

Citizenship in South Africa today

Some insights from Christian ecclesiology

Nico Koopman¹

Abstract

This essay reflects upon the notion of citizenship in the context of post-apartheid South Africa. Citizenship discourse in South Africa takes place in the context of the movement away from apartheid, and in the context of the processes of Africanisation and globalisation. An attempt is made to make a contribution to citizenship discourse in South Africa by drawing from theological insights, specifically from the classic formulation of the four marks of the church, namely catholicity, unity, holiness and apostolicity. Based on these ecclesiological marks the following four sets of features of citizenship are identified: apostolic and inclusive citizenship; united and justice-seeking citizenship; holy and virtuous citizenship, and apostolic and responsible citizenship.

Keywords: Catholic and inclusive; United and justice-seeking; Holy and virtuous; Apostolic and responsible

1. Introduction

During the years of the struggle against apartheid we described our struggle as a struggle for full citizenship. Black people were bereft from our citizenship with all the rights and responsibilities that this entails. In the context of a young democracy we reflect afresh about citizenship in a new time.

Now is a time of embodying the vision of a post-apartheid society. We are thankful that much of that vision of dignity, freedom and justice is being implemented. But perhaps even more of it is still unfulfilled. This ambivalence regarding the fulfilment of that noble vision poses challenges to citizenship.

Now is also a time of Africanisation. Our boundaries are open to fellow-Africans. High numbers of brothers and sisters from other African countries immigrate to South Africa. Sometimes they experience xenophobia.

Now is also the time of globalisation. This implies that South Africa is part of the global world. The interconnectedness implies that citizenship is not only national and local, but also international and global. In this global context various types of collaboration take place. Southern and Northern countries reflect together on the theme of citizenship.

¹ Prof Nico N. Koopman is Vice Rector for Social Impact, Transformation and Personnel (acting), Stellenbosch University. He can be contacted at nkoopman@sun.ac.za.

So-called South-South collaboration also illuminate the discourses about citizenship. The collaboration between South African theologians and Brazilian theologians, for instance, has the potential to enrich the crucial citizenship discourses in the two countries with their relatively young and still vulnerable democracies. The attention that Brazilian theologians give to citizenship discourse, and especially the research collaboration between theologians of Brazil and South Africa, have given momentum to the discussion of this theme amongst South African theologians. For both sets of theologians citizenship discourse is a crucial task of Public Theology. In Brazil Public Theology is drinking from the wells of Liberation Theology, and in South Africa Public Theology is informed by Black Theology. This factor enriches the collaboration immensely.²

This paper argues that the confession about the marks of the church, namely the catholicity, unity, holiness and apostolicity of the church might shed some light upon our understanding of citizenship today. This discussion, therefore, strives to ask what Christocratic principles that apply in the first instance to the church, could mean for life in a democracy. Does Christocracy have meaning for democracy? Does discipleship have meaning for citizenship? Does the nature of heavenly citizenship impact upon the nature of earthly citizenship? More specifically, do ecclesiological convictions provide insight for contemporary citizenship discourses, in South Africa, Brazil and other parts of the world?

This discussion about ecclesiology and citizenship might enable theology to address the challenges for citizenship discourse tabulated by South African social scientist, Sharlene Swartz. She identifies the following challenges for discussions about citizenship in South Africa today: socio-economic justice for the millions of historically disadvantaged South Africans; the nature of citizenship in a democracy after a long period of tyranny and totalitarianism; the moral and ethical responsibility of citizens; the role of religion in citizenship discourse after the ambivalent role of religion during apartheid, namely that of being oppressive, on the one hand, and liberating on the other hand.³

The ecclesiological discussion of this paper might also deepen and strengthen the insights of South African political scientist, Amanda Gouws⁴, about citizenship. She

² In his doctoral dissertation that has focused upon the theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, South African theologian, Russel Botman, has at the birth of democratic South Africa twenty-one years ago, pleaded for attention to the notion of faithful discipleship and responsible citizenship. See HR Botman, *Discipleship as transformation. Towards a Theology of Transformation* (Unpublished PhD dissertation, Bellville: University of the Western Cape, 1993). Brazilian theologian, Rudolf Von Sinner has written a very important book about citizenship discourse in Brazil. His work helps us to understand, amongst others, how Brazilian theologians address the theme of citizenship. See R Von Sinner, *The churches and democracy in Brazil. Towards a Public Theology focused on citizenship*. Eugene, Oregon: WIPF & STOCK, 2012).

³ S Swartz, A long walk to citizenship: morality, justice and faith in the aftermath of apartheid, in *Journal of Moral Education*, Vol.3, No.4, December 2006, 553.

⁴ A Gouws, The politics of state structures: citizenship and the national machinery for women in South Africa, in *Feminist Africa*, vol 3:1, 2004, 27-47.

draws from feminist discourses about citizenship and argues that we need both the insights of the liberal and civic republicanist views of citizenship. Liberal views define citizenship in terms of the rights that individuals bear based on the notion of natural rights. Civic republicanism defines citizenship in terms of the participation of individuals in political life. Gouws draws from feminist scholar, Ruth Lister, and explains that the liberal emphasis on rights refers to the status of citizens as that of people with rights. Civic republicanism refers to the agency of citizens. Citizens are people who participate actively in political life, in the processes that determine the quality and destiny of their lives. She argues that feminist discourse widens the area of participation of citizens. Citizens do not only participate in and impact upon the political sphere, but on all spheres of public life. Feminists appreciate this broader focus on the areas of participation because they have to struggle hard to overcome the oppressive dualism of private and public life spheres that for very long have reduced and marginalised women's citizenship to that of caring services in the so-called private spheres of life.

First, the notion of catholic and inclusive citizenship is discussed. Thereafter the discussion focuses upon the notions of united and justice-seeking citizenship, holy and virtuous citizenship, and apostolic and responsible citizenship

2. Catholic and inclusive citizenship

Robert Schreiter identifies various meanings of the term, catholic. Some of them are relevant for our reflection upon the notion of citizenship. According to Schreiter, Ignatius of Antioch was the first person to use this term with regard to the church in the year 110 AD.⁵ Ignatius is well known for the formulation: "Wherever the bishop appears, there let the people be; as wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the catholic church."⁶ Ignatius' formulation reflects a twofold understanding of catholicity. It namely refers to both the orthodoxy and universality of the church – orthodoxy in the sense of *pleroma* or fullness of faith, or the rule of faith, i.e. the faith that was believed and professed everywhere.

The term catholicity also refers to the geographical extendedness of the church, especially since Christianity became state religion. Just as the Roman empire was seen as embracing the oikumene, the whole inhabited earth, the church was acknowledged as ecumenical. Here the close link between catholicity and ecumenicity can be seen.⁷ In the Eastern church, according to Schreiter, a *mystical* meaning of catholicity developed.⁸ Catholicity refers to the eschatological fullness of the church. The visible

⁵ R Schreiter, *The new catholicity: Theology between the global and the local* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2002), 121.

⁶ Quoted by R Schreiter, *The new catholicity*, 121.

⁷ R Schreiter, *The new catholicity*, 21.

⁸ R Schreiter, *The new catholicity*, 21.

church reflects brokenness and incompleteness, but already participates in the fullness of the invisible church that will be revealed in heaven. The Reformers as well as Vatican II emphasized this eschatological dimension of catholicity.

These features of catholicity imply that the catholicity of the church is an inclusive catholicity. We include other Christians from other centuries, ages and generations, including past, present and even future generations. Inclusive catholicity means that we include and embrace other Christians from other geographical areas of the world. Inclusive catholicity also means that we jointly embrace the quest for truth, the quest for worshipping God faithfully, the quest for discerning the will of God for our time, the quest for a life of trust, truthfulness, faithfulness and reliability in the light of our divine calling to be children of God, disciples of Jesus Christ and hosts of the Holy Spirit.

North American philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah⁹ employs the notion of cosmopolitanism, which might be a helpful way of expressing the idea of catholic citizenship. He explains that his use of the notion of cosmopolitanism, which literally means citizen of the world, does not suggest an abstract universalism, which is actually the imperialism of western liberalism, i.e. one parochialism that is advanced at the expense of other parochialisms, which are all oppressed. Neither is cosmopolitanism for Appiah mere adherence to principles of moral universalism, i.e. moral cosmopolitanism, or adherence to the values of the world traveller who takes pleasure in conversation with exotic strangers, i.e. cultural cosmopolitanism.

His life as the son of a black African father and a white English mother, i.e. his life as a hybrid, has taught him that you can live with more than one loyalty at a time. He states: "Our community was Asante, was Ghana, was Africa, but is also (in no particular order) England, the Methodist Church, the Third World: and ... my father insisted that it was also all humanity."¹⁰

For Appiah¹¹ a constructive understanding of cosmopolitanism entails that a commitment is made to both the universal and the particular.

A tenable cosmopolitanism, in the first instance, must take seriously the value of human life, and the value of particular human lives, the lives people had made for themselves, within the communities that help lend significance to those lives. This prescription captures the challenge. A cosmopolitanism with prospects must reconcile a kind of universalism with the legitimacy of at least some forms of partiality.

⁹ KA Appiah, *The ethics of identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 214, 222. Also see his *Cosmopolitanism. Ethics in a world of strangers* (New York/London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006).

¹⁰ KA Appiah, *The ethics of identity*, 214.

¹¹ KA Appiah, *The ethics of identity*, 222 - 223.

Cosmopolitan citizenship entails a life of openness to the other in local and global contexts, a life of seeking the wellbeing and dignity of the other, a life of simultaneous openness to the universal and recognition of the particular, a life of including the other.

These insights about catholicity and cosmopolitanism have so much meaning for our contemporary citizenship discourses. Citizenship cannot be defined in a reductionist and exclusivist, and in a parochial and provincialistic manner. Citizenship is hospitable, i.e. it is invitational and inclusive. It cannot be limited and restricted by indicators such as natural birth, nation-state, socio-economic position and nationalistic loyalty. Citizenship is determined by indicators like inclusivity, participation, embrace, global friendship and trust. Modern societies are structured in terms of categories like the nation-state.

For various reasons, amongst others the care for people in a specific geographical area, and the organising of life together in that area, we need social categories like nation-state. Crucial constructions like nation-state should, however, not be absolutised. The drafting of requirements for citizenship in nation-states should rather take the insights of catholicity, cosmopolitanism, inclusivity and hospitality seriously.

Where this occurs the painful phenomena are destroyed of a fortress Europe, which implies the exclusion of people from outside Europe, and of fortress South Africa, which entails the lack of hospitality to people from other countries, especially other African countries. Moreover, citizenship that are viewed through the lens of catholicity and cosmopolitanism, hospitality and inclusivity paves the way for the extinction of xenophobia.

Yoon Jung Park and several South African authors claim that, despite the diminishing role and impact of states in the context of globalisation and transnationalisation, borderlessness and new spatialities, tribes and networks, states still have the power to construct borders and boundaries of exclusion and inclusion. They do this mainly by defining citizenship in a racially, ethnically, and socio-economically exclusive way, and on the basis of gender-inequality, and by distributing resources in an exclusivistic manner.¹² The notion of catholic and inclusive citizenship poses a noble and powerful challenge to these exclusivist definitions of citizenship and the consequent rights and responsibilities of that citizenship.

3. United and justice-seeking citizenship

The Belhar Confession 1986¹³ gives a very clear description of the central features of the unity of the church:

¹² YJ Park, Introduction: Identity, citizenship and power, in *African Studies*, Vol.3, no.69, December 2010, 380.

¹³ See *The Confession of Belhar 1986*, (Belhar: LUS Publishers, 1986).

... this unity must become *visible* so that the world may believe; that separation, enmity and hatred between people and groups is sin which Christ has already conquered, and accordingly that anything which threatens this unity may have no place in the church and must be resisted;
 that this unity of the people of God must be manifested and be *active* in a variety of ways: ...
 that this unity can take form only in *freedom* and not under constraint; that the variety of spiritual gifts, opportunities, backgrounds, convictions, as well as the diversity of languages and cultures, are by virtue of the reconciliation in Christ, opportunities for *mutual service and enrichment* within the one visible people of God ...

These words from the Confession of Belhar make it clear that unity should be seen; unity takes shape in freedom; unity is not uniformity but unity in diversity; the unity in diversity, unity in interaction with, unity in nearness to, unity in the proximity of the other, paves the way for wonderful service, enrichment and complementarity; unity is active unity, unity in action.

The unity of the church is an active unity that seeks reconciliation and justice. One of the authors of the Confession of Belhar 1986, Dirkie Smit,¹⁴ more than two decades ago, expressed the importance of unity in constructive proximity for justice and reconciliation. According to Smit article 1 of Belhar about the unity of the church helps churches to discover and confess that their continued disunity presents an obstacle to the quest for reconciliation and justice. This disunity implies the separation of people from different socio-economic groups, with different levels of privilege, training, skills, participation and influence in society. Disunity constitutes the perpetuation of classism and the refusal to be involved with less privileged brothers and sisters. Smit writes remarkably about the way in which the situation of separate churches and disunity prevents Christians from showing justice and compassion towards each other. "Christians are denied the opportunity to get to know each other and to love and serve each other. Consequently it becomes more difficult – and mostly almost impossible – to know and to carry each other's burdens."¹⁵ In unity, in togetherness, Christians seek reconciliation and justice in the world.

The unity initiatives of Nelson Mandela remain praiseworthy. The national motto of the South African nation formulated under Mandela's leadership is unity in diversity. Mandela established a government of national unity in 1994. We still remember how he expressed the quest for unity in South Africa visibly by holding onto the hands of both his deputy presidents, namely Thabo Mbeki and FW de Klerk at the

¹⁴ See DJ Smit "... op 'n besondere wyse die God van die noodlydende, die arme en die veronregte ...", in GD Cloete en DJ Smit (reds), *'n Oomblik van Waarheid* (Kaapstad:Tafelberg Uitgewers, 1982), 60-62.

¹⁵ See DJ Smit, "... op 'n besondere wyse, 62.

event of his inauguration as South Africa's democratically elected government on the 10th of May 1994. He visited Betsie Verwoerd, wife of apartheid Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd. He wore the Springbok jersey during the rugby world cup tournament in 1995.

Current South African president, Jacob Zuma pleads for unity and social cohesion in South Africa. The National Development Plan that was recently adopted as official government policy makes a plea for social cohesion and for unity amidst diversity:

A more prosperous country that is progressively eradicating poverty and inequality will also, over time, eliminate the effects of apartheid and colonial discrimination that have so scarred our society. It will lay the basis for greater social cohesion, unity and opportunity.¹⁶

These appeals to citizens to live in unity amidst diversity can be highly enriched by the theological description of unity. It is especially with regard to the notion of unity in action, unity for reconciliation and justice, that theological insights can enrich the idea of unity amongst citizens. Especially those citizens who are still excluded from the basic goods and necessities of life are sceptical about the notion of social cohesion and unity amongst citizens.

Unity in action can help to bring into birth a justice that is not alienating, but reconciling and embracing. On its very last page the National Development Plan affirms this connectedness of unity and justice: "What unites us: our common sense of humanity; our shared history and experience; just relations between people, between people and the state, and within the state".¹⁷

This embracing justice is based in the embracing work of justification of the triune God. Through this redemptive work we become just people who seek justice in the world. Through justification justice is achieved in the world.

These ecclesiological insights about unity can inspire and enhance the quest for unity in diversity, unity in freedom, unity in proximity, and unity in action, unity for justice amongst South African citizens.

4. Holy and virtuous citizenship

The confession of the holiness of the church might strengthen the quest for developing virtuous citizens, i.e. citizens of public and civic virtue and character.

The holiness of the church implies that we do not belong to ourselves but to the triune God and to each other. Holiness literally means that we are separated for

¹⁶ *The National Development Plan. Vision for 2030*, 2011, 2.

¹⁷ *The National Development Plan*, 430.

God. We are his property. The Afrikaans word *kerk* is not without reason derived from the Greek word, *Kuriake*, meaning those who belong to the *Kurios*, to the Lord. Holiness also means that those who are separated for the Lord live differently. They live with a difference in the world.

The analyses of Daniel Migliore¹⁸ and John Webster¹⁹ illuminate our understanding of holiness. It helps to understand holiness as trinitarian holiness. Holiness is the work of the triune God. Although the notion of sanctification, of being transformed to Christofornity, is usually associated with the work of the Holy Spirit, Migliore and Webster plead that the work of Father, Son and Spirit in justification, sanctification as well as vocation or election be acknowledged. This view honours the traditional confession that the works of the trinity is not divided. In the work of one Person, the other Persons participate.

For Webster²⁰ the holiness of the church is alien sanctity, a nonpossessable holiness. He pleads that the fact that the holiness of the church is based in the triune God not be interpreted in such a way that God and church be united in such a way that a spiritualized ecclesiology which makes no room for the church as historical reality, be developed. The relationship between God and church, on the other hand, can be one of dualism and polarization which develops an image of God as a purely transcendent reality, unrelated to space and time. Over against these dangers of an ontological relationship between God and church, he stresses that the church is holy not by virtue of some ontological participation in the divine holiness, but by virtue of its calling by God, its reception of the divine benefits, and its obedience of faith.

With an appeal to the letter to the Ephesians, what Webster calls that magisterial declaration of proto-trinitarian theology, Webster²¹ argues, with an appeal to Calvin that holiness, innocence and virtue rest in the election and calling of God. He articulates the theological, in the sense of doctrine of God, holiness of the church as follows: "Only God is properly holy; only God may elect the church; only an elect church is sanctified; The church's holiness is thus grounded in the election of God the Father."²²

Webster²³ also argues that the holiness of the church is based in the reconciling work of Jesus Christ. With an appeal to Calvin, and based on an analysis of Ephesians (specifically the reference to baptism in Ephesians 5: 25 – 27; see also 1 Corinthians

¹⁸ D Migliore, *Faith seeking understanding. An introduction to Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991/2004), 235 – 247.

¹⁹ J Webster, *Holiness* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans), 53 – 76.

²⁰ J Webster, *Holiness*, 56 – 57.

²¹ J Webster, *Holiness*, 59 – 60.

²² J Webster, *Holiness*, 60.

²³ J Webster, *Holiness*, 60 – 61.

1:2 and Philippians 1: 1), he argues that Christ's work of reconciliation implies the sanctification of believers. He refers to Calvin's interpretation of baptism in the context of the sanctification that Christ brings. Baptism has a twofold aim, firstly separation or what might be called passive sanctification, and secondly active sanctification, i.e. the concrete participation in the quest for blameless and holy living.

Migliore²⁴, and also Moltmann²⁵, focus on another dimension of Christ's role in sanctification. They explicitly spell out the work of justification by grace through faith brought about by Christ. This justification is the basis of our sanctification. Migliore²⁶ appeals to Calvin who speaks about the double grace that we receive through participation in Christ through faith. We are justified and forgiven in Christ, and thus reconciled to God, and we are sanctified by Christ's Spirit so that we may cultivate a new life in conformity with Christ.

Besides the role of Christ and the Father in our sanctification, the Holy Spirit is also working sanctification. In the previous paragraph mentioned was made of this already. According to Webster²⁷ the work of the Spirit is to bring to completion and full realisation the reality which is willed in election and established in reconciliation.

Webster²⁸ concludes as follows about the work of the Spirit in sanctification:

In sum: If there exists a covenant people and a communion of saints – if the will of the Father to dwell with human kind is effected, if the reconciling work of the Son is realized in human life and history in a body or form of common life – then it is because the Church exists 'in the Spirit', by the Spirit's agency and by the ever-fresh coming of the Spirit, in the realm of transformation in which the Spirit is Lord.

Through the Trinitarian work of sanctification humans are transformed into people of character and virtue. According to American theologians, Bruce Birch and Larry Rasmussen²⁹, an etymological study of the word character indicates that character has to do with the engraving of particular principles into a person. They refer to the Greek roots of the word, which means engraving tool, and by extension the marks made by an engraving tool. Character, hence, has the notion of values which are engraved into a person, over time, so that it becomes assimilated, incarnated, and embodied in the person. Character, like the virtues, therefore, develop over time in communion with God and other human beings.

²⁴ D Migliore, *Faith that seeks understanding*, 235 – 240.

²⁵ J Moltmann, *The church in the power of the Spirit* (London: SCM, 1977), 355

²⁶ D Migliore, *Faith that seeks understanding*, 240.

²⁷ J Webster, *Holiness*, 61.

²⁸ J Webster, *Holiness*, 62.

²⁹ B Birch and L Rasmussen, *Bible and ethics in the Christian life* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1989), 24.

The North American ethicist, Philip Wogaman³⁰, offers a valuable description of virtue. He describes virtue as “a disposition of the will towards a good end, as a tendency to think or behave in accordance with goodness, as a habit of the will to overcome a threat to our ultimate good”. A virtue is a predisposition, a tendency, an intuition to be and to act in a specific way without prior reflection. It almost happens instinctively. It to some extent has an element of unavoidability. The Greek word for virtue, *areté*, refers to the divine power that we have to be and to act in accordance with goodness. Virtue also has the dimension of *habitus*. This implies that virtue is acquired in a process of consistent and collective habitual behaviour.

Greek philosopher, Aristotle,³¹ has identified four so-called cardinal virtues. Cardinal is derived from the Latin word *cardo*, which refers to the hinge of a door. The four cardinal virtues are, therefore, the hinge on which all virtues turn. These virtues are justice, moderation/selfcontrol, discernment/wisdom and courage/fortitude. Centuries later Thomas Aquinas³² added three theological virtues to these four, namely faith, hope and love.

Our democracies in South Africa and in Brazil with its vision of human rights cultures that serve the common good cannot become a reality without leaders and citizens of civic virtue and civic character. Societies hunger for people of public and civic virtue: public wisdom in contexts of complexity, ambivalence, ambiguity, paradoxality, tragedy and *aporia* (dead-end streets); public justice in context of inequalities and injustices on local and global levels; public temperance in context of greed and consumerism amidst poverty and alienation; public fortitude amidst situations of powerlessness and inertia; public faith amidst feelings of disorientation and rootless-ness in contemporary societies; public hope amidst situations of despair and melancholy; public love in societies where public solidarity and compassion are absent.

5. Apostolic and responsible citizenship

The confession of the apostolicity of the church, as expressed amongst others in the notion of the *missio Dei*, in the notion, therefore, of participating in the mission of God in the world, in God's redemptive work in the world, might also assist the quest to define the nature of citizenship today. Apostolicity refers to the witness and mission, preaching and proclamation, celebration of the sacraments, as well as the witness and comprehensive mission of the church.

³⁰ J Philip Wogaman, *Christian moral judgment* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989), 29.

³¹ Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*, translated by M Oswald (Indianapolis: Bobbs:Merrill, 1975).

³² For a discussion of the virtue ethics of Thomas Aquinas see P Nullens and RT Michener, *The matrix of Christian Ethics. Integrating philosophy and moral theology in a postmodern context* (Downer's Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2010), 122 – 126.

The theological discussions during a large part of the 20th century about the nature of the mission of the church helped us to re-discover the heart of Christian faith. From an understanding of mission as the mainly spiritual salvation of individuals, and mission as the introduction of non-western cultures to the riches and blessings of the west, and mission as the planting and extension of churches, and mission as an evolutionary or cataclysmic transformation of the world into the kingdom of God, the emphasis shifted to an understanding of mission as the mission, not of individual believers or the church, but of God. The point was emphasized that mission is the mission of God. Mission is *missio Dei*.³³

South African missiologist, David Bosch, describes the notion of *missio Dei* in an illuminating way. He firstly states that the *missio Dei* has two movements, what I would call an inner-Trinitarian movement and an outer-Trinitarian movement. *Missio Dei* firstly refers to God the Father sending the Son, and to God the Father and the Son sending the Spirit. The second movement refers to the Father, Son and Spirit sending the church into the world. The mission of the church has no life of its own. Our mission is based in the *missio Dei*, which implies that God works in the world and that He calls the church and sends us to participate in his work. And since mission is always God's mission, the mission cannot become triumphalist. The *missio Dei* is the mission of the incarnate and crucified Christ.³⁴

The *missio Dei* reflects the love of the triune God for the world. "To participate in mission is to participate in the movement of God's love toward people, since God is a fountain of sending love."³⁵ Bosch continues:

Mission is, primarily and ultimately, the work of the triune God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, for the sake of the world, a ministry in which the church is privileged to participate . . . Mission has its origin in the heart of God. God is a fountain of sending love. This is the deepest source of mission. It is impossible to penetrate deeper still; there is mission because God loves people.³⁶

Darrell Guder³⁷ also describes the *missio Dei* in terms of God's love for the world. "... on the cross, and at Easter, the salvation of the world was accomplished. God's mission now broadens to embrace the whole world for which Christ died. The gos-

³³ D Bosch, *Transforming mission. Paradigm shifts in theology of mission* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1991), 389 - 393.

³⁴ D Bosch, *Transforming mission*, 390.

³⁵ D Bosch, *Transforming mission*, 390.

³⁶ D Bosch, *Transforming mission*, 392.

³⁷ D Guder, *The continuing conversion of the church* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000), 47.

pel of God's love fulfilled in Christ is now to be made known to everyone." Wilson Niwagila³⁸ of Tanzania describes the *missio Dei* as God's initiative to extend his hospitality, his love, and his salvation to us. The *missio Dei* means that God Himself is the Sender, the Messenger and the Message.

Theologians like Karl Barth and Karl Hartenstein, and important ecumenical church meetings like those of the International Missionary Council (IMC) in Tambaran (1938) and especially Willingen (1952), and also the 1961 New Delhi Assembly of the World Council of Churches, as well as Vatican II, adopted this understanding of mission as the mission of God, and of mission as an essential and constitutive part of Christian and ecclesial faith.³⁹

The *Missio Dei* has various dimensions. The *missio Dei* clearly entails a wider understanding of mission than the earlier views of mission. It portrays the aim of God's work in the world as the total salvation of the total person in the total world. Bosch⁴⁰ warns, however, that a broadening of the idea of mission in a way that excludes a Christological focus, would run against the original motive of the *missio Dei* as articulated by especially Karl Barth. Bosch pleads for a broader understanding of *missio Dei* from within a Trinitarian framework, which therefore entails a Christocentric focus. Neither should the ecclesiological dimension of the *missio Dei* be neglected. The danger exists that the work of God outside the boundaries of the church is emphasized in such a way that the church is no longer viewed as an essential participant in the work of God in the world.

The aim of the *missio Dei* is the fulfillment, operationalization and actualization of the reign of God. In Romans 14 verse 17 the apostle Paul identifies justice, peace and joy as the central features of the kingdom of God.⁴¹

The notion of apostolicity as described above paves the way for developing responsible citizenship as loving witness about, testimony to and participation in the fulfilment of a life of justice, peace and joy for all. Drawing upon Dietrich Bonhoeffer Larry Rasmussen⁴² gives a very helpful description of responsibility:

³⁸ W Niwagila, Partnership in participation, in E Helander and W Niwagila (eds), *Partnership and power. A quest for reconstruction in mission* (Usa River, Tanzania: Makumira Publications Seven, 1996), 109 – 110.

³⁹ D Bosch, *Transforming mission*, p.493. For another discussion of the historical development of the notion of the *missio Dei* also see B F Fubara-Manuel, *In the missio Dei. Reflections on the being and calling of the church in the sovereign mission of God* (Calabar, Nigeria: Presby Press, 2007), 1 – 20.

⁴⁰ D Bosch, *Transforming mission*, 391 – 393.

⁴¹ For a helpful discussion of these features of God's reign, see D Guder, *Missional church. A vision for the sending of the church in North America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998), 90 – 91.

⁴² L Rasmussen, The ethics of responsible action, in J De Gruchy (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 219.

Responsibility in the first instance, then, is the basic answering ... of a person to life itself, the fundamental response of one's own life to life as constituted in and by relationships. Responsibility is an overall life-orientation affecting all particular actions and specific responsibilities. To use Bonhoeffer's terms: 'responsibility is the total and realistic response of man (sic.) to the claim of God and of our neighbour'.

Responsible living means that we respond to God's call and claim upon us. We answer faithfully to God. Based on this faithful responsiveness to God we anticipate and pro-actively respond to the questions and challenges of contemporary human and natural society, as well as the envisaged plights, needs and quests of future generations.

Responsible, even purposeful and purposive, citizenship, citizenship with a mission, might then entail that we respond faithfully to the call of fellow-citizens and human beings and of the rest of creation upon us to foster a life of justice, peace and joy for all.

6. Conclusion

These ecclesiological insights have the potential to enrich citizenship discourses in South Africa. Christian theology can table these insights in accessible language in pluralistic, interdisciplinary and intersectorial discourses in the publics of the academy and broader society. And perhaps theology's contribution to these discourses might have more credibility and impact where there is a community of faith that visibly embodies this heavenly and earthly citizenship of catholicity and inclusivity, unity and action for justice, holiness and civic virtue, apostolicity and public responsibility.