.
And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it.

For the mouth of the Lord has spoken." A voice says, "Cry out."
And I said, 'What shall I cry?' "All men are like grass and all their glory
Is like flowers of the field. The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the
Breath of the Lord blows on them. Surely the people are grass. The grass
Withers and the flower fall but the word of our Lord stands for ever."

You, who bring good tidings to Zion, go up a high mountain,
You, who bring good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up your voices with a
Shout, Lift it up do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, "here is your God
" See, the Sovereign Lord comes with power and his arm rules for him. See, his reward
is with Him, and his accompanies him. He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathered the
Lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young.