A case for 'anticipatory leadership':
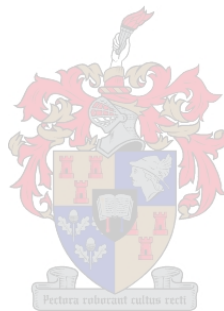# Christian eschatology and anticipation as a leadership competency for ministers in an 'age of perplexity'.

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Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of theology in the Faculty of Theology at Stellenbosch University

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Declaration

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Abstract

Communities around the world are experiencing accelerating social change at a bewildering pace. Rapid globalisation is spurring vast advancements that require constant adaption. While society values the welfare that global innovations and developments contribute, there are unintended consequences as spin-offs. The modern landscape is filled with environments that are full of complexities interjecting immense uncertainty into the social fabric of society. In a sophisticated and challenging modern world, religious leaders lead faith communities. The associated uncertainties of modern living have the potential to paralyse ministry leaders and cloud their outlook of the future. How do religious leaders faithfully lead in a fast-changing and disruptive world? How is the modern context impairing leaders' thinking about the future? Is the future a constant source of concern that leaders find perplexing or is it filled with hope? These are the issues the study explores.

The Christian tradition contains the domain of eschatology which has rich reflections on the subject of time, temporality and the future. This can assist religious leaders to lead faithfully in the face of vast uncertainties. Christian eschatology and its traits of anticipation, expectation and hope can be articulated into a leadership competency that has immense value. The study will focus on formulating a religious leadership competency that can adequately respond to the modern environment. By examining the global context and analysing its consequences on leadership, a competency would be introduced to what this study calls "anticipatory leadership". This can assist religious leaders to lead faithfully in a context of overwhelming change.

Opsomming

Gemeenskappe regoor die wêreld ervaar versnelde sosiale verandering teen 'n verbysterende pas. Blitsige globalisering lewer groot vooruitgang wat konstante aanpassing verg. Terwyl die samelewing die welstand waardeer wat wêreldwye innovasies en ontwikkelings bring, is daar onbeplande gevolge as newe-effekte. Die moderne landskap is gevul met omstandighede wat vol kompleksiteite is wat geweldige onsekerheid in die sosiale weefsel van die samelewing tussenwerp. In 'n gesofistikeerde en uitdagende moderne wêreld lei godsdienstige leiers geloofsgemeenskappe. Die gepaardgaande onsekerhede van die moderne lewe het die potensiaal om bedieningsleiers lam te lê en hul uitkyk op die toekoms te vertroebel. Hoe lei godsdiensleiers in 'n vinnig veranderende en ontwrigtende wêreld hul gemeenskappe? Hoe benadeel die moderne konteks leiers se denke oor die toekoms? Is die toekoms 'n konstante bron van kommer wat leiers verwarrend vind of is dit met hoop gevul? Dit is die kwessies wat die studie ondersoek.

Die Christelike tradisie bevat die domein van eskatologie wat ryk besinning oor die onderwerp van tyd, tydelikheid en die toekoms het. Dit kan godsdienstige leiers help om te midde van groot onsekerhede getrou gemeenskappe te lei. Christelike eskatologie en sy eienskappe van afwagting, verwagting en hoop kan verwoord word in 'n leierskapsbevoegdheid wat ontsaglike waarde het. Die studie sal fokus op die formulering van 'n godsdienstige leierskapsbevoegdheid wat voldoende op die eise van die moderne omgewing kan reageer. Deur die globale konteks te ondersoek en die gevolge daarvan op leierskap te ontleed, sal 'n bevoegdheid bekendgestel word wat hierdie studie "antisiperende leierskap" noem. Dit kan godsdienstige leiers help om in 'n konteks van oorweldigende verandering getrou hul roeping uitleef en gemeenskappe begelei.

Dedications and acknowledgements

To my loving wife, Marlett:

Thank you for giving me valuable time to endeavour this study.

To our son, Luca, born during this study:

You are our future legacy.

Thank you to Prof. Ian Nell for academic supervision and guidance.

Thank you to my Dutch Reformed Church faith family for making this study possible.

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Soli Deo Gloria

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Chapter 1: Research problem and design

1.1   Background to and motivation for the study

Modern society truly lives in a prosperous time in history. Research[1] shows that, over the past two centuries, global living standards, health, literacy, education and freedom have increased, while extreme poverty has been decreasing (Roser, 2017). This is partly due to industrial society's mantra of growth, expansion and acceleration. While these developments have brought great gifts, they have also birthed unintended consequences. As the globalised world develops, human civilisations have entered a fundamentally new era, with an underlying basis in advances in communication and connectivity, which has brought forth a myriad of disruptive change (Van den Berg, 2020:2).

Contributing to the changes and disruptions are multiple factors. Louis Fourie (in Van den Berg, 2020:13) notes that, in human history, it has often been single agents, like steam, electricity and computerisation, that have led to major societal changes, but in modern times individuals are experiencing a multitude[2] of confluent advances that are reshaping society. Regarding this era, Gosselin and Tindemans (2016:17) state that the social environment has three distinct attributes that will increase as time progresses: the rate of change, uncertainty, and complexity. It is thus undisputed that the world is changing at an unprecedented rate and it therefore comes as no surprise that our age is defined by some as the 'era of mega-change' (West, 2016).

Spinoffs stemming from our incrementally changing world have left modern society in a great deal of uncertainty. Our social world is exposed to a constant state of flux and is experiencing rapid change at an unparalleled rate.[3] Large volumes of literature have been dedicated to the uncertain, turbulent and complex environment we live in, and

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[1] A collaborative research effort by academics in the Oxford Martin Programme on Global Development at the University of Oxford.

[2] Some of the recent forces driving shifts in society originate from the evolution from the industrial world to the fourth industrial revolution. The 'knowledge society' has brought major developments in artificial intelligence, the internet of things, robotics, nanotechnology, quantum computing and bioengineering, etc., which are transforming modern-day life.

[3] Following Kurzweil's "The Law of Accelerating Returns" thesis, and "Moore's Law" – predictions by Gordon Moore – these indicators point to a future in which the rate of change (especially technologically) will not be slowing down.

the concomitant disruptions to our social environment. The global ramifications experienced are tearing into the social fabric of society and can be felt on a personal level. They disrupt any simplistic narrative of individual identity and introduce complexity and uncertainty into the process of understanding who we are (Melluish, 2014:540).

It is from within this reality that the popular concept of VUCA[4] was formulated, which is widely used to describe and articulate the modern landscape. Anthropologists, sociologists, economists and corporate figures regularly refer to this acronym to define the social environment of the 21st century and the deep changes it has brought about in all spheres of life.

As a theologian living out my calling in the ministry, a VUCA world invoking deep societal changes poses great challenges to leading and guiding a faith community. Navigating uncertain times in a constructive way has become a competence I have to attain in order not to become perplexed by the vastness of the complex societal changes and disruptions characterising the future. This has become even more evident in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is these experiences in church ministry that have led to the undertaking of this research. This study is a quest to research how theologians, in practising religious leadership, position themselves in living out their calling by reimagining the unknown future when confronted by the realities of a fast-changing and disruptive world. With this motivation in mind, this research venture brings about the problem statement elaborated in the next section.

1.2   Problem statement

As it is expected from clergy to guide believers and churches, the realities of a VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous) world poses numerous challenges to religious leadership. Religious communities are not immune to the deep and fundamental changes occurring and their bewildering consequences.[5] Saane (in Kok

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[4] VUCA is an acronym for volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous, drawn from the leadership theories of Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus (2005), which describe the disruptive and chaotic environment in the 21st century (especially for leadership).

[5] Some repercussions can be observed on local soil and confirmed in reports by the Dutch Reformed Church's Centre for Public Testimony (Hanekom, 2019). Its report ,"Vyf uitdagings wat ons toekoms gaan beïnvloed" (Five changes that will influence our future), observes intensified migration, low

and Van den Heuvel, 2019:50) acknowledges that people often experience a lack of control in modern living. This is partly due to the pace of life, which has accelerated relentlessly over the past few centuries. These influences are evolving into a "disconcertingly complex environment in which axioms of the past appear increasingly inadequate", according to corporate philosopher Richard Hames (2007:3). The consequences manifest in insecurity and perplexity, which have led to a malaise in modern civilization. The magnitude of uncertainty and complexity that citizens need to navigate can indeed be overwhelming.

On the psychological front, the unpredictable and disruptive forces experienced today provoke what sociologist Zygmunt Bauman (2000) would describe as *Unsicherheit*: a complex combination of uncertainty, insecurity and vulnerability created at the hands of a fast-moving globalised world. What is fuelling this is a sense of not being in control. Bauman (2007:26) notes that our insecurity and uncertainty can be attributed to and are "born of a sense of impotency: we seem to be no longer in control, whether singly, severally or collectively". The constantly accelerating changes people encounter can be experienced as alienating, leaving them with a sense of living 'wasted lives', Bauman (2005) concludes.

The evangelical Christian polling firm, the Barna Group (2017), affirms these findings and points out that the complex influences experienced in present society pose a tremendous challenge to the clergy. The complexity and uncertainty in which religious leaders operate could potentially be paralysing to clergy and could have the consequence that ministers do not proactively address or prepare churches for the inevitable changes the future brings. In addition, a post-colonial and diverse South African context adds complexity to the already overwhelming societal disruptions.

Naudé (in Van den Berg, 2020) notes that theology is always in need of reinterpretation when it is exposed to societal shifts. Societal changes not only confront theology, but also religious leadership. Consequently, reconceptualising religious leadership should also be undertaken in the face of disruptive societal

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social cohesion and climate change amongst the things that pose challenges in a South African context. These factors correlate with the fallout of relentless global change.

changes. Osmer (2008:18), when reflecting on the role of religious leaders, builds on Charles Gerkin's pastoral leadership model and states that the role of congregation leaders is inter alia as 'interpretive guides'. Ministers should be identified as pastoral guides travelling with congregants into new territory.

The VUCA realities, in the light of a minister's role, lead to the following challenges: How do ministers combat and overcome the profound uncertainties associated with modern life, and assist in being faithful 'interpretive guides' in a complex world? Into what theological roots do religious leaders delve to address the effects of the immense societal changes under way? In the light of a VUCA world, which aspects of Reformed theology could assist religious leadership in navigating the unsteady modern landscape? These challenges lead the study to formalise its research question as elaborated in the next section.

1.3   Research question

With the issues at hand stemming from what has been described above, the research question directing this study was as follows:

• How can Christian eschatology, with its rich dimensions of time, anticipation and imagination, facilitate a vital leadership competency called 'anticipatory leadership' for the ministry in an age of perplexity?

In the quest to answer this research question, the following sub-question were also addressed:

- How do ministry leaders reimagine the unknown future when confronted by the realities of a fast-changing and disruptive world?

By exploring the research question and gathering relevant insights, the study intended to shed light on how the problem can be addressed. The aim of the research is explained in the following section.

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1.4   Research aim and significance

The Reformed Christian faith is rich in eschatological concepts. As concepts like 'time' and 'the future' are at the core of what it means to be human, ministers' eschatological understanding potentially has a critical role to play in their lives and ministry. In having a renewed 'eschatological consciousness', inter alia a heightened sense of God in our future, theologians might increase their capacity to manage and address uncertainties and minimise being perplexed by contemporary disruptions. Instead of resisting intricate change, religious leaders might embrace the unforeseeable future, given that the future is reinterpreted from a deep eschatological viewpoint. This, in turn, could potentially increase theological vitality in a world defined by increasing uncertainty and complexity.

Thus, a potential competency for ministers could be 'anticipatory leadership'. Futures studies, a branch of the social sciences, provides some insights into the research question. Studies on 'anticipatory behaviour', i.e. a behaviour that 'uses' the future in its actual decisional process, seem to assist in the art of sensemaking of complexity and change (Poli, 2017). Poli (2017), as well as Miller (2012, 2013), indicates that how we think about the future affects the way we make decisions. Miller (2012:40) elaborates on this, stating that "few aspects of our conscious reality are as powerful as the imagined future for determining what we do".

Therefore, thinking about the future initiates a way to improve the quality of our present decision-making. To be highly oriented towards the future is to not leave it to chance, but to shape and alter it intentionally into a preferred future. Thus, thinking about the future affects the future. In anticipating, we are actively influencing and changing the future. It is for this reason that Van den Berg and Ganzevoort (2014:169) state that our expectations of the future are to a large extent performative in nature.

Although we cannot predict the unforeseeable future, we can develop a 'future-oriented mindset' that fosters a disposition of not fearing the uncertainty of the future, but rather embracing it. This could provide a constructive way to live with the rapid change our age is defined by and help embrace the fundamental unknowability of the future. When this is embraced, a new social condition can be reimagined against the backdrop of the unknowable future.

Correspondingly, the research aims to propose a leadership competency, namely 'anticipatory leadership', as a potential religious leadership competency in an age of uncertainty and perplexity. The study will offer to research the positive contribution of 'anticipatory leadership' and the role Christian eschatology can play as a competency to handle the uncertainty and complexity of the unpredictable future. Reformed eschatology, which cultivates the capacity to imagine an alternate future possibility, might be considered a necessary leadership competency for ministry. If this possibility is credible, this study will be making a case for 'anticipatory leadership' as a vital ministry skill set. This could assist ministers in better handling the challenges posed by an uncertain future and help them navigate churches as faithful 'interpretive guides'. Equipped with this outlook, it may assist religious leaders not just to survive in an uncertain climate, but also to thrive in the face of the challenges it brings. It might help religious leaders to make more sense of what is happening in the world and act faithfully within it.

1.5   Theoretical framework

A theoretical framework is a way of presenting and explaining information in a research study. It is a way to critically engage with and evaluate the given research problem and provides parameters for the field within which the scope of research will be organised. In this section, the numerous elements of this study's theoretical framework are explained.

As the praxis of this study flows towards conceptualising a religious leadership competency that is exercised in the context of the church, practical theology is the preferred academic field. The research question stems from leadership in relation to the ongoing life of the church. This context is at the heart of the academic orientation of practical theology. Although practical theology has interests beyond the church, Pete Ward (2017:11) mentions that the academic practice of practical theology has an ecclesial perspective and purpose, and thus theological reflection in this discipline only makes sense when it is in relation to the church. As the focus is on clergy conducting active church leadership, practical theology is the preferred academic departure point. What does the academic field of practical theology consist of? This is examined in the next section.

1.6   Practical theology

Practical theology is the academic endeavour of understanding faith practices. It has one foot in the world of scholarly academics and the other in the world of the ordinary, lived religious practices of believers. Practical theology thus maintains and sustains a mutual relationship between theological theory and theological practices. The primary subject matter of practical theology is some form of Christian praxis in the contemporary world (Shults, 2006). It therefore joins the two worlds of academics and the 'lived experience' of believers. On the latter, Gerkin (1986:12) notes:

> … pastors and pastoral care theorists must constantly have one ear open to the shifts that take place in the ways persons experience their needs and problems of living and the other open to the currents of change in ways of understanding and interpreting human needs.

As a result, there is a complex interplay of theory and practice when it comes to practical theology. Practice gives rise to theory, while theory often has practical implications (Cahalan and Mikoski, 2014:2). Thus, in its nature, theology is 'practical', but practice is also 'theological'. Practical theology is consequently born out of reflecting on actions and practices, but also has a normative function by supposing practical implications. It thus has a 'functional approach', but should not be reduced merely to pragmatic tasks.

This theoretical framework of practical theology can be understood as a "bridge approach" (Osmer, 2008:17). It bridges and joins academic theory and the 'local realities' of believers. Macallan and Hendriks (2013:196) call these "local realities" the 'local' dimension of practical theology. They note that theology does not begin in the academy, but in reality. The context of believers that shapes their lives and in which their communities are rooted are a critical component of practical theology (Macallan and Hendriks, 2013:196).

Recalling the metaphor of a 'bridge', practical theology has a 'two-way movement' between theory and practices and therefore has a theory-praxis relational character. This bridge approach, with its 'two-way movement', can be seen in the structure of this study. It begins with the local dimension by examining some of the local realities. The

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research then departs from the 'lived experience' of ministers in relation to their community and the VUCA world. The research questions begin broad and examine global shifts that go hand in hand with the global nature of practical theology, as noted by Macallan and Hendriks (2013:201). They state that practical theology must pay attention to global factors that are affecting local realities. As this study investigates these global realities, they fit neatly into the nature of practical theology. But practical theology does not only observe global and local 'shifts' and 'experiences'. Practical theology also bridges these observations to theory, as mentioned. Through a hermeneutical analysis, the 'local realities' are understood, theologically interpreted and reflected on. From this it again goes back to the local dimension and offers a pragmatic strategy that responds appropriately to the research questions, hence the 'two-way movement'.

Practical theology has also developed into an interdisciplinary approach. Since practical theology has to do with the 'lived experience' of believers, it coincides with the social sciences, of which the primary purpose is to explain the meaning of a phenomenon so that we may gain knowledge to act in more effective ways. This can also be observed in this research study.

Within this theoretical framework, the present study is an attempt to theologically reflect on the analytical character of practical theology in relation to the research question, but also with an inclination towards future orientation (a disposition often lacking in practical theology). Practical theologians Van den Berg and Ganzevoort (2014:166) discuss and promote the idea that practical theology is a future-oriented discipline. Both theologians point out that, as practical theology deals primarily with practices and thus focuses on what Osmer (2008) would call the pragmatic task. Van den Berg and Ganzevoort (2014:167) on this note adds that there is often a predicament in trying to solve today's problems instead of preventing tomorrow's. They note that, "[m]oreover, the position and authority of practical theology suffer from the fact that we are constantly reorienting ourselves to new situations rather than steering consistently into the future" (Van den Berg and Ganzevoort, 2014:168). This attribute of practical theology that van den Berg and Ganzevoort (2014) brings to light would also, to a certain degree, emerge in this study and give it a futurological

character. For this reason the study would include insights from relevant fields of social sciences like anthropology, psychology, sociology and futures studies.

With the considerations of the theoretical framework and research design, practical theology is the preferred field of research. It is within this academic framework that the scope of the research is undertaken.

1.7 Research design and methodology

The research methodology took the form of a literature study. The sources of literature were published bodies of knowledge and use was made of a variety of secondary sources, mostly consisting of academic books, scholarly journals and articles. These secondary sources included the voices of theologians, philosophers, sociologists, futurists and psychologists.

The literature study embodied the characteristics of two research frameworks. First, it made use of applied research, which entails solving a specific issue by addressing it and establishing a strategy. Second, it made use of conceptual research, which consists of formally developed concepts that are studied and that provide the building blocks of the research. Specific concepts in this study were compared and connections could be examined.

A suitable and well-established practical theological research structure is the 'pastoral cycle'. Macallan and Hendriks (2013:195) make reference to Ballerd and Prichard (2006), who state that the pastoral cycle has become widely accepted and used in practical theology. It is a hermeneutical tool that sits at the heart of any contemporary perspective of practical theology (Macallan and Hendriks, 2013:196). The pastoral cycle was thus a well-used, systematic structure for interpreting and analysing this study's research question.

The pastoral cycle has a critical and systematic approach that centres on four interpretive questions that were used to guide the research study. These four tasks are visualised in the illustration below.
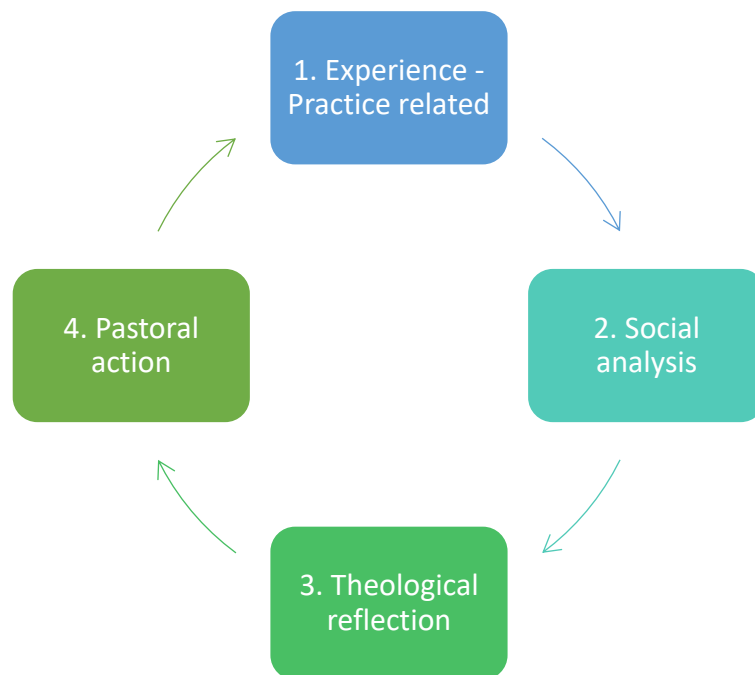
This research framework consists of the four interpretive tasks that embody the basic structure of practical theological interpretation. Each of the steps in this cycle and spiral movement develop from the previous one and move forward to the next task. These tasks consists of the following objectives:

1.7.1.   The experience task

This task consists of identifying and focusing on the context of the problem that needs interpretation. This task has a searching and investigative character, which consists of naming, defining, clarifying and narrowing the problem in a systematic manner. It explores the realities, such as global and local factors, that influence the research problem and gathers information to analyse the context. Macallan and Hendriks (2013:198) write that practical theology sets off from a dialectical process by being attentive to the "emerging questions" that come from the daily cultural realities of individuals. It is from this context that the first task departs.

The researcher's own 'social locus' was the point of departure of this study. Regarding this, Macallan and Hendriks (2013:198) note: "Someone's experience, or one's own personal experience, gives birth to the pastoral concern that begins the pastoral cycle

for Practical Theology". It is the lived experience of being a minister in a local church that is the impulse for the 'pastoral concern' that sits at the core of the first task of the pastoral cycle. The first task thus consist of reflections that originate from the experienced reality. This task is led by the reflective question: "What is happening?" Sociologists use critical social theory to set the foundations of the research problem from which the next tasks follows.

1.7.2. The social analysis task

If the information gathered is noted by a sensitive observer, the findings of the first task are brought into conversation with theories of the arts and sciences. This task calls for theoretical interpretation and consists of probing the consequences of the research problem, identifying its factors and delineating linkages. This endeavour is guided by the question: "Why is this going on?" Appropriate cross-disciplinary dialogue is utilised in this task.

1.7.3. The theological reflection task

This task calls on theological reflections to shed light on the research question. The research problem is viewed against the backdrop of theology to analyse how one might respond. By tapping into the Christian tradition and utilising Christian teachings, theological insights and concepts are introduced that pave the way for addressing the issue. This task is steered by the question: "What ought to be going on?"

1.7.4. The pastoral action task

This task consists of formulating an appropriate action to bring about change. It engages in developing a specific response to shape a desirable direction and aim. A suitable strategy of action is proposed based on the insights gathered by the previous tasks. This task is directed by the question: "How might we respond?"

This structure of reflective practice was the preferred research design to be used. A cross-disciplinary approach was also followed to contribute to the depth of this research. By tapping into the knowledge bases of a number of social sciences branches, namely anthropology, psychology, sociology and futures studies, these diverse insights helped provide a deeper understanding of the research question and aim. Peering into academic fields outside of theology, this study brings various

concepts into discourse with theology to enrich and strengthen the argument used in the research. It is within these parameters that the study was conducted.

1.8 Limitations and delimitations of the study

When embarking on research it is important to note the 'local soil' on which it is written. The researcher was well aware that this study was being done in the light of a post-colonial African context and the significance of this for the writing process. Therefore, this study was written from and for a South African context. South Africa is an immensely diverse and culturally rich country, with a plethora of religious expressions. This poses interesting challenges when reflecting on the main theme of this research, namely leadership. Leadership contexts vary across South Africa. South Africa is a highly multifaceted country and consists of people and leaders who live in multiple contexts of modernity. Some leaders lead in a postmodern context, while others lead in rural contexts where aspects of the research observations might not be applicable. Modernity thus will have many faces in South Africa. This is a reality embraced by the study and of which it is conscious when making use of authors who have Western or European theological orientations.

When embarking on research that includes reflections on leadership, there is some essential aspects to mention. In the light of developments in the social sciences, there is a growing body of academics who write on leadership and mention that there seems to be a 'romance' with leadership that could become very simplistic, especially when it is focused individualistically. An evolution in the awareness of developments in leadership highlights that academic reflections on leadership should embark from a "social constructionist meta-theory".[6] The researcher is well aware of the contemporary dispositions on leadership, for instance 'social identity theory' and 'reciprocal determinism theory'. Leadership is not a phenomenon birthed from a void, nor is it something acquired in isolation. Departing from a constructivist philosophical paradigm, the study acknowledges that leadership is indeed situational and the context in which a leader leads is crucial. In mentioning this, the study does not intend

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[6] 'Social constructionist meta-theory' is a social psychological framework. In terms of leadership, 'social identity theory' would focus on the social environment in which a leader leads (for instance, bringing into account the group dynamics), rather than focusing solely on the individual. For a detailed discussion on this, see Haslam et al. (2011).

to promote another simplistic reflection on leadership that adds to the body of 'classical, traditional or authoritarian leadership'.

While the researcher is aware of the above, the research endeavour for this study is indeed focused on the individual. Although its focus is ministers, with the intent to lift their leadership consciousness to cope in a VUCA world, it will hopefully ripple through to faith communities. The study hopes to cultivate a competency to heighten a certain theological awareness among ministers that can also enrich the wider church.

Lastly, the researcher is aware of the scope and depth of the three main themes, namely globalisation, futures studies and eschatology. The study is conscious that a dissertation can be dedicated to each of these subjects on its own. Taking into account the extent of this literature study, however, the study has opted to focus exclusively on the relevant parts of each theme that concern the research problem.

1.9   Chapter outline

The study consists of arguments in chapters building up the main argument.

Chapter 1 – Introduction, research problem and design.

Chapter 2 – The second chapter consists mainly of exploring the first objective of the pastoral cycles by naming, clarifying, defining and narrowing the research problem. This is guided by the research question: "What is happening?" It calls attention to societal changes, and the study turned to contemporary research that examines abrupt shifts in society. By having a 'funnel' approach in this chapter, the research sets off with a broad perspective by reflecting on globalisation. After identifying and unpacking societal shifts, the scope is narrowed by introducing the VUCA concept. This helps to conceptualise the nature of the modern world and get a grip on global shifts. With the further help of social theorists, insights from social sciences help to explain why these changes are occurring, along with the repercussions of a VUCA world on religious leaders, especially how uncertainty impairs their future outlook. The second chapter covers the first task of the pastoral cycle and sets the basis of the research problem.

Chapter 3 – Social sciences branch, futures studies is introduced in this chapter as it is relevant to the central question of this study. Futures studies, as a field of social inquiry, also grapples with the same core issue: How to cope with change and complexity brought about by an uncertain future. We cannot control the future, but we can control our thinking about the future, which in return influences how we respond to it. Therefore, knowledge of the elements that shape the future assist us in improving the future. In this chapter, the research reveals why thinking about the future, inter alia 'prospective thinking', is of significance when confronted by the unknowable future. Developing a 'future-oriented mindset' might be a key competency in managing the unknowable and complex future. This chapter focuses on the second task of the pastoral cycle.

Chapter 4 – In this section, theological reflections on the research question are unpacked. This task asks the question: "What ought to be going on?" This part of the research builds on the previous chapter by including insights from the field of futures studies, in conversation with Reformed theology's eschatological dimension. How do Christian believers comprehend the future? The rich Christian tradition of Reformed eschatology will be used to assist the research problem. Both disciplines are deeply influenced by concepts of time and thus share commonalities that complement each other. By connecting these fields, a rich perspective can obtained to build up the research.

Introductory insights into Reformed eschatology were researched, with a focus on the work of Jürgen Moltmann. Moltmann (1996:22-34) puts forth that the future is not only *futurum* (referring to the future tense), but also *adventus* (referring to that which is 'to come'). With this in mind, eschatology assists in reconfiguring relationships in time (past, present and future). The insights from eschatology intertwine with aspects of futures studies, and properties such as anticipation, imagination, forecasting, backcasting and expectation were examined. By unpacking these aspects, this chapter expresses the noteworthy influence of cultivating an 'eschatological consciousness'. Equipped with insights from futures studies and the eschatological dimension of theology, the next chapter is dedicated to building a case for – 'anticipatory leadership'.

Chapter 5 – In this chapter, the focus turns to the pastoral action task. This task asks the question, "How might we respond?" and poses a well-conditioned response to the research question. As the second chapter states that the future unfortunately cannot be outsmarted and change is constant, religious leaders can enhance their 'future literacy' to constructively handle the unforeseeable future. Equipped with Reformed eschatology, which cultivates the capacity to imagine alternate future possibilities, it assists clergy to develop a 'future-oriented' mindset, which in turn helps them live with fundamental changes and embrace complexity. By having a heightened sense of eschatology, an 'eschatological consciousness' can be cultivated. This flows into what the research formulates as 'anticipatory leadership'. A major part of this section is attributed to what such leadership competency entails and why it is essential against the backdrop of an ever-changing world.

Chapter 6 – Reflecting on all the research gathered, this chapter addresses how to systematically summarise the arguments put forward by this research and how they build up to answering the research question. This section concludes that 'anticipatory leadership' might be considered a vital leadership capacity in an age of uncertainty and perplexity.

Chapter 7 **–** Bibliography

Chapter 2: The 'age of perplexity' and the future

2.1   Introduction

In this chapter, the research problem is defined by describing the immense uncertainty religious leaders face and the consequences this imposes on their future outlook. A 'funnel' approach (see illustration below) will be used to gradually narrow down the focus of the research question. Firstly, the broad-based context that religious leaders face will be examined. This will be achieved by exploring elements of globalisation and identifying global disruptive forces of the 21st century. These changes reverberate in the daily lives of individuals and fuel uncertainty. To understand this, the study will unpack the concept of 'social acceleration' and how it fosters VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous) contexts. Narrowing down the scope even further, the psychological effects imposed by a fluid 'liquid modern' world on clergy will be examined critically. Finally, uncertainty and how it affects future thinking for religious leaders will be researched. These findings, ranging from the macro-level (focusing on external global shifts) towards the micro-level (inner psychological experiences), set the foundation for the research problem. This systematic and analytical approach corresponds with the first task of the pastoral cycle, as explained in the first chapter.
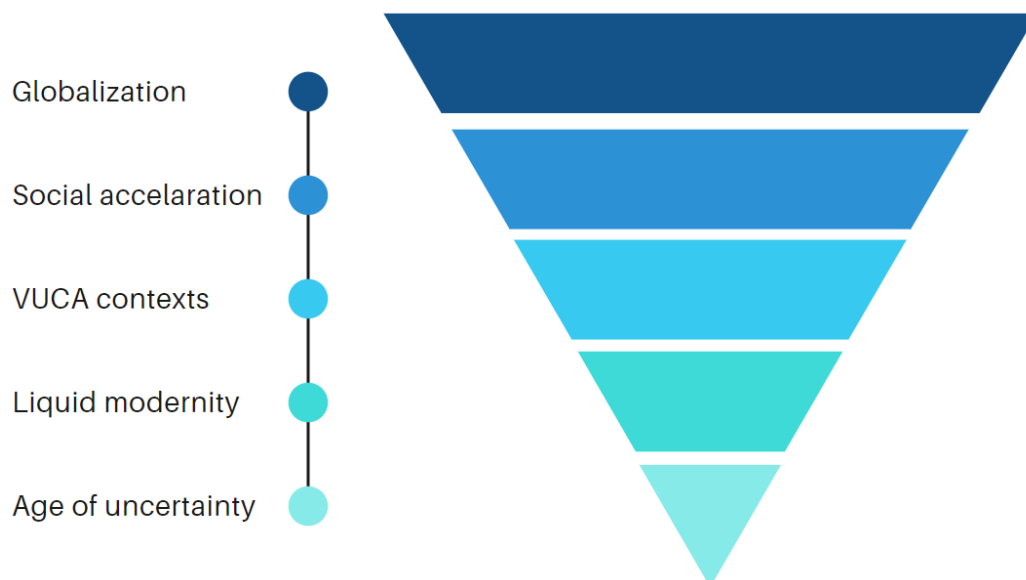
2.2   Global change

"While we were sleeping the world changed." – Thomas Friedman, *The world is flat* (2007)

Global shifts have been occurring swiftly and to such an extent that it feels as if the world has been transformed 'overnight'. This may resonate with many people. In a short period of one century, major innovative breakthroughs have occurred, heralding in an era of numerous developments. Multiple factors are contributing to these changes. In human history, often single agents like steam, electricity and computerisation have led to major societal changes, but in modern times, individuals are experiencing a multitude of confluent advances that are reshaping society (Fourie, in Van den Berg, 2020:13). A major contributor to the above is the rise of the internet. It has connected individuals, corporations and countries from opposite locations on earth. This has resulted in a torrent of change and has fast-tracked many developments, such as the evolution from an industrial age to a post-industrial age (there is even talk of the 4th industrial revolution) in the 21st century.

Friedman (2007) argues that this 'global interconnectivity', advanced by the emergence of the internet, has 'flattened' the earth 'overnight'. Global interconnectedness has dismantled many market boundaries and has interconnected countries and their citizens, enabling them to communicate and trade with each other relatively easily. This juggernaut of change has caused the world to become so 'flat' that it has become a 'global village'.[7] It is this interconnected, dense and tangled global world that is referred to as the globalised world.

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[7] A term coined by Canadian philosopher, Marshall McLuhan, in the 1960s that refers to the phenomenon of the 'shrinking' world by people all over the earth coming together through electronic communication interconnections such as the internet. An interesting example of this 'shrinking world' is the popular idea of 'six degrees of separation'. Accelerated by social media, people are linked by chains of acquaintances. This idea states that an individual is within six connection 'chains' apart from anyone on earth. Some experiments (see Weisman, 2003) suggest that the world is even smaller than we expected, considering the interconnecting contributions of social media companies like Facebook.

Friedman (2016:26-27),[8] who has done extensive observation and research about globalisation, identifies our age as the "age of accelerations". It is an age defined by a massive increase in the rate, magnitude and dynamics of change. The German sociologist, Hartmut Rosa (2019:40), confirms that modern society is constantly experiencing 'waves of acceleration' as speed-enhancing innovation occurs. It is this increase in intensification of interconnectedness and change that Giddens (1991:63-64) identifies as 'globalisation'. While global trade is nothing new, the intensified pace of global trade and the upsurge in international economic activity is what defies the phenomenon called 'globalisation'.

Together, these changes make up what South African practical theologian, Nelus Niemandt (2019b:52), calls the 'Great Acceleration'. It alters nearly every single aspect of modern life and has a tremendous effect on economies, geopolitics, the environment, and culture. The Spanish sociologist, Manual Castells (2009:1-2), observes and confirms that unfettered globalisation in its various forms and conflicting trends is a powerful force shaping the world and our lives. The effects of globalisation are incredibly vast and difficult to comprehend, but some of the main elements that globalisation affects directly are the following: Technological disruption driving discontinuous change,[9] geo-political tension,[10] climate change, mass migrations, populism and anti-establishment movements, and economic inequality, to name just a few.

These global mega-drivers are becoming dispersed to daily life and are affecting and altering how we live our lives. They affect the way we live, communicate, work and socialise. The sheer speed at which society is being transformed at the hands of globalisation is historically unprecedented (Rosa, 2019:75). The changes associated with these developments inject many complexities and uncertainties into daily life.

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[8] For a detailed perspective with plenty of examples on globalisation, see Friedman's books *The World is Flat (2005)* and *Thank You for Being Late: An Optimist's Guide to Thriving in the Age of Accelerations* (2016).

[9] Major technological drivers of the 4th industrial revolution include artificial intelligence, bio-engineering, the internet of things, robotics, self-driving cars, three-dimensional printing, nanotechnology, quantum computing, virtual and augmented reality, and the development in new material sciences like graphene. For a more detailed discussion, especially of the implications of the 4th industrial revolution on theology, see Van den Berg (2020).

[10] Examples include Brexit and trade wars like the China–United States trade war.

Globalisation and the change it imposes can be a double-edged sword. It has truly birthed a wealth of advancements and many positive contributions that enrich humanity, but also some unanticipated consequences. Professor in social innovation, Diane Nijs (2015:1), highlights this and states that the world is less predictable, more uncertain and more interdependent than ever before. One of the consequences of the globalised 'ecosphere' is 'social acceleration', which will be explained in the next section.

2.3 Globalisation and 'social acceleration'

It is difficult to comprehend how globalisation affects individual lives. To decipher these changes, the sociologist, Hartmut Rosa, makes critical contributions. Rosa's work on a comprehensive sociology of acceleration and on modern temporal culture is a new voice analysing and critiquing some of the effects of globalisation. Using critical social theory, he explores and examines how modern society is changing in the hands of globalisation. In Rosa's book, *Social Acceleration: A New Theory of Modernity*, he introduces the concept of 'social acceleration'. This is a key concept for the research problem. Rosa analyses how globalisation has sped up many aspects of life, resulting in the quickening tempo of modern social life. He stipulates a cultural diagnosis of modernity and shares three dimensions and/or types of phenomena that have a direct effect on individuals in modern life. These are the following:

2.3.1. Technical acceleration

The most evident shape in which we see 'social acceleration' playing out is in the examples of transportation, communication and production. This acceleration in movement and transmission was birthed from the transmission, transport and industrial revolutions that have collectively sped up society's material-processing systems. Rosa (2019:73) cites Francis Heylighen (2001), who estimates that the speed of communication has increased by a factor of 1010-fold in the past two centuries. This acceleration of human goods and messages goes hand in hand with the escalating speed of distribution and consumption. In short, technical acceleration is the intentional acceleration of goal-directed processes (Rosa, 2019:74). To maintain a modern capitalistic society and for it to reproduce itself, it must forever expand and grow, increasing production and consumption (Rosa, 2019:1). Hence, technical acceleration is intensifying.

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2.3.2.   The acceleration of social change

This change is more complex to comprehend and relates to the tempo of change. Rosa (2019:76) makes use of the philosopher Herman Lübbe's concept of 'contraction of the present'. He notes that modern society is subject to an ongoing contraction of the present at the hands of a growing sociocultural 'compression of innovation' (Rosa, 2019:76). The tempo of the social implementation of new technologies (not to be reduced to only technological acceleration itself) is increasing and, conversely, influences how we view the past and the future. To simplify: As one experiences and adapts to many new social engagements (for example a new digital payment system), one is removed from outdated, old experiences of doing things (paying with cash). This is a simplistic example, but as society is confronted with multiple innovations, it constantly needs to adapt. On this, Rosa (2019:352) quotes Lübbe: "the number of years decreases over which we can look back without seeing a world alien to our trusted present-day lifeworld as well as outdated". Thus, the present 'contracts'. This has an influence on our future outlook too, as it is decreasing our ability to see a world that has the same conditions as the present because we are subject to frequent change. As the future and past become increasingly alien to us, because our present world transforms so quickly, it "contracts the present" and forms the thesis of Lübbe's work. This acceleration of social change has significant outcomes, as the conditions in which people are living are constantly changing, and hence the rates of change are increasing. People must adapt more quickly as the patterns of association are changing rapidly. Many people may experience this as alienating, which will be elaborated on in the next dimension.

2.3.3.   The acceleration of the pace of life

Rosa indicates that this acceleration has an objective and subjective component. Objectively it is the shortening of episodes of action. People "stack" time by multitasking to complete a set of actions faster, thus increasing the number of actions and episodes per unit of time (Rosa, 2019:78). Examples of this could be people who try to 'condense' action episodes, for instance decreasing rest times or shortening mealtimes. These tendencies heighten, amongst others, the pace of life and have a reaction on our perceptions. Rosa also elaborates on the subjective component. The acceleration of the pace of life alongside the previous dimension (acceleration of social change) can be perceived as being 'pressed for time', which can lead to the anxiety of

'not keeping up'. It may result in a feeling that time itself is passing by faster. Thus, this kind of acceleration can contribute to experiencing a prevailing sense of the scarcity of time (Rosa, 2019:80). Rosa confirms that this has been observed particularly in highly industrialised societies.

These three dimensions serve to conceptualise and distinguish how social change is experienced. Although the social sciences grapple with the understanding of how lives have accelerated, as they are a complex social-psychological occurrence, Rosa provides a conceptual differentiates to understand how society has been speeding up at the hands of globalisation. As Rosa points out, globalisation has a direct link with the pace of modern life, that is undoubtedly speeding up. These fast-paced changes are driving fear and uncertainty, which comprise the core enquiry of the research problem, and Rosa's work provides one of the foundations on which an age of uncertainty and perplexity is built. These three dimensions are a major driving force altering modern society in many facets, and this 'social acceleration' reproduces VUCA contexts. In the next sections, VUCA characteristics of the modern world are explored.

2.4   The VUCA world

Rosa's observations assist in comprehending the accumulative changes that are occurring in the world, which is not an easy endeavour. Building on his work, a complementary concept to conceptualise the 'chaotic' global environment is the well-established acronym, VUCA.[11] VUCA, which stands for *volatile*, *uncertain*, *complex* and *ambiguous*, is an acronym originally developed from the leadership theories of social scientists Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus at the U.S. Army War College to describe the disruptive world. The acronym attempts to characterise the turbulent environment in the 21st century. The VUCA notion has been a well-established concept in the past two decades to grasp and understand the modern world, and has become a widespread and useful notion in trying to convey the nature of living in a globalised world.

Although the VUCA concept has been used prominently in corporate environments, it has been recognised in various fields, including theology (see *Leading in a VUCA*

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[11] To gain further understanding, see Bennett and Lemoine (2014).

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world: Integrating leadership, discernment and spirituality, by Kok and Van den Heuvel, 2019). It is a useful lens through which to get a grip on the changes in the modern world. The VUCA analysis would be a supplementary guide to understanding the age of uncertainty and perplexity modern individuals are navigating, and for building up the research issue. The following four foundations of VUCA are unpacked to provide clarity on the conditions to which a modern world is often exposed.

2.4.1. Volatility

The modern world is filled with frequent and unstable change. This nature of the globalised world would typically be associated with volatility. As the rate of change (referring to Rosa's 'social acceleration') has increased, it is fuelling highly unpredictable and turbulent environments[12] full of fluctuations. Volatile contexts are the breeding ground for nonlinear and/or discontinuous change. Such change is often abrupt, unexpected and difficult to predict, and results in unstable and unknown outcomes. As the rate of change increases, it speeds up a volatile dynamic and, in turn, the more volatile the world is, the faster things change. Volatility and its closely associated characteristic of discontinuous change drives uncertainty, which is elaborated on in the next section.

2.4.2. Uncertainty

Uncertainty can be characterised by situations and/or environments in which it is difficult to predict the outcome or future because there is a lack of knowledge. Characteristically, situations consist of dubiety on the nature of cause-and-effect relationships. It is not knowing what the ramifications of events might be, and thus it is an unpredictable environment. It can be associated with people's inability to understand what is going on. As a result, the more uncertain the world is, the more difficult it is to predict. More on the different forms of uncertainty is unpacked later in this chapter.

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[12] Examples of this are financial and economic conditions, like stock markets, industries (particularly business), political aspects like the government sector, and the technology industry, to name just a few. As these environments experience high volatility, it easily creates the proverbial 'butterfly effect', which consequently ripples through to society and affects individuals' daily lives.

2.4.3. Complexity

Complexity could be associated with situations or environments that have vast, interconnected and interdependent parts. The more factors there are, the greater the variety and, consequently, the more complex the environment is. As the modern world is immensely interconnected, the variety of relationships becomes complex and harder to understand. Highly complex environments are nearly impossible to analyse, and thus the more complex the world becomes, the harder it is to analyse. Complex situations cannot be forecasted with certainty, and often require uniquely distinct responses. Gosselin and Tindemans (2016:65) note that, as globalisation has accelerated change at a rapid pace and as interconnectedness has increased, it has brought greater complexity to world affairs. Globalisation has created a fragile ecosystem of geopolitics and economies, and these interrelationships are not easy to untangle.

A brief organisational example is the church. Niemandt (2019:151) states that the church (whether local congregation or huge denomination structures) is a complex system. The church finds itself in the context of a complex world in which the dynamism also entails complexity (Niemandt, 2019a:115). The church is not only submerged in a complex world, but also consists of complex relationships organisationally.

2.4.4. Ambiguity

Ambiguity refers to situations or environments in which there is a lack of clarity to interpret an event or situation. It may seem similar to uncertainty, but differs in the sense that the overall meaning remains unclear, even in the face of relevant information. This often leads to confusion, as there are multiple plausible interpretations. The more ambiguous the world is, the harder it is to interpret. Ambiguous environments consist of paradoxical situations in which there is no precedent for making predictions. A simple example of this is the rise of 'wicked problems'[13] and systemic challenges.

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[13] *Wicked problems* is a term introduced by design theorists, Horst Rittel and Melvin Webber (1973), to explain the complex and interconnected roots of dilemmas. A 'wicked problem' has innumerable causes due to interconnected challenges. It has the characteristics of a 'knot', which is difficult to unravel. It consists of social or cultural problems that are challenging to address and solve.

Equipped with the guidance of the VUCA notion, it prevails that elements of the modern world can have an overwhelming influence on individuals. For this reason, the study now shifts to the perplexing uncertainties a globalised VUCA world might impose on people.

2.5   The human consequences of a globalised VUCA world

As the globalised world has birthed many VUCA contexts, it is important to understand how globalisation and its volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous environments affect people. The scope of the research problem will now narrow and shift to the unintended psychological consequences this world poses to individuals, with a focus on religious leaders.

The late Alvin Toffler, one of the world's most respected futurists, introduced the concept of 'future shock' as a certain psychological state of modern people. He argues that society is experiencing too much change too soon. The year 2020 saw the 50th anniversary of his book, *Future shock*. This might seem outdated, but Toffler was anticipating that technological and social change would overwhelm people and lead them to become 'disoriented'. He states that "future shock is the dizzying disorientation brought on by the premature arrival of the future" (Toffler, 1970:15). This 'future shock', states Toffler, is a "time phenomenon, which could be attributed as a product of the greatly accelerated change in society" (Toffler, 1970:15). This force is "so powerful today that it overturns institutions, shifts our values and shrivels our roots" (Toffler, 1970:10). It can be felt as a "distress", both physically and psychologically (Toffler, 1970:297). Toffler's predictions are not far off, as they correlate with the work of Hartmut Rosa (2019), and have been confirmed by the sociologist, Zygmunt Bauman, whose concepts are introduced in the next section.

English academic Stephen Melluish (2014:534), from the school of psychology at Leicester University, notes that it is important to understand the psychological dimensions of globalisation and how these are influencing our sense of self. Melluish (2014:540) notes that well-being may be a collateral casualty of the economic, social and cultural change associated with globalisation. Melluish links with sociologist Zygmunt Bauman, a key theorist of postmodernity. Bauman, a respected Polish

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sociologist and philosopher, has written many provocative works on the concerning effect of postmodernity on human identity. Bauman strives to explore the causes of the uncertainties experienced by society and says globalisation is the catalyst. In humanity's drive and unquenched appetite for progress, Bauman explores what he calls 'the human fallout' of rapid globalisation. Bauman's work is the focal lens on the research problem and his social theoretical perspectives lie at the bedrock of the age of uncertainty and perplexity.

2.6   Liquid modernity

As mentioned, the world and times are not stationary, but always in a state of flow. In the 'age of acceleration', where the rate of change has increased relentlessly, coupled with constant advancements, Bauman (2000) identifies and coined a modern context, referred to as 'liquid modernity'. Bauman uses the metaphor of liquid to refer to the characteristic of fluidity in describing modern times. Liquid, as a fluid, continuously changes shape and cannot easily hold its form. It has extraordinary properties of mobility. These characteristics exemplify the modern context. This fluid condition is that in which many social forms, such as institutions and identity, decompose faster than the time it takes to shape them (Bauman, 2007:1). Bauman justifies this by critiquing a wide range of topics, from economic systems, politics and globalisation to consumerism, culture and identity, in his book *Liquid Modernity* (2000).

His choice of terminology referring to 'liquid' stands in contrast to 'solid',[14] pre-modern world, our social settings are subject to 'stable' social forms like traditions, norms and religion. These 'stable' institutions and societal structures provide much comfort and certainty to people. There was contextual continuity and a fixed form to life before modernity, which offered stability and security. The contrast is happening in a liquid modern world. There seems to be a break with or discontinuity from the stable social structures. Solid forms, like religion, politics and norms, are being dissolved. Bauman (2000:6) says: "previously solid bonds of collective identity flowed

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[14] For a more detailed perspective, see the work of the English social theorist, Margaret Archer (2014). She defines these 'solid' social settings as 'morphostatic'. In her book, *Realist Social Theory: The Morphogenetic Approach* (Archer, 2011), she distinguishes between what Bauman would call liquid and solid as 'morphostatic' and 'morphogenic', and gives an in-depth academic view on social change that uses the umbrella concept of 'social morphogenesis' to explain social shifts from the 1980s. Margaret Archer shares concepts that are similar to Bauman's work, but is less critical of modernity in her book, *Social Morphogenesis* (Archer, 2014).

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into less determined, more vicarious forms of individually conducted life policies". Social bonds that have a protective function are being challenged and battered. The social fabric of society is being torn away (Bauman, 2000:4). Many 'solid' institutions 'evaporate' as globalisation unties the economy from its traditional political, ethical and cultural entanglements (Bauman, 2000:5). As this happens, the stability of lives and identities becomes fluidised.

Bauman argues that modern humankind lives in a condition of constant mobility and change, especially in terms of identity. This gives rise to shifting identities. People are changing places, jobs, spouses, values and political orientation as they adapt to the changing environments of the fluid world. It is from these observations that Bauman states that there is an increased 'fluidity' to contemporary social life. Life in a modern fluid society is subject to continuous modernising, and this is 'liquefying' the 'solids'. This 'melting of solids' is a permanent feature of modernity (Bauman, 2000:6). It is this 'liquid' world that translates into a 'liquid' life. A liquid life, according to Bauman (2013:2), means living under conditions of constant uncertainty. As Bauman (2000:82) puts it, liquid modernity "is the growing conviction that change is the only permanence, and uncertainty the only certainty". This conviction lay the foundation for the research question. It resonates with the core question underlying this study: How do ministers lead in an age of uncertainty and perplexity?

Bauman's observations on globalisation and modern society correlate with Rosa's (2019:39) observations that there is an ongoing, accelerated metamorphosis of existing social forms. Globalisation, especially economic globalisation, is the catalyst eroding 'solid' forms and 'liquefying' life. It is this fluid state that adds to the 'flexibility' of the contemporary world (Rosa, 2000:135). As individuals become more individualised by society's openness, traditional patterns will be replaced by self-chosen ones.

For the reasons stated above, there is a 'fleeting' experience associated with modernity that many thinkers express in their own manner and terminology. The philosopher Marshall Berman (1988) in Rosa (2013:35) shares Bauman's thoughts and writes that, in short, to be modern is to be part of cosmos where "all that is solid melts into air". Toffler calls it 'future shock', and mentions there is a 'dizziness' to the

speed of life as things change. Many critique and share concerns about the effects of modernity. Bauman's observations correlate with Friedman's (2007) statements that modern individuals find it difficult to digest all the changes modernity provides. It can be immensely discomforting navigating all the social changes that modernity bestows. One might analyse Bauman's work and conclude that this modern, liquid world is a new burden individuals need to carry, as many of life's stabilities become eroded and melted away. This results in life becoming more vulnerable and fragile.

Bauman's book, *Liquid Times* (2007), has the subtitle: *Living in an Age of Uncertainty*. With these words he manages to confine and encapsulate the essence of modernity. The modern context, according to Bauman, is the 'age of uncertainty'. It is this age of uncertainty and perplexity that the research argues poses a challenge that needs to be navigated by religious leaders. In the next section, attention is given to the local context in which religious leaders in South Africa lead. On local soil, there are other environmental factors that add to the uncertainty religious leaders need to navigate.

2.7   Liquid modernity and the South African context

Liquid modernity filled with VUCA situations and environments is typical of an ever-changing world. As the world has evolved to become richly interconnected, the fluid ripple effect of VUCA changes into local contexts and inevitably has 'glocal' consequences in South Africa. Local communities are not immune to the deep changes inflicted by globalisation, which adds to the complexity and uncertainty that religious leaders already need to navigate.

South Africa is an exceptionally diverse country. According to studies,[15] on the basis of various factors, South Africa falls among the top 25 ethnic fractionalisation list, the top 10 linguistic fractionalisation list, and is no. 1 on the religious fractionalisation list. This gives one a clear idea of how multifaceted and pluralistic the nation is in terms of culture. The country has a rich diversity of people with 11 official languages. These factors, coupled with the country's postcolonial context, history of injustice and political turmoil, make religious leadership a challenging landscape. Niemandt (in Kok and van

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[15] See Alesina et al. (2003). This study might not contain the most recent data, but it does provide a broad perspective of the different forms of diversity found in South Africa.

den Heuvel, 2019:152) further notes because of its complex diversity, South Africa has a complex denominational and religious landscape. The vast multitude of ethnic groups gives rise to many multicultural religious expressions. It is all these factors that increases the complexity of religious leadership in South Africa (this is elaborated on further in Chapter 5, section 5.9). There are immense environmental complexities and coupled uncertainties that are being bestowed on ministry leaders.

One of the consequences of a VUCA world is that society has become fragmented and diverse in many ways, which Van Saane (2019:50) confesses is not easy to interpret. The powerful divisive force of globalisation translate into division,[16] not into unity. It degrades social structures. This is happing through the agency of globalising processes which promote spatial segregation, separation and exclusion, and is why Bauman (1998:2-3) states that globalisation divides as much as it unites. This effect has correlations with local challenges that have been observed in a study[17] of the Dutch Reformed Church's Centre for Public Witness (see Hanekom, 2019). The result is that religious leaders lead in communities that are vulnerable and fragile. All of this adds to the complex environmental uncertainties religious leaders face on local soil.

Being a religious leader in a highly diverse and young democratic country is not an easy task. Religious leaders can easily throw their hands in the air, feel overwhelmed by all the uncertainty at hand and become apathetic in living out their calling and

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[16] South African academic Barney Jordaan (2019:61), a scholar at Vlerick Business School in Belgium, states that VUCA environments affect all levels of society. Jordaan (2019:50) points out that VUCA environments often result in doubt, dualities, distrust and paralysis (due to information overload). A simple example of this is explored by the futurist, Richard David Hames. One aspect fuelling doubt, dualities and distrust is the clashing of worldviews as the world has 'shrunk'. In this 'small world', diverse worldviews coexist, all jostling for our allegiance in one form or another (Hames, 2007). Hames indicates that different ideologies and belief systems that promote perceptions of what is right and wrong, true and false, good and evil, become pushed through mass- and social media and intrude into our daily lives. These different worldviews project particular versions of reality onto those who are predisposed to believe them. These diverse worldviews permeate society, reifying coherent inventions of 'the truth'. It is this fusion of knowledge systems and beliefs that is forming an eclectic clash. When these worldviews collide, tension, confusion and uncertainty are experienced (Hames, 2007:45). A state of personal moral crisis can emerge, as our allegiance to a particular worldview is challenged by a vast majority of alternatives we are exposed to through mass and social media. This is one of the examples of how globalisation is producing a hotbed of uncertainty and can bring about division.

[17] In this report, *Vyf uitdagings wat ons toekoms gaan beïnvloed*, Hanekom (2019) mentions low social cohesion as one of the challenges for communities in South Africa. These factors add to the complexity and uncertainty in which ministers operate. Navigating through the diverse South African landscape can be challenging, and intensifies the sophisticated leadership that is required from clergy.

ministry. In the next section, these uncertainties and how they affect how one thinks of the future are examined.

2.8   Liquid modernity fuelling uncertainty

As Bauman (2000, 2007, 2013), Rosa (2019) and Toffler (1970) point out, the destabilising of many of modern life's social structures at the hands of rapid globalisation affects the individual in ways that can be synonymous with overwhelming uncertainty. The VUCA world and its changes are fuelling uncertainty, which can be discomforting for many people. Many despise the feeling of prospectless uncertainty and repulse it. Bauman emphasises that people experience a lot of fear and uncertainty at the hands of globalisation in a fluid modern world. Bauman (2004) notes that the constant accelerating change people experience can be alienating, leading to a sense of 'wasted lives'. What is fuelling this fear is a sense of not being in control. Bauman (2007:26) notes that our insecurity and uncertainty can be attributed to and are "born of a sense of impotency: we seem to be no longer in control, whether singly, severally or collectively". This lack of control has a big influence on our self-understanding and, ultimately, our outlook. The fluid modernity produces pressure to be adaptable, and moulding oneself to be adjustable becomes an obstacle in a fluid society. Melluish (2014:540) acknowledges this too and notes that globalisation seems to be altering our sense of ourselves and, as complex connectivity driven by developments of the internet increases, who we are will be challenged further.

It is also difficult for people to adapt to these fast-paced changes. Thomas Friedman (2016:33) states that our societal structures are failing to keep pace with the rate of change, adding that the rate of change exceeds the ability of mankind to adapt to change. There is consequently a "dislocation", as Niemandt (2019a:152) puts it, between the rate of change and mankind's ability to adapt to change. It seems that, individuals cannot keep up with the constant influx of new information. These elements seem to be fuelling fear and uncertainty in society.

This is also confirmed by Joke van Saane (2019), professor in Psychology of Religion at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. She states that, as the VUCA world is demising old structures like traditional religion, extended families and geographical proximity, people are experiencing a lack of control that results in fear and uncertainty.

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This correlates with the observations of Melluish (2014) and Bauman (2004). Van Saane bases these claims on her psychology background and refers to psychologists Dan P. McAdams and Fred B. Bryant, who state that there are three basic needs of people: "In psychology three basic needs of people are distinguished: the need for solidarity with others, the need for control over reality and the need for self-enhancement. If these three needs are not met, isolation, insecurity and anxiety arise" (Van Saane, 2019:50). This builds on Bauman's sociology work, which points out that globalisation seems to challenge the three basic needs (as Van Saane states) and translates into isolation, anxiety and uncertainty. These characteristics are typical consequences of the effects of globalisation and VUCA environments.

How these external factors affect leaders' internal emotional state is complex to unravel. To assist the study in this regard, it engages with academics on local soil. South African scholar Kathy Bennett, at the University of Stellenbosch Business School, works in the area of leadership uncertainty and shares insights on the layers of uncertainty experienced. Bennett (2017:2) shares the following valuable insights for comprehending how leaders deal with uncertainty: She indicates that uncertainty is pervasive in many contexts in life and difficult to define conclusively. Bennett (2017:14) states that uncertainty can manifest in the following ways: Firstly, *environmental uncertainty*, as observed in the first section of this chapter. This could be the numerous effects of globalisation, such as disruptive technologies. Secondly, *experienced uncertainty.* This is a more personal and subjective uncertainty that manifests as identity uncertainty. Identity uncertainty is associated with feelings of self-doubt, being unsure and being in limbo (Bennett, 2017:14). This usually occurs in times of transition and affects a person's sense of confidence and being in control. Personal questions, like 'Who am I?" and "Who am I becoming?", are typical introspective searches related to identity uncertainty. This "identity uncertainty", says Bennett (2017:30), easily translates into "anticipatory uncertainty", which is an intense worry in the present about a possible future threat.

Bennett's uncertainty concepts correlate with the work of American scholar, Frances J. Milliken. Milliken (1987) elaborates further and differentiates between three types of uncertainties, namely state, effect and response uncertainty when it comes to

organisations (in the context of religious leadership, this would be the ministry of the church).

State uncertainties (or *perceived environmental uncertainty*) refer to external uncertainties. These are uncertainties associated with changes brought about by the broad macro-environment as unpacked in the first section of this chapter. These could arise from societal, political, economic, technological, etc. changes and entail the inability to assign probabilities to the likelihood of future events (Milliken, 1987:136).

Effect uncertainties would be the inability to understand how changes affect an organisation. It is a lack in understanding of cause-effect relationships (Milliken, 1987:136). Where *state uncertainty* involves uncertainty about the future state of the world, *effect uncertainty* entails uncertainty about how change will affect one's organisation's functioning (Milliken, 1987:136).

Response uncertainty is associated with the inability to know how to respond to changes experienced. It is the incapability to predict the likely consequence of a response (Milliken, 1987:136) when confronted to make a decision.

With a clearer understanding of the types of uncertainties, it is evident that a modern, liquid VUCA world can pose staggering *environmental uncertainties*, as pointed out by Bennett (2017), and *state uncertainties*, as identified by Milliken (1987). These uncertainties easily translate into *experienced uncertainty*, which Bennett maintains is a more personal and subjective uncertainty that affects identity. These observations have various connection points with the observations of Bauman (2000), Rosa (2019) and Toffler (1970). The lack of permanence in modern society has extensive potential to create adversity and *experienced uncertainty*, not only for individuals, but especially for religious leaders leading in the context of ministry.

2.9   How uncertainty affects future thinking

With the accumulated research up to this point, it is possible to state that a liquid, modern VUCA world instils uncertainty, as the future becomes increasingly unclear. It is undeniable that a fluid VUCA world has an effect on how one perceives and plans for the future. As Bauman's research points out, the stability of 'solid' modernity is

vanishing, and this causes fear of the future. Lubbe's (cited in Rosa, 2019:76) concept of the "contraction of the present" also states that, as "social acceleration" increases, the future seems harder to comprehend and this results in a sense of adversity in relation to the future.

Advances in neuroscience assist in understanding how uncertainties affect an individual's thinking. The Australian scholar in neuro-leadership, David Rock (2009), states that the brain does not like uncertainty. Referring to scientific studies done by Hsu et al. (2005), he states that "uncertainty about the future generates a strong threat or 'alert' response in your limbic system". On a neurological front, people tend to resist uncertain change, and this has a direct affect on their future. These observations correlates with what Bennett (2017:30) calls "anticipatory uncertainty", in which leaders have an experience of worry strengthened by the unpredictable nature of the future, since it could hold possible threats. In the literature on neurobiology, uncertainty diminishes with how efficiently and effectively we can prepare for the future (Grupe & Nitschke, 2013).

This is essential for ministers to grasp, as they are leaders in their congregations, guiding their communities into the unknown future. The immense, fluid VUCA changes can result in insecurity among religious leaders, especially about the uncertain future. A potential impediment that the fluid VUCA world can produce is that people become so overwhelmed by changes that they see the future as a unsolvable concern, and thus withdraw from acting and fail to solve an actual problem (Bennett & Lemoine, 2014:2). These influences are creating a wave of complexity that leaders need to navigate in ordinary life and add to an adverse sensation of uncertainty about the future.

2.10   The uncertain future and religious leadership

With Rosa's observations of 'social acceleration', the VUCA concept that attempts to convey the tumultuous, unpredictable state of the modern world, and Bauman's insights into 'liquid modernity', the research thus far brings the study to the main problem: How do religious leaders cope with uncertainty and its effects on their future thinking?

As the research has revealed, leading in a fluid VUCA world is synonymous with living alongside burgeoning change and complexity. The ramifications of the forces emerging from globalisation pose very real tensions that religious leaders need to address, and have the potential to paralyse clergy in living out their vocation. Gibbs and Coffey (2000:24) rightly states that the momentum of change generated by the shift from modernity to postmodernity "can result in churches becoming paralysed in the midst of the shock waves". If ministers become overwhelmed by VUCA changes, it could lead to an apathetic ministry. It puts the church in a position of becoming irrelevant, since it is unable to engage constructively with the challenges posed by a VUCA world and does not address the context in which congregants find themselves. This must be avoided by religious leaders. Casting a blind eye to VUCA changes is to neglect the *Missio Dei.*

Niemandt (2019:205b) notes that religious leaders should know that the future of the congregation is constantly at risk in a VUCA world. How do ministers not fall prey to a future outlook that is filled with dystopian despair? It is important to realise that the disruptive modern social landscape, as this chapter has been dedicated to describing, brings about changes to concepts of leadership, especially ministry leadership. Practical theologian Ian Nell (Van den Berg, 2020:187) points out that the deep-seated changes a VUCA world brings confront leadership with unique challenges. Niemandt (2019a:152) adds to this and affirms that the modern context opens new leadership challenges and raises important questions on the core competencies of leaders, which is a key aspect this research enquires about. South African theologian Stephan Joubert (2013:117) further emphasises that the modern context favours new forms of complexity, disruption, uncertainty and non-linear change, which call for different leadership roles.

Niemandt (2019a:154) advocates that religious leadership includes helping people to adapt to change and changing contexts. It is particularly in uncertain conditions that communities need guidance. In circumstances of uncertainty, people look to leaders to shepherd and protect them and guide them into a better future. The leader's reaction helps followers to make sense of what is happening (Rast & Hogg, in Storey et al., 2016:53). If this is a necessary skill for ministers to be proficient in, what competencies do religious leaders harness to create meaning out of a VUCA world?

Niemandt (2019b:72) refers to Newbigin, who states that leaders must help congregations become what they are called to be, and thus to discern God's preferred future. Osmer (2008:18), who embraces Gerkin's model of pastoral leadership, also calls on religious leaders to be *interpretive guides.* Niemandt (2019b:121) calls this function 'sense-making', which is a form of discernment. This 'interpretive' function leads this study in the right direction for answering the research question. Religious leadership must strive to become 'meaning makers'. Ministers must be proficient in the art of sensemaking[18]. Sensemaking consists of scanning the environment and interpreting the context. Religious leaders should thus be proficient in making meaning of uncertainty. It is for this reason that Niemandt (2019b:121) calls on leaders to give meaning to unfolding VUCA events. For a religious leaders, this would be part of being a proficient interpretive guide and a faithful cultural hermeneutic.

Unfortunately it is this 'interpretive' function that is severely challenged by a convoluted VUCA world. How do clergy tackle and overcome this challenge? How can the fluid VUCA future be shifted from a perplexing and uncertain state to a potentially preferred future? The research enquiry that flows from this problem is: How do ministers cope with intrinsic changes and embrace the future, rather than becoming perplexed by its uncertainty?

Futures studies offers valuable insights that lead one on the right path in answering the research question. In the next chapter, the research turns to futures studies, a branch of social sciences, which assists in the art of making sense of uncertainty.

2.11   Conclusion

This chapter has built up the main research question. It began with a broad, macro-level examination of how global shifts affect society by identifying global disruptive forces. Following that, it has systematically shed light on the character of the modern world using the work of social theorist, Hartmut Rosa, an analysis of VUCA, and the research of sociologist Zygmunt Bauman. Through these sources, the study has revealed some of the challenges a fast-paced, modern world imposes on people, with a focus on uncertainty. Furthermore, psychologists, sociologists, futurists and theologians have exposed and acknowledged some of the staggering uncertainty that

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[18] Sensemaking is a term coined by Karl Weick (1995). It points to the method by which people give meaning to their collective experiences.

'liquid modernity' imposes on people and how it impairs their future thinking. Accordingly, the foundation of the research problem has been laid for the challenges brought on by an age of uncertainty and perplexity.

By revealing these insights, this chapter has accomplished the first task of the pastoral cycle, as stated in the research methodology. This has been done by gathering information to analyse current realities and provide context to the research problem. With these insights in mind, the next chapter turns to the knowledge base futures studies to assist in resolving the research problem. Futures studies can assist religious leaders living in a world saturated with uncertainty by assisting in reinterpreting how we view the uncertain future, thus supporting the art of 'reframing' the unknown future.

Chapter 3: Insights from Futures Studies

3.1.   Introduction

In this chapter, the focus shifts to the social sciences branch of futures studies[19] to assist with the research question. Futures studies is quite relevant to the central research question, as it grapples with the same core enquiry: How to cope with intricate change and an uncertain future? In endeavouring to answer this question, the study moves further into the interpretive task of the pastoral cycle's research method. This chapter starts by examining why thinking about the future matters and how this action has a 'performative' nature. As this was unpacked, elements like anticipation, imagination and forward-thinking were researched. As these aspects of futures studies are discussed, their relevance is linked to the research question to provide clarity. This assists in responding adequately to the research question: How do ministers lead in an age of uncertainty and perplexity.

3.2 Why thinking about the uncertain future matters

The previous chapter shed some light on the unpredictable nature of the 21st century and how the future is plagued with uncertainty. We might never know what the uncertain future entails, so why think about the future? The future is often perceived as a distant, unforeseeable realm, and thus many may not consider thinking about it. The unpredictable nature of the future usually generates a natural resistance, because people do not have control over it. Some may even associate the future with feelings of fear and impotence, because it consists of forces we cannot understand. This unknowingness makes thinking about the future problematic.

For this reason, people often have a 'proximity bias' towards the present (Hong, Longoni & Morwitz, 2021). Because the future does not exist, the present is embraced

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[19] Futures studies (or futures research) is a scientific field of research that involves investigating alternate (possible, probable and preferred) futures. It has a social science connotation, as numerous researchers in this academic field come from psychology, sociology, political sciences, etc. Its focus in short is "using" the concept of the future to change the present. Futures studies consequently is concerned with the opportunities presented in a time yet to come. Interestingly, one of the reasons futures studies is gaining influence is that two centuries ago, humankind did not have such a major effect on the global environment. As social acceleration has increased (referring to Rosa's [2019] term), it has brought major innovations that have given humankind the potential to have ever further-reaching consequences for humanity. It has become inadequate to rely only on the past when solving present-day dilemmas, and so futures studies has become increasingly relevant, as it starts from the future to address complex issues.

more, simply because it is closer in proximity. People may tend to discount the future and focus more on the present, since present circumstances provide more security than the future, which is uncertain. Lübbe's (in Rosa, 2019:76) concept of 'contraction of the present' (as discussed in the previous chapter) can also advance the 'proximity biases' of people. As social acceleration has increased, the future becomes increasingly difficult to predict, hence escalating the 'proximity bias' people experience towards the present and away from the future. This could lead to the temptation to make decisions based only on the past or even in defence of the past. This 'short-termism' is neither advised nor useful.

Another reason that thinking about the future can sometimes be inhibited is because it consists of unforeseeable novelty and creative causality. Riel Miller (2013:107), one of the world's leading strategic foresight designers and head of futures literacy at UNESCO,[20] asserts that, from an early age, humans grasp two out of three basic models of the future:

Contingent futures: These are futures that can be imagined as the outcome of external forces. Contingent futures are phenomena whereby events emerging from outside forces can to a certain degree be prepared for or even pre-empted (Miller, 2010:25). Such events could include tsunamis, earthquakes, pandemics or other wildcard events.

Optimistic futures: These are futures that have been planned for. They are futures that have been predetermined and thus the idea is to impose our will on the future. We shape the future by planning and it conforms to our desires and expectations (Miller, 2010:25). An example of this could be farmers planning to plant seeds with the expectation of a future crop. They know that, as time passes, their crops will grow, although they are aware that many external factors may have a big impact.

Novel futures: These are futures filled with the unknowable and with uncertainty. These futures have no immanent cause, but spring into existing, altering the present because we live in a creative universe that is filled with rich emergence (Miller,

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[20] The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

2012:42). Novelty lies in things that do not exist at present and have never existed before, but will in the future. It is this novel future paradigm that people often pay little attention to, as it is unknowable; people therefore ignore it as it seems pointless (Miller, 2013:107). Novelty often creates fear, disappointment and confusion because it is associated with uncertainty, but when novelty is embraced it can reduce the levels of fear, disappointment and confusion because it is anticipated. Unfortunately, any approach that welcomes uncertainty as a source of novelty runs contrary to individuals' desire for certainty (Miller, 2013:107).

In referring to Beck (1992), Miller (2013:108) states that this is why many resort to nostalgic reactions. When individuals are unable or unwilling to incorporate novelty into the way they imagine the future, then the lived experience of change becomes disorientating. This is why many people experience the uncertain future as unnerving. As a result, people often tend to fall back on doing 'things as usual'. The famous Pakistani-born Australian futurist, Sohail Inayatullah, calls this "used futures" (2008:5). It comprises upholding practices of thought that are dysfunctional and not useful anymore. Often we 'use' a future that is taken uncritically with declining relevance for the new context. Such an approach only proves inapt for engaging with present or future challenges.

However, it turns out that thinking about the future, how uncertain it might be, has immense influence on our lives. Social research and futurist, Ivana Milojević (2005:8), says that the future is a not an empty space, but (like the past) an active aspect of the present. It turns out the future is the only aspect of time we really can influence. We cannot influence the past, nor the fixed present. The future is the only aspect that is open-ended and consequently influenceable. The future is manipulable and thus deterministic. It can be influenced directly and, as a result, steered intentionally towards a preferred future. Because the future is open-ended, there is no single-set future, only plausible alternative futures. The more informed we are about alternative futures, the more empowered we are to steer the future to a desired one. This makes the 'future' an asset and a resource.

The scientist Dennis Gabor (1963:161) writes: "The future cannot be predicted, but futures can be invented." By shifting our relationship to the future from a chaotic and

useless time paradigm to a resourceful asset is a way of not being a "victim" of time, but instead "inventing futures", as Gabor puts it. How can this be achieved? To not fall victims of "used futures" or "proximity biases", it is advised that our relationship with the future changes and we realise that we are all shaping the future.

3.3 Time and reshaping the future

Time is an age-old concept that is regularly debated. Many philosophers, sociologists, astrophysicists, historians, etc. have examined and tried to explain time from their specific academic faculty, but time still is a fleeting and elusive concept to grasp. Gell (2011), cited by Cilliers (2019), a South African theologian, asserts that time is ever-present yet intangible, and the single element over which humans have no absolute control. For this reason it is a fleeting phenomenon and therefore seems to be out of our hands and never under our control (Cilliers, 2019:3). One of the reasons for this is that time is a form of relating to the world around us, and thus a construct that changes according to our cultures[21] and forms of social relations (Shallowe et al., 2020).

What we do know is that time is irreversible and the future will eventually become the present. How it will evolve we do not know for certain, but what we are sure about is that the future will mature towards our present and, although we evidently cannot control time, we can change our relationship towards time. Zimbardo and Boyd (2010:14) also note that we have no control over the laws of physics, but we do have some control over our frames of reference when it comes to perceiving time. This is a key aspect that futures studies addresses.

It is easy to compartmentalise time zones as past, present and future. This is advanced by our scientific approach to time, which follows a linear pattern that divides time into past, present and future, and into hours, minutes and seconds (Milojević, 2005:15). People tend to think of these time zones as individualistic realities and autonomous 'pockets' of time, but it is important not to distinguish past, present and

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[21] This is called 'chrono-geography'. See Gell (1992:190) for deeper insights. Social researcher and futurist, Ivana Milojević (2005:13), also adds to this when reflecting on civilizational approaches to time and notes that, although the conception of time and the future exists universally, it is interpreted and understood in diverse ways by different societies.

future as entities that stand independent of each other. These time frames are much more entangled than one usually thinks.

Understanding the relationship between past, present and future, especially for religious leaders, is of critical importance. The future is not separated from the present, but in relationship to it. The future can thereby be viewed in a type of 'symbiotic' relationship with the present – interacting in such a way that it is in a mutually beneficial relationship. It is essential for religious leaders to grasp this. Cilliers (2019:9) affirms this notion from a theological viewpoint and indicates that linear time is often perceived as 'separate' time stages (past, present, future), but it is 'intrinsically intertwined'. Accordingly, for ministers to understand the present, they need to incorporate "the past by way of remembrance (anamnesis) and the future by way of anticipation of its coming (adventus)" (Cilliers, 2019:9).

This makes the future accretive. It is built upon the layers of the past and the present. The future is thus not an unusable void, but a resource, because the present has an influence on the future and the future can have an influence on the present. In effect, how we view the future is vitally important to how we think about and act in the present, and our present context is vitally important to how we think about the future (Shallowe et al., 2020:65). By performing the act of thinking about the future, one is directly influencing the future. When we change how we think about the future, we are consequently changing the future.

It is for this reason that Renesch (2014) asserts we are "future shapers". John Renesch (2014:135), a futurist, writes in the *Journal of Futures Studies* about using the phrase, "future shaping". He notes that we all contribute to the future. A person cannot be living and not have some influence on the future. In such a sense, we are all "future shapers". We all are actively participating in and influencing the future in some way or another, whether consciously or unconsciously.

When one is conscious that we are influencing the future, we are equipped. With this outlook we can accept a responsibility for moving the world closer to the way we would like it to be. We can deliberately shape it. This happens by shifting our consciousness. By claiming our role as 'future shapers', we acknowledge that we can become

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architects of the future of humanity. By owning this role, we are not settling for whatever happens to unfold or leave the future to chance (Renesch, 2014:137). How are we consciously or unconsciously shaping the future, one might ask – by changing our relationship towards time. How can this 'future resource' be put to work?

3.4 Imagination and the future

Many people try to predict the future as a means to contain it, but (especially organisations) spend tremendous energy trying to solve today's problems instead of preventing tomorrow's. Unfortunately there is no easy way of 'solving'[22] the future. We can try to predict the future using probabilistic analysis, but that is simply using the past to forecast the future. With such an approach, the past is always the centre point. Joubert (2013:118) also signals the temptation to primitively assume that, with more order and knowledge, one can increasingly predict and effectively plan for the future. Such an assumption would be to cast a blind eye on the complexity of the VUCA world we live in.

Futures studies suggest starting with the future. The future as a reference point in the present has an immense influence. The future, or the "later than now", is always imaginary, notes Miller (2012:42). He adds: "Few aspects of our conscious reality are as powerful as the imagined future for determining what we do" (Miller, 2017:44). If the future has an impact on the present it is via the imagined future, which is facilitated by our capacity to imagine and subsequently foster behavioural change. A key aspect of the imagined future evidently is imagination.

Imagination is a crucial capacity for thinking about the future. It is the foundation for envisioning new ideas. Without imagination it is impossible to visualise emerging possibilities and opportunities in the future. Niemandt (2019a:152) refers to Haight (2014) by highlighting that human beings cannot understand or think about reality

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[22] It is important to note that futures studies does not try to outsmart or outperform the future, but rather fixates on the quality of decision-making. It is not about fortune telling or predicting the future, but 'using the future' to improve the quality of present decisions that resultingly shape the future. We cannot control the future, but we can control our thinking about the future, which in turn influences how we respond to it. Thus, knowledge about the elements that shape the future assists us in improving the future. This is the core endeavour of futures studies and assists the research problem.

without an accompanying imagination, and that this is a treasured resource.[23] By activating the mind's ability to imagine, it shifts the mind's focus from a material reality to what one is seeking. It frees one from confined restrictions. It lifts us up from our limited reality to dream up new alternatives and preferred futures. When our imagination is engaged, it enriches a mindset in which scarcity is replaced by opportunities, as imagination is not confined by boundaries. Therefore, the future is subjective to our collective imagination and design.

It is for these reasons that imagination is a crucial aspect of leadership, as it enables us to see possibilities. It does not view the future as linear and opens us up to accepting that the world is open-ended. Niemandt (2019b:155) elaborates on this and mentions that imagination equipped with creativity empowers one to see differently and thus enables us to visualise alternatives. This is a much-needed skill in the new, globalised world (Niemandt, 201a:155). It is for this reason that Friedman (2007) also mentions that it is a vital capacity in a modern world, because it empowers one to perceive things differently.

This propensity to think about the future is a disposition that needs to be enriched and developed. This creative orientation of the mind is not a natural reflex but, like a muscle, needs to be trained. It is for this reason that Miller (2006:7) calls for "rigorous imagining". He highlights that "the very language used to conceptualize a future context is limited by the terms and practices of the present" (Miller, 2006:7). It is one thing to accept that there can be changes to the conditions of change, but imagining what such a changed world can look like is another. Rigorous imagination is needed to envision a world of tomorrow that facilitates our desirable future. When this imagination 'muscle' that humanity possesses is developed, it leads to an orientation or tendency to foresee potential and possibilities. This kind of imagination, coupled with futures literacy, can be translated into an 'empowering imagination', as one is not just imagining futures, but one is conscious that the mere act has an influence on our future. The future can only be imagined by conscious human anticipation, and this is

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[23] Interestingly, Niemandt draws parallels between the capacity of imagination and the works of the Spirit. He says that the work of the Spirit is characterised by creativity. See Niemandt (2019b:154-155). Practical theologian, C.A.M. Hermans (2019:9) shares this insight and writes about God as "pure possibility and the wonder of possibilisation".

why the influence of anticipation is important and explored in the next section.

3.5 The influence of anticipation on the future

Anticipation[24] is activated by the brain's ability to foresee images. Roberto Poli,[25] an Italian academic and editor of the book, *The handbook of anticipation*, and fellow at STIAS (Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study), mentions that anticipation is a "forward looking activity" that occurs when the future is used in action (Poli, 2019b:5). Anticipation therefore can be used to affect the present. It consist of the process of 'using' the future in the present. Psychologists Butz, Sigaud and Gérard (2003:1) confirm this and conclude that anticipatory behaviour "is behaviour that is not only dependent on past or present but also on predictions, expectations, or beliefs about the future". Anticipation is a forward-looking activity that has a major influence on our current decisions and behaviour. Anticipation of the future is crucial because it plays a fundamental role in shaping how we make decisions and consequently affects our actions (Miller, 2006:4).

Miller (2006:4) further highlights these claims and advocates that "[t]he future matters because anticipation, in its various forms…, is one of the fundamental determinants of our actions and feelings". How we anticipate future events has a major influence on how we react in the present. These claims are grounded by psychological research. Psychologists Ebert, Gilbert and Wilson (2009) state that our choices are guided by how we expect (and thus anticipate) a situation might make us feel. In other words, anticipated feelings, like satisfaction, pleasure and regret, determine various consumption decisions (Ebert et al., 2009). Thus, the manner in which we visualise (through imagination) how the future might be activates associated feelings that have an influence on the present. This is an impactful influence to be aware of.

Poli (2019b:4) provides a simple example of this: Listening to a weather forecast predicting rain is not an anticipatory action. Although there might be a high probability of rain, it still is not a guarantee that it will rain. But using that knowledge and taking

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[24] The relevance of anticipation as a legitimate topic of research has only recently been receiving attention and gaining momentum. It was previously studied in various academic fields, like psychology, biology, etc., but has only recently been recognised as an academic discipline.
[25] Poli is an associate professor of philosophy of science at the University of Trento in Italy and UNESCO chair for anticipatory systems.

an umbrella before going to work is a way anticipatory action is utilised. It is the action of seeing an idea of the future and changing our behaviour according to that idea. In this sense, anticipatory behaviour is more robust and useful than just being reactive to uncertain changes that are imposed on us. It is for this reason that Miller (2012:41) says: "When someone becomes more capable at anticipation they become better at using the future to understand the present." This makes anticipation a valuable action.

In reflecting on practical theology and future studies, practical theologians Van den Berg and Ganzevoort (2014:169), add: "In anticipating, we are actively shaping and changing that future. This means that our expectations for the future are to a high degree performative by nature. We create the future in as much as we try to predict it.". Thinking about the future is thus *performative* by nature. Accordingly, when thinking of and anticipating a preferred or desired future, it is directly influencing the future, as this thinking has performative properties. This has a big effect on the future.

If these faculties play such a crucial role in decision-making, then a person's disposition towards the future is a major consideration. When our anticipated future is synonymous with feelings of anguish, adversity and anxiety, it has a significant influence on how we plan for the future. The anticipated feelings that are released by the way we think of the future inevitably have a direct effect on current decision-making. It is for this reason Miller (2018:53) notes that anticipatory activities play a crucial role in the seeking of available choices in the present.

To link this information with the previous chapter – as mentioned in Chapter 2, change is nothing new, but change has been happening in an accelerated way that characterises our epoch. Today's rate of change, upended by globalisation, touches on multiple deeper issues that raise the levels of perplexing uncertainty. It easily translates into vexatious feelings that cause worry and frustration. When a person's anticipated future is closely associated with the perplexing uncertainty of a VUCA world, a viable assumption can be made that it will lead to poor-quality decision-making in the present. This is a crucial aspect to be conscious of when it comes to religious leadership. How ministry leaders anticipate the future has a critical influence not only on their own future, but also on their ministry. Their attitude towards the future will spread to the faith community in which they lead (this is elaborated on further in

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Chapter 5). In conclusion: Our ability to anticipate future outcomes tends to shape our choices and, accordingly, our future.

How anticipation can be useful is in the means to imagine how actions can play out in the future (Miller, 2018:53). This makes anticipation a powerful remedy. In a talk hosted by Stellenbosch University's Centre for Complex Systems in Transition, Poli (2019a) asserted that anticipation can make leaders more resilient to volatile change because, by anticipating the future, one is already embracing uncertain change and consequently our disposition towards the future changes. This assists us to better handle future uncertainty. Anticipatory behaviour therefore is a kind of sense-making[26] process. Poli (2019a) calls this sense-making a kind of resilience. It is the capacity to recover after a shock.[27] For this reason. the influence of anticipation can help individuals to make sense of the novelty that happens in a 'creative' universe.

British sociologist John Urry (Wajcman & Dodd, 2016) further confirms this by linking with Bauman (1998), who also maintains that the capacity to think through utopian futures is emancipatory. It enables one to overcome the overwhelming dominance of what seem to be normal patterns of life (Wajcman & Dodd, 2016:43). When futures thinking (with its associated imagination and anticipation) is deployed, people – to a certain extent – can feel more collected in the unpredictable face of the future that is unfolding before them. This protects them from becoming overwhelmed by perplexing uncertainty about the future. In anticipating, one is not gaining more certainty, but rather gaining understanding and being aware of what may happen in the future (Poli, 2019a).

This is a helpful tool to assist religious leaders in their "interpretive" task, as mentioned by Osmer (2008:12) (more on this in Chapter 5). The quality of our choices is grounded in how we think of the future and the consciousness it imposes. Thus, how we think about the future is central to our decision-making. The ability to anticipate future outcomes tends to shape our choices. Anticipating and thinking about the future is a

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[26] Improving sense-making capabilities and skills is crucial for being a faithful interpretive guide, as advocated by Osmer (2008:18) and Niemandt (2019b:121).

[27] When one recalls Toffler's (1974:297) 'future shock', which he describes as "the distress, both physical and psychological, that arises from an overload of the human organism's physical adaptive systems and its decision-making processes", elements such as anticipation, imagination and futures thinking can assist in recovering from this. As Poli (2019a) suggests, they are sensemaking mechanisms.

manner of improving our present decision-making, which can have an immense effect for ministry leaders leading in vast environmental and experienced uncertainty (see Bennett (2017)). This, in turn, could benefit faith communities as well. Futures studies assists by accentuating that the fluidness and uncertainties of the VUCA world should not be something to solve, but rather reinterpreted. The unknowability of the future is not something that will decrease or disappear, but could be reinterpreted to give meaning, as Niemandt (2019b:121) urges religious leaders. How does one begin to reinterpret the unknown future? According to futures studies, this is done by regularly thinking about the future, which will facilitate growing a future-focused mindset.

3.6 A future-focused mindset and futures literacy

With the accumulated insights in the previous section, it is vital to cultivate a future-focused mindset. A future-focused mindset is oriented towards the future and moves from a primarily past-orientation to a primary future-orientation. It is thinking in a multifactorial manner and not one-dimensionally (only past and present). It is having a consciousness of how present actions and plans have future repercussions.

Miller (2006:15) calls fostering such a mindset futures literacy. It is the capacity to think about the future. It is something that everyone does, although people differ in how they utilise it. Many people plan their meals or weekly activities, but not everyone utilises long-term foresight. Such a literacy is crucial for the purpose of turning aspirations into reality. A person who is futures literate has the necessary skills and imagination to introduce the concept of the future, which by definition does not yet exist, into the present (Miller, 2018:83). Why is this important? To reiterate the research question in the first chapter, one might wonder how to cope with the world that is becoming ever more uncertain and complex. Miller sheds light on this by proposing that individuals improve their ability to take advantage of the novel emergence that surround us. If we anticipate the emergence that unfolds in the uncertain future, we seek to make sense of it and change the present. (Shallowe et al., 2020:51)

By enriching our futures literacy, individuals are freed to go beyond the predictable and enabled to embrace complexity and novelty, as well as live with permanent ambiguity (Miller, 2010:28). By having a future-oriented mindset we can pierce the veil of uncertainty. We then are not blindsided by the uncertainty of the future, because

we embrace the element of change, in other words the certainty of uncertainty is embraced. Correspondingly, having a future-focused mindset assists in overcoming change, complexity and uncertainty. When we improve our futures literacy, we are not 'victims' of time, but are reframing the uncertain future into a future of possibilities. Futures literacy therefore helps one to remove the 'voidness' of the uncertain future and 'use' it constructively. The future becomes a lens through which to see the present. We become more resilient towards the future, and consequently also towards environmental uncertainty. This is a key understanding for the research question of this study.

3.7 Foresight and the future

As mentioned, all actions are based on the prediction and anticipation of their consequences. We anticipate what the consequences could be based on those actions. This is called foresight.[28] It is a "process of developing a range of views of possible ways in which the future could develop and understanding these sufficiently well to be able to decide what decisions can be taken today to create the best possible tomorrow" (Horton, 1999:5). In short, it is the analytical exploration of how possible futures and events influence the present. Foresight refers to the capacity to regularly take a longer-term view to inform the decision-making processes we follow. It is anticipating how the world is changing, and using those anticipations to create alternative futures.

This ability goes hand in hand with what psychologists Gilbert and Wilson (2007) would call *prospection*. Prospection refers to people's ability to "pre-experience" the future by simulating it in their minds (Gilbert & Wilson, 2007:1352). Just as retrospection focuses on our ability to re-experience the past, prospection is about the imagined future that is mentally simulated. Gilbert and Wilson elaborate on this and mention that our brain's frontal region plays a critical role in this ability. Neuro-imaging reveals that the prefrontal cortex, assisted by the medial temporal lobes, activates prospection (Gilbert & Wilson, 2007:1352). Interestingly, the crucial role played by these regions

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[28] Foresight has a strong action-based connection, as it is associated with strategic planning. While futures studies examines alternative futures purely for the sake of awareness, foresight does the same, but with the use of strategy to implement change in the present with the intent to change the future.

of the brain suggests that few, if any, animals have this ability, which makes them 'stuck in time'. Animals do not have the capacity to think about the future. Humans seem to be the only species that can simulate an event, thus 'previewing' it before it actually happened and 'pre-feel' the emotions that are associated with that event. For example: A person might never have won the lottery or broken a leg, but by mentally simulating these events through our capacity to imagine, the brain activates feelings of joy and pain. This is a powerful capacity unique to humans.

It is crucial for ministry leaders to be aware of this capacity and become proficient in utilising it. Through foresight, people have the ability to imagine future events, which activates associated feelings that in turn drive present disscisions and behaviours. Niemandt (2019a:159) also emphasises this crucial ability by referring to Scharmer and Kaufer (2013), who stress that "presencing an emerging future possibility is at the core of all deep leadership work today". This leads to the question: How often do leaders mentally construct images of the future to drive their present behaviour and how can such an ability help overcome uncertainty?

What kinds of futures are imagined by leaders? Are ministry leaders left out from being shaped by the disruptive VUCA world and its related uncertainty? Are religious leaders mainly at the merciless hands of globalisation, which Bauman (2000) mentions leaves individuals rootless and bereft of predictable references for life? Or are we more in control than we are aware? Can leaders pioneer a desired image of the future, created by their imagination, and steer their lives and ministries intentionally on that trajectory? These are some inquiries that sprout from the chapters findings.

3.8 Leading from the uncertain future and its relevance for religious leaders

Uncertainty and disruption will characterise the future going forward. It is within this context that leaders and ministers will have to lead faith communities. For this reason, religious leaders should not only lead from the past (remembering) into the present, but also from the consciousness of the future, as they are future shapers. If religious leaders want to evade being perplexed by an uncertain, fluid VUCA world, they should intentionally be 'leading from the future'. When leaders' futures literacy and foresight are enriched, it helps them to lead in the present from the future. Just as leaders look

backwards, learning from hindsight, they should also be looking forward, leading with foresight.

If future-focused thinking and foresight are not embraced by ministers as a vital leadership skillset, they might become 'victims of time', trapped in the present only to act reactionarily to contemporary challenges. Future-focused thinking helps leaders to escape the confined limits of the present and steer their imagination and anticipation consistently into the future. A future-oriented mindset thus tries to make the aspiration of inventing the future concrete.

As the study has mentioned, thinking about the future is performative by nature, and thus, by being future focused, ministers are already shaping the future and not letting the future shape them. They are intentionally taking control of the uncertain future, using it as a canvas of possibilities, and steering it to a preferred future. Instead of having a reactionary position toward the uncertain future, leaders should impose a future-focused position that takes advantage of the novel emergence that surrounds them. Leaders should discover, examine and chart a preferred future and intentionally steer a faith community towards this desired future (more on this in Chapter 5). This obviously has practical implications. Leading from the future entails implementing the desired or preferred future in the present to make it a reality. In futures studies this would be called 'backcasting'. Backcasting sets off by defining desired outcomes in the future and working backward to decide on an implementation plan that would help achieve these outcomes (Shallowe et al., 2020:55). There are various strategies[29] and methodologies to make this happen (unfortunately the confines of this study do not make it possible to give an overview of these aspects). This helps leaders not only to be reactive (acting after the effect), but to become proactive in creating a preferred future.

The insights of futures studies therefore promote reconciling uncertainty (associated especially with modernity) with everyday life and incorporating it into daily living. When uncertainty is embraced rather than rejected, one accepts that the world is not static

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[29] There are numerous decision-making frameworks that consist of visioning, horizon scanning, futures mapping, forecasting, strategic foresight and backcasting, which are all useful strategies for charting pathways and intentionally creating preferred futures.

but open ended and open to change. Change and its associated uncertainty do not catch one off guard, but are accepted as a certainty. This is one of the key contributions made by futures studies in regard to the research focus of this study.

3.9   Conclusion

In this chapter, elements of futures studies have been examined, along with their links to the research problem. Futures studies advocates that information of the past is not sufficient enough to address modern society's complex issues. To make sense of, and engage with, emerging complexity and incessant change, we need a different mindset and approach (Shallowe et al., 2020:52). Starting from the future is a much more effective approach. By examining these approaches of futures studies, this chapter has ventured into the interpretive task of the pastoral cycle's research method.

As futures studies suggests, thinking about the future is performative by nature, and thus the future is influencing the present. This is done by anticipation. We are all influencing the future through anticipation, which is a forward-looking activity. The chapter has shown how future-focused or prospective thinking strengthens the sophistication of our sensemaking, which in turn assists us to live with uncertainty. It helps us to understand the possible changes in our long-term future and how to respond to these accordingly. To assist in this, futures studies attempt to cultivate an anticipatory competence, which consists of increasing and building a mindset capacity that is future focused. This helps one to pursue desired futures.

Futures studies provides key insights into developing the competence to handle increasing change and uncertainty, without becoming overwhelmed and perplexed. Its knowledge base provides useful perspectives to lead and live in co-existence with the distresses associated with a VUCA world. With such an outlook, individuals do not have to become perplexed by the unknown and uncertain future, but can embrace it when their perception of the future is reframed.

This chapter has also touched on how the insights of futures studies can be relevant to religious leaders. As leaders are leading people into the future, the future imagined by the leaders shapes the trajectory of a faith community. It is on this account that

practical theologians Van den Berg and Ganzevoort (2014:178) promote that futures studies is relevant: "Our explorations in futures studies show, however, that we can and should engage in anticipating and creating alternative preferable futures." If so, what 'futures' do ministers facilitate? What 'futures' do ministers' theological traditions facilitate? Do their theological roots enrich futures thinking? This question is explored in the next chapter. Equipped with the research in this chapter, the study turns to eschatology. The next chapter therefore ventures into the eschatological nature of the Reformed theology and builds creative connections between futures studies and eschatology. This leads the study further to reflect meaningfully on the research problem.

Chapter 4: Christian eschatology

4.1.   Introduction

Building on the insights of futures studies, the focus in this chapter shifts to the theological branch of eschatology. In the previous chapter, futures studies promoted the building of a mindset capacity that is future focused. In Reformed theology there is a rich tradition that has corresponding resemblances, namely eschatology. In this chapter, the research unpacks aspects of the nature of eschatology and the creative connections it has with futures studies. This endeavour sets off by first defining eschatology, followed by an unpacking of aspects relevant to it. These elements will be brought into conversation with the work of the Reformed theologian, Jürgen Moltmann. Accordingly, a rich relationship could be drawn between futures studies and eschatology.

After these connections have been explored, the chapter will reveal how eschatology could facilitate a disposition of constructively embracing the uncertainties of a modern world. These insights assist in answering the research question: How do ministers lead in an age of uncertainty and perplexity? Following these approaches, the study engages with the 'theological reflection' task set out in the research design and methodology. For an elementary[30] entry into this subject, the next section consists of a blend of concepts, approaches and aspects to define the broad field of eschatology.

4.2.   What is Christian eschatology?

Eschatology can be a nebulous[31] concept, but in short it is a theological term that derives from two Greek words, *eschatos*, meaning 'last and/or final', and *logos*, meaning 'word'; it is traditionally referred to as 'the end of all things'. It is concerned with what happens at the end of time and beyond time, and consists of expectations and attitudes concerning the future. For this reason, the future is the horizon of

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[30] Eschatology is "a word with many meanings", as Sauter (1999:1) rightfully notes. It has become an umbrella term that consists of complex conceptions and diverse questions, making it a broad field (1999:xv). For this reason, the study cannot elaborate on the multiplicity of ideas that eschatology entails, but only introduces relevant key concepts.

[31] There are a few quintessential subjects deriving from eschatology. One main example is Jesus' teachings of 'the kingdom of God'.

eschatology. As it is usually associated with 'the last things', it is synonymous with concepts like 'end times', 'final judgment', catastrophe, death, heaven, hell, etc.

For a long time, eschatology was treated as simply a dogmatic topic. There have been various developments in eschatological thinking, especially in the 1900s, when the subject enjoyed much progression. Advancements in New Testament studies have promoted eschatology as being of key significance for theology (Bauckham, 2007:333). Various influential theologians, such as Johannes Weiss, Albert Schweizer, C.H. Dodd, Martin Werner, Jürgen Moltmann, Wolfhart Pannenberg, Gerhard Sauter and Johann-Baptist Metz, to name a few, have made valuable contributions to this field of theology. From the 1960s there was a major shift in which eschatology became the decisive register in which all theological loci are set (Ziegler, 2018:4). As eschatology touches on various foundational subjects, such as our understanding of salvation (soteriology), the character of Jesus Christ (Christology), our understanding of space and time (temporality), etc., it has developed from being merely a doctrinal subject to an all-encompassing way of viewing theology. Ziegler (2018:xiii) quotes Scottish theologian James Stewart (1951) on this matter and states that, when dealing with eschatology, "we are dealing, not with some unessential … scaffolding, but with the very substance of the faith".

A core and basic foundation of Christian eschatology is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Eschatological assumptions are derived from biblical texts that elaborate on this event and the promise of a second coming. Through Jesus' birth, death and resurrection, God inaugurates a new reality that invades and reclaims the world by liberating it from the plague of evil and sin. Through this event, God renders in Jesus Christ a saving judgement for humanity. This divine act of God doing something radically new, by raising Jesus from the dead, makes the cross's saving event the focal point of eschatology. The cross is a history-making event that marks God's salvation for humanity in Jesus Christ and makes the impossible possible. This impossible made possible event marks a discontinuity[32] and radical break that interrupted time with grace.

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[32] In Polkinghorne and Welker's (2000) book, which consists of an interdisciplinary theology-and-science inquiry about 'end times', they state that all scientific projections about the future of humankind point towards a universe that would ultimately become inhospitable, either by a fiery collapse or cold decay. The historical resurrection event is an act of God that brings a discontinuity in

For this reason, Christ is the inbreaking of the *eschaton* (the final event in the divine plan). Ziegler (2018:8) quotes Karl Barth (1962), who talks about this *eschaton* event as "not the extension, the result, the consequence, the next step in following out what has gone before, but on the contrary, it is the radical break with all that has gone before". It is the start of something new. God's future invades our present by the divine act of the resurrection, ending the old and signalling the beginning of the new. God's eschatological future invades the passing age and conquers it from within. This is God's "creative negation", as Lutheran theologian, Gerhard Forde (1991), emphasises in Ziegler (2018:9).

Ziegler (2018:9) finds the words of Forde (1991) useful in this regard, where it is mentioned that Christ dies not "instead of us", but rather "ahead of us". Christ died ahead of his creation to remake it anew when he returns. These actions make the risen Jesus the *enacted* promise of God. It is this act that has the potential to change the circumstances in which humanity stands. It is for this above reason that Jesus cannot be understood in non-eschatological terms (Bauckham, 2017), and therefore eschatology stands under the rubric of the coming of Christ. Through this re-creative act, God bestows grace on his creation through Jesus Christ.

This re-creative act of God is synonymous with God's saving grace. Christ is the graciously sovereign incursion of God's future, not only for humanity, but for the whole cosmos. Therefore Jesus' promise is not only applicable to individual redemption, but also cosmic redemption. If God is the creator of all things, he is also the saviour and redeemer of all things. This makes the cross and resurrection the invasion of God's sovereign and saving love for all humanity and creation. Eschatology, or 'end times', should thus not be interpreted as disastrous events and a 'judgement day' that should be feared. There seem to be manifold misinterpretations that have given rise to the view that 'the end' is no more than a mood promoting desperate anxiety that has nothing to the with the gospel (Ziegler, 2018:xiv). Christian eschatology often has been culturally popularised and 'weaponised' by doomsday calendarists and eschatological extremists. In contrast, eschatological content has to do with liberation. It is God overturning 'the old and passing age'. This event echoes on a new horizon of hope for all humanity and creation. It is on this note that the late Prof Russel Botman (2002:29)

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the trajectory of the present physical world that would end in decay. Instead, God inaugurates a promise of a redeemed, new creation.

asserts that God's future is inseparable from the future of every single being in God's creation. Eschatology therefore admits and articulates the victorious grace and redemption of the God of the Gospel (Ziegler, 2018:12).

4.3.   The eschatology of Jürgen Moltmann

To obtain a sounder appreciation of Christian eschatology, the study looks at the work of German Reformed theologian, Jürgen Moltmann, on eschatology. While there are accent deviations in eschatological thinking, ranging from *futurist eschatology* (Johannes Weiss and Albert Schweitzer), *realised eschatology* (C.H. Dodd and Rudolf Bultmann) and *inaugurated eschatology* (Oscar Cullmann), this chapter cannot venture into the numerous developments contributed by each author. Respecting the limits of this study, it ventures only into the works of Jürgen Moltmann to assist in obtaining a better understanding of Reformed eschatology. While it is not possible to reflect on all of Moltmann's theological contributions, this section will elaborate on relevant aspects of his work.

In Moltmann's influential book, *The coming of Christ*,[33] he mentions that the traditional way of comprehending eschatology is human beings departing from this world to God. Moltmann, in contrast, goes to great lengths to systematically and theologically explain that the reverse is true – it is God coming to us. For him, eschatology is not so much about the end of history, but about the coming of God's new creation in which all living and non-living things will be redeemed. It is not about an ending, but about the beginning of the new creation. This viewpoint stands in stark contrast to the often misinterpreted apocalyptic views that evoke fear and horror, as the 'end times' are usually perceived, spelling disaster for history. The coming of Christ, which entails the recreation and redemption of all creation, rather is something that should be anticipated with great and hopeful expectancy.

These eschatological views are derived from the central theme of the resurrection. For Moltmann, everything rises and falls by the resurrection, and his eschatology is interpreted through this event. The resurrection of Jesus becomes the lens through which eschatology is viewed and, in his work, he greatly testifies to the transformative power of the cross.

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[33] This book marks Moltmann's completion of his five-volume messianic theology.

According to Moltmann (1996), eschatology is the entering into the promised completion of God's redemption plan. It is about the fulfilling of God's promise that He will make "all things new".[34] This fulfilling of God's promise to redeem creation is the victory of God against all forces seeking to destroy it. It is a promise that creation will be redeemed. This eschatological fulfilment is not built on the hope that creation will return to its original state, but rather points to a new creation over against the original. These aspects cover Moltmann's (1996:294) "cosmic eschatology", about which he states that the temporal creation will become the eternal creation and the special creation will become the omnipresent creation filled with God's omnipresence.

True eschatology is thus not about future history; it is about the future *of* history (Moltmann, 1996:10). This is an important distinction. Moltmann says that eschatology is about the future vista, but also goes beyond it. It is about the time after 'end times'. It is about life after life. It is not history that puts an end to eschatology, it is eschatology that puts an end to history (Moltmann, 1996:14). Eschatology is not about the completion *of* history, but the redemption *from* history. This *parousia*[35] is thus not merely an event in history, but the end of history and the starting of God's promised new creation. As Moltmann (1996:xi) puts it: "In God's creative future, the end will become the beginning". It is God's messianic future that wins power over the present.

Therefore, according to Moltmann, Christianity is eschatology. It is for this reason that eschatology is not simply a doctrinal topic, but a dimension of the whole subject matter of theology (Bauckham, 2017:333). It is not one element of Christianity, but the medium of Christian faith as such (Moltmann, 2002:16). It is on this account that Moltmann (1996:xii) associates himself with Karl Barth and asserts: "Christianity is wholly and entirely eschatology, not just in an appendix. It is hope, a vista, and a forward direction, and it is hence a new departure and a transformation of the present."

It is this 'forward direction' and 'vista' that entice this study and how such an outlook, in particular, can assist leaders to lead in an era of uncertainty. Can Moltmann's work

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[34] Revelations 21:5

[35] The Greek word for arrival. In Christian theology it is referred to as the second coming of Christ.

lift the horizons of leaders' expectations that a VUCA world has marred with uncertainties? This question reverberates throughout this chapter. Moltmann elaborates further on various quintessential topics of eschatology in his works, and the next section looks at another relevant topic.

4.4. Moltmann on 'cosmic eschatology'

For Moltmann, a major aspect of the promise of Jesus is his inclusive view of 'cosmic eschatology', which Bauckham (2017) would also call 'holistic eschatology'. Redemption does not only entail the personal salvation of the soul, but also the renewal of the cosmos. This cosmic scope of divine salvation does not entail the total destruction and annihilation of popular apocalyptic views, but instead that God will redeem humankind and restore his whole creation. As God is the creator of the world, He is also the redeemer of all creation. Moltmann mentions that God would not only restore and redeem the world, but will also bring it to fulfilment and completion (bring it to its unblemished state) (Bauckham, 2017:344). Thus, using biblical language, it is a conversion of Earth into Eden. As a result, eschatological hope is not for the return to an original state, but for a new creation – a second creation. It is not merely the repair or improvement of the cosmos, but it will be 'made new'. This new creation will be filled with God's glory[36] (Hebrew – *Shekinah*) as Moltmann (1996:266) mentions.

Moltmann (1996:265) further refers to Revelation 21:5 – "Behold, I make all things new" – and adds that nothing passes away or is lost, but that everything is brought back again in a new form. This consists of the recovery, liberation and transformation of the whole of creation. Moltmann reflects on this, taking into account 1 Corinthians 15:53-53, and states that the morality of creation-in-the-beginning will be overcome and make way for a new, immortal creation that will come into being (Polkinghorne & Welker, 2000:241). This new creation will not be riddled with crisis and conflicts any more, but will make way for a counter-reality because it will be the universal indwelling of God. All of creation will be liberated from the power of sin that perverted the perfect beginning (Moltmann, 1996:262). The *temporal* creation will become the *eternal*

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[36] Referring to Isaiah 6:3 – And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" (ESV).

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creation, and this marks the promise of the consummation and fulfilment of all things (Moltmann, 1996:264-265)

Cosmic eschatology, however, should not be confused with a theological version of a modern utopian progressivism, because the 'new creation' is not simply the outcome of the process of history itself (Bauckham, 2007:335). It is the creation out of the old (*creatio ex vetere*) that constitutes the renewal of all things (*renovatio omnium*). It does not consist of a scientific prediction of a better future, but a hope aroused and sustained by the promises of the God who created the world and promises redemption of his whole creation (Bauckham, 2007:335). Among other things, Biblical language calls this new creation 'the new Jerusalem', which will become the home of God's presence destined for all things. This new home – "the new heaven and the new earth" – will be filled with the eschatological indwelling of God's presence (Moltmann, 1996:266). It is this 'new thing'[37] of God's saving grace that Moltmann expresses as the hope available to human beings that God has promised. It is for this reason that hope flows naturally from eschatology, and this will be elaborated on in the next section.

4.5.   Moltmann on eschatology's hope and promise

"From first to last, and not merely in the epilogue, Christianity is eschatology, is hope" (Moltmann, 2002:2). These words are a central theme in the works of Moltmann. Hope flows out of eschatology, and hence eschatology and hope are intrinsically intertwined and cannot be separated. The eschatological message is a message of hope. This hope of Christians is a hope for the whole community that its Creator and Redeemer will arrive and may find in creation his home (Moltmann, 2006:xiii). Therefore, the Christian hope is an inherently transcending concept. It carries a promise that is not qualified historically, but eschatologically.

The Christian hope can eschatologically be described as a two-sided coin. On the one side, it consists of the *adventus* (Christ's coming), and on the reverse is the *novum*[38] (Latin for new thing). The *adventus* is Christ's second coming that believers await. Because creation is on a teleological timeline towards an eschatological event when

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[37] Referring to Isaiah 43:18-19 – "Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert" (ESV).
[38] For further reading, see "The category novum" in Moltmann (1996:27).

Christ comes to us, time is not only *futurum* (that what will be), but also *adventus* (that which is 'to come'). This makes the future not just the passing of time until our future becomes our present, but the 'not-yet future' is full of 'which is to come'. The Christological 'who' of 'which is to come' is where the hope and promise reside.

The *novum*, according to Moltmann, comprises the totally new acts of God, like raising Christ from the dead. Scientifically, the crucifixion condemns any bodily resurrection, but this is precisely the 'new thing' God has done, by bringing life from death. This event is nothing less than a truly eschatological event. Therefore, the resurrection event is a sort of *re-creatio ex nihilo*, a new creation out of nothing. Christ's resurrection is a propitious interruption and conversion of time. It is sheer, unanticipated novelty. This event has openly exploded the power of God's conversion. The resurrection thus seeks hope for history because it draws on the coming saving and transformative power of God. The eschatological future is thus charged with hope and promise. This hope is available to all humankind as believers wait for the 'new thing' God has promised. The Christian hope is based on God's future breaking into our current times, filling it with promise, and this can be translated into hope. It is an outlook that the present and future are filled with God's presence.

On this note, Fromm (2010:33) states that, when reflecting on how hope is perceived, it "is not prediction of the future; it is the vision of the present in a state of pregnancy …". The future is filled with the promise that 'something new' is becoming and growing, and thus fills the bearer with hopeful expectation. Such a hope holds two crucial aspects in balance, allowing hope to thrive (Watts, in Polkinghorne & Welker, 2000:51). These two aspects are that which is inaugurated and possible, on the one hand, and that which is still coming into being (Watts, in Polkinghorne & Welker, 2000:51).

Balancing these two aspects generates hopeful agency, which has a strong influence on neutralising the incapacitating effect imposed by a fluid VUCA world. Instead of leading at the unnerving hands of a tremulous world in flux that annihilates certainty, religious leaders equipped with hopeful agency can lead with conviction. It is for this reason that hope is a necessary ingredient combatting the fatiguing power of uncertainty.

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In defining Christian hope, it is also helpful to mention that which hope is not. Hope is not a this-worldly phenomenon staking everything on a better tomorrow in the sense that the future will progressively improve in circumstances. That would be facile optimism. This hope is not confidence in a future event that is predicted. Moltmann (1996:17) says on this point: "Christian eschatology does not speak of the future as such. It sets out from a definite reality in history and announces the future of that reality, its future possibilities and its power over the future." This is where eschatology's hope resides, not necessarily in a better future, but in God in our future, and the power and possibilities that such a future holds. It thus does not simply speak of what will happen next, but what one can hope for in the unknown future.

As a result, leading with hopeful agency is not synonymous with a shallow positivistic attitude or a coping opiate, but with a deeply rooted hope built on the Christology[39] of Christian eschatology. This is not to be confused with an emotional commodity or psychological mood, but rather is a gift of grace and therefore an attitude towards God (Soskice, in Polkinghorne & Welker, 2000:78). It is for this reason that eschatological hope translates into an empowering hope. It is empowering because it equips one with hopeful agency and even audacity.

4.6.   Moltmann on eschatology's dichotomy between 'the present' and 'the future'

A creative temporal tension can easily exist in Christian eschatology: a strain between 'the future' that is already with us, and simultaneously 'not yet'. Christians might feel that they are living between the 'now already' and the 'not yet' of God's promised redemption. It might feel as if they are living 'in-between' the first advent and the coming advent of Christ.

Thus there is a tension that needs to be embraced – a tension between the 'already' in terms of linear existence, where we have 'not yet' reached the *telos* of time, and the 'not yet' of eternity. This might be a difficult reality to comprehend, since linear thought often structures our thinking on time.

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[39] When it comes to eschatological reflection, it is crucial not to split the 'what' from the 'whom'. When reflecting on the *parousia* (the coming of Christ), one should not merely focus on 'what' is to come, but also on the character of the one who is to come. It is this 'who query', which is a Christological aspect.

It is on this point that Moltmann's work is valuable. One cannot simply reduce eschatology to a chronologically linear timeframe. Linear time is a modern scientific concept and a way of organising 'time' into seconds, minutes, hours, days, etc. When one diminishes eschatological thinking only to linear time, eschatology becomes subjected to *chronos* and, consequently, the power of transience. Ziegler (2018:14) also highlights this by referring to Minear: "The conception of endless, unilinear, one-way time must be modified if we are to accept the apostolic testimony. … If the end has actually been inaugurated, then historical time is capable of embracing simultaneously both the old age and the new." Thus eschatology is more than merely perceived linear time.

Eschatology has long been grappling with this paradox of time and eternity and how these two realities co-exist. Moltmann's theology gives some clarity on this matter. Moltmann, in conversations with Karl Barth, agrees that the God of time is both fully present and fully eternal. Moltmann (1996:282) notes that God is beyond earthly time (and space), and thus inhabits what he calls 'aeonic' time (a cyclical, symmetrical time that is time without a beginning and an end). God encompasses the irreversible trend of earthly time, and thus is both fully present and fully eternal.

For this reason, Barth (in Moltmann 1996:14) remarks that eternity is now (*nunc aeternum*), for every moment in time is equally close to the eternal 'now' and breaking into every moment of time. The future, which is filled with the omnipotence of God, is continuously breaking into the present, and therefore the present can become an epiphany in which God is revealing Himself. Moltmann (1996:35) refers to Franz Rosenzweig (1945) and states that the present is a 'springboard' to eternity. The present is thus filled with the 'presence of transcendence'. As a result, eschatology is not just looking forward to the *omega* (end) moment, but eternity is breaking into every moment of time from the alpha (beginning) moment to the omega (end) moment. Therefore, eschatology is not simply just things in the distant future, but a current (real-time) reality. This is the religious dimension of time to which Moltmann (1996:35) refers.

Eschatology is consequently less about prediction (a chronological future) and more about promise. The promise is that time (current or future) experiences the in-breaking of God's promised consummation, which makes the future filled with promise and,

accordingly, hope. It is for this reason that the future can never be void of promise, but 'the future' per se is not the promise. On the other hand, this does not mean that eschatology does not have something to say about the future that will eventually become our present. Thinking eschatologically about the future is not to overemphasise the future, but also is not taking one's eye off the future.

Consequently, eschatological thinking is an encompassing orientation and way of understanding our temporality and the future that is yet to come. Such an eschatologically charged outlook on time opens up new meanings and possibilities that religious leaders should be aware of. This also begs the question: Does religious leaders' thinking on God affect their present and future? Do religious leaders lead from an eschatological consciousness? If eschatology is to be taken seriously, it calls for the reconfiguration[40] of what we understand as time. This is unpacked in the next section.

4.7.   Eschatology calls for the reconfiguring of 'time'

The influence of time in our lives has a significant influence on how we live. Christian eschatology invites one into a comprehension of perceived time as bigger than merely seconds, minutes, days and years going by. A responsible Christian eschatology therefore calls for the reconfiguring of time. For religious leaders, apprehending time not only as linear (as a one-way arrow running irreversibly forward until the 'end of time'), but also theologically, can be a challenging[41] dimension. Time (and its counterpart eternity) can be a difficult theological puzzle to understand, as these elements are very juxtaposed. All of creation is time-bounded, but God the creator is an eternal being. Christian leaders believe in the 'God of time', from which all things come, and therefore time as a linear notion cannot be the only aspect of perceived time. It is this duality of linear and transcendental time that can become a struggle to understand (hence different and sometimes conflicting viewpoints exists on this subject).

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[40] It might be effortless for religious leaders to live with the conviction that God is in the *hic et nunc* (here and now), but is God also in the unknown future? We might believe that God is breaking through space and time into the present, but is God also in the not-yet future? Can God be present in our current reality and simultaneously present in our future? This could be counterintuitive thinking and mind-bending, as God conflates the present and future. Christians believe that God has set space and time in motion, and thus God also intervenes and interflows in these environments.

[41] As mentioned in the previous chapter, time is a shifting concept because it is bound by elements like language, space, rationality, embodiment, etc. These aspects are perceived and experienced subjectively, which makes time such a complex topic.

What is important to comprehend is that religious leaders should have a particular attitude towards time and temporality. Time should not be understood only linearly, but also theologically. This is done by reconfiguring the relationship of past, present and future. Here again, Moltmann's contributions are valuable. Moltmann explains that there are two different concepts from which to comprehend the future. Firstly, there are the 'phenomenal level' and 'transcendental level' of the future (Moltmann, 1996:26). The 'phenomenal level' is the awareness of everyday experiences of time (past, present and future). The 'transcendental level' of the future, on the other hand, is the awareness that the future is God's power in time. Moltmann (1996:35) refers to Rosenzweig (1945) to clarify this. For Rosenzweig, when one thinks of the progression of time, one assumes that the past moves from the past (what is already finished) towards the future, and the future is the progression of the past. However, in terms of the anticipated future, the flow moves from the future into the present and past. Hence, the future becomes 'potential' reality. In Rosenzweig's words (in Moltmann, 1996:36): "'Eternity is a future which, without ever ceasing to be future, is yet present. Eternity is a Today, but it is aware of being more than Today." This 'transcendental' awareness of the future can also be called an 'eschatological awareness' of time.

Why is this reconfiguration of time important? When religious leaders live and lead from a one-sided, compartmental approach to time (mainly past, only in the present or just in the future), it may lead them to experience a 'dislocation of time'. 'Dislocating time' would be to live as if the scientific approach to time as linear or 'calendar time' is the only reality of 'time' we live in. This breaks the continuity of time. If religious leaders do not have a strong capacity to envision a future beyond their present, they might be lured into thinking only in the past and developing a nostalgic and romanticised longing for the past. Religious leaders should rather live *from* the past as opposed to *in* the past. Religious leaders should live *from* the past via memory, but not be stuck *in* the past. They should be discouraged from dwelling only in the past through mere remembrance, and rather be future-oriented by having an eschatological consciousness.

This eschatological awareness allows leaders in the ministry to recognise that there is a creative 'dialectical tension' of time. On the one hand, there is the need to remember

the past, but also to proclaim the future (eschatology). Such an outlook has implications for how religious leaders think about the future. This is unpacked in the next section.

4.8.   Reconfiguring 'the future' as *adventus*

As has been pointed out in futures studies, the future is dynamic. The present has an influence on our future, and how we think about the future affects our present. The 'now' is filled not only with the past (by means of memory), but also with the future. For religious leaders, the future should not be reduced to merely an experience of time related exclusively to the *futurum* (the advancement of history), as Moltmann mentions, but also viewed with an eschatological sensitivity. How do religious leaders think about the future from an eschatological grounding? As Moltmann's eschatology makes us aware, the 'future' should be understood as God with us, as well as God coming to us, and therefore our future outlook should understand the future as *adventus* (*the continuous coming of the present One*). Cilliers (2019:89) explains it in the following way:

> Between the faith in 'God above us' and 'God in us', comes a third possibility: 'God ahead of us'. In the tension between our experiences of God's absence and God's presence, we are seeking God's future … but this future is not something or a condition an eternity away; rather a power working in the present, through promise and hope, and in the liberation and creation of new possibilities. As the Power of the future, God works in the present.

God is working in the present through the 'in-breaking' of God's presence. The future is thus full of potential, as 'the eternal God' is breaking into the 'now' through transcendental acts. This 'in-breaking' should not be understood as 'interrupting' time. Eschatological events do not merely interrupt time. Moltmann distances himself from this term, but rather uses the word conversion. Interruption implies disrupting time and, afterwards, everything goes on as before. Conversion, on the other hand, suggests changing the course of time and calling for the creation of new life (Moltmann, 1996:22). For this reason, the eschatological message creates the possibility for

conversion. This opens up the possibility[42] for 'new life' within history. With this view in mind, God's presence breaking into the present creates the potentiality and possibility for the conversion of events and time to create a new reality. This changes how religious leaders view the future. It is not simply time passing by and being left to our own individualistic devices to change; the transcending power of God is also at play, which is crucial to factor in when thinking about the future.

This is the hope that is articulated in Moltmann's work. There is hope *for* and *in* the future. The present and the future are filled with promise and are something to be celebrated as a gift. The unknown future is not filled with void, but comingles with transcendence. The anticipated future is metaphorically speaking 'baptised' by God's promise and hope. The future is not something at a faraway distance, but an active force full of promise and hope (Moltmann, 1969:177-178). This stands in stark contrast to any vision of the future fuelling despair. As mentioned, the fluid VUCA world and its uncertainties can become so overwhelming that feelings of hopelessness devastate people. Religious leaders living with a vital eschatological outlook refrain from such a disposition, because they know that the *unknown* future is filled with the *known* God. The future should therefore be celebrated as a gift (rather than feared), because it already fills the present with meaning (Cilliers, 2011:2). It is in the basis of this dynamic that religious leaders perceive and anticipate the future, and it is through anticipation that we become aware of God's penetrating acts of conversion.

To understand how reframing the future through an eschatological viewpoint can effect people's actions is an interesting field. There seems to be some noteworthy comparative research on how transcendental thinking affects people's future outlook. This will be elaborated on in the next section.

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[42] It is for this reason that the theological scholar, Nicholas of Cusa (1401-1464) speaks of God as 'Posse ipsum' – 'The power of the possible'. Prof. C.A.M. Hermans of the Netherlands has also dedicated an article described as "God as Pure Possibility and the Wonder of Possibilisation". See Hermans (2019).

4.9. Empirical research indicating how eschatological thinking affects people's future outlook

Psychologist Philip Zimbardo, emeritus professor at Stanford University, seems to have established connections between faith-based convictions and a 'future-oriented' mindset. In their book, *The Time Paradox*, Zimbardo and Boyd expands on the Zimbardo Time Perspective Inventor (ZTPI) in a user-friendly manner. He and his team have conducted tests with and redefined a tool that was developed in 1999 to measure people's experiential dimensions of time. Six time factors, ranging from future, future transcendental, past positive, past negative, present hedonism and present fatalism, have been identified by mapping people's mental 'time perspective'.

Research conducted by Zimbardo and Boyd (2010:173) shows fascinating correlations between people's religious convictions and having a 'future-oriented mindset'. From mapping people's 'mental time perspectives', Zimbardo and Boyd states that Protestants scored above average in the 'transcendental-future time perspective' (see 'Table 4.1')[43] and the 'Future time perspective' (image below names 'Table 4.2').[44]

Table 4.1 - The Transcendental-future Time Perspective and World Religions

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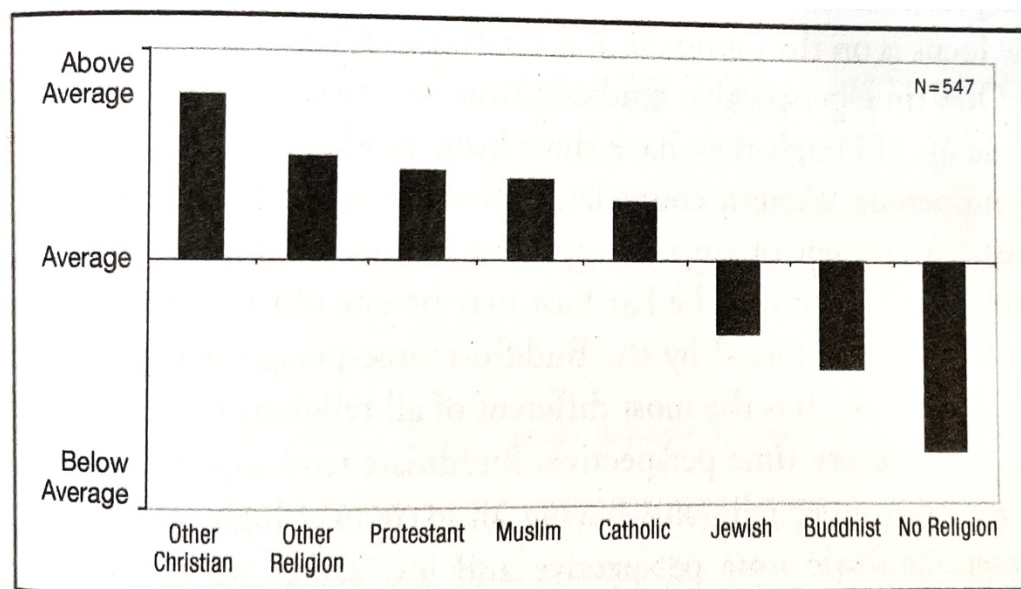
[43] See Zimbardo and Boyd (2010:173)
[44] See Zimbardo and Boyd (2010:177)

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Table 4.1 indicates people's stance on life after death. Protestants scored above average, which indicates that they have a high regard for a time perspective that runs from the body's physical death to infinity. Zimbardo and Boyd (2010:173) further suggests that people who attend religious services and perform in religious rituals score higher on this scale than their counterparts who do not.

Table 4.2 - The Future Time Perspective and World Religions
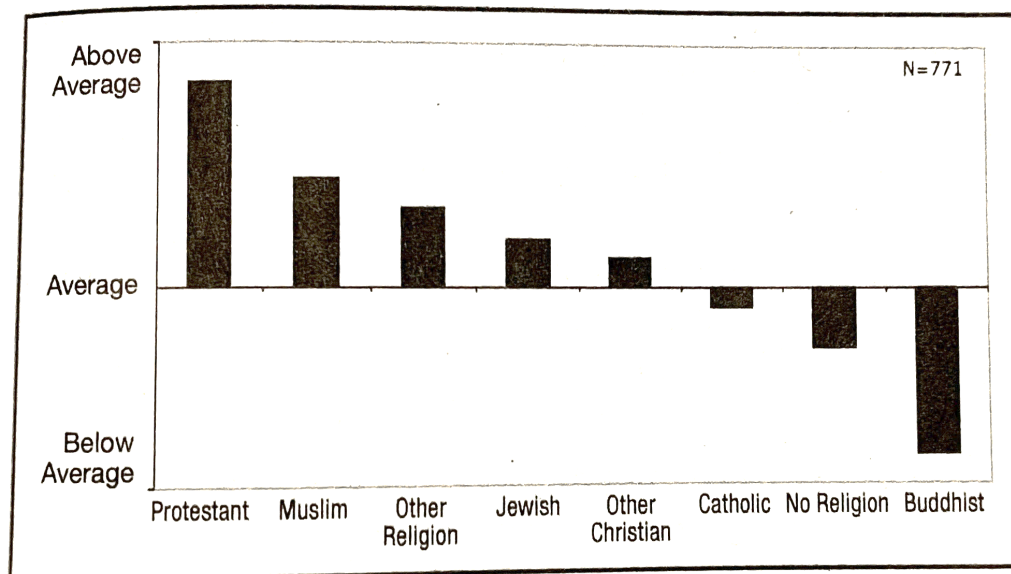
Table 4.2 indicates people's stance on a future outlook. Protestants scored the highest on this perspective. As people's goals, hopes and fears live in the future, and the future is our primary motivational space, as indicated by Zimbardo and Boyd (2010:177), Protestants seems to have a strong motivation to work assiduously towards the 'good' future.

From Zimbardo and Boyd's research it is fair to conclude that religious beliefs about a 'future dimension' assists people in developing a future mindset and also, to a certain extent, confirms that Protestant theology seems to cultivate a 'future-oriented mindset'. These results only serve to provide an indication that eschatological thinking (beliefs about the future) seems to foster a future-focused mindset. In the next section we explore how eschatological thinking promotes action.

4.10. Participating in God's 'preferred future'

As mentioned, at the deepest core of eschatology lie convictions about the future. These future beliefs affect people's actions and ethics,[45] as outlined in the previous chapter and as also indicated by Zimbardo and Boyd's research. Inevitably for religious leaders, the promise of a coming new creation does not give rise to a passive, awaiting stance, but calls up ethical action. The vision of a redeemed and healed future is not to be treated as tranquilising, but rather as a stimulus for ethical action. It is for this reason that William Schweiker (in Polkinghorne & Welker, 2000:138) asserts: "To live the new creation is to dedicate one's life to combat all that unjustly demeans and destroys life out of a profound love of life and in the name of divine goodness." Moltmann (1996:217) affirms this when he states that the intent of the Christian apocalyptic view is not to provoke horror, but to encourage resistance to the powers over this world that will lead to actions that create a new future for an oppressed world. He (Moltmann, 2002:21) further asserts, "Those who hope in Christ can no longer put up with reality as it is, but begin to suffer under it, to contradict it".

The hope of a coming new creation modelled on the resurrection ultimately ignites action. Fraser Watts agrees on this and states that hope centred around God's fulfilling promise demands action (Polkinghorne & Welker, 2000:58). This is because Christian hope looks forward to God's time, and this anticipation awakens action. This hope that demands action is not to be confused with optimism. While optimism does not carry any specific commitment, hope, in contrast, demands action (Polkinghorne & Welker, 2000:138). These 'actions' consists of living and working towards the vision of God's 'preferred future'[46] towards which religious leaders lead faith communities. It is working towards a vision "seeing God in all things, participating in the transparently and

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[45] Fraser Watts (in Polkinghorne & Welker, 2000:48) rightfully states that eschatology is essentially moral, because it is about a *good* future. This moral aspect of eschatology shapes believers' ethics and actions. This is also underlined by clinical neuropsychologist Detlef Linke, when he reflects on brain theory and eschatology. He notes that our hope for and expectation of the coming future, and its associated new creation, already influence all our activity (Polkinghorne & Welker, 2000:48).

[46] When one mentions God's 'plan for the future' and/or 'preferred future', one is essentially using eschatological grammar. It is a language that propels one to visions of the new creation. This 'preferred future' is not tied to a chronological end date. Fraser Watts (in Polkinghorne & Welker, 2000:48) states that often when theologians talk about the hoped-for future they are not necessarily speaking of a particular point in temporal chronology that will one day be the present; instead, they are speaking of a different kind of future, intended by God and hoped for by humankind.

joyously theocentric world of creation indwelt by God" (Bauckham, 2017:349). The 'vision of God', sometimes called the 'beatific vision', is a vision of being in the immediate presence of God. When one uses the language of 'God's preferred future', one is envisioning an eschatological vision of a flourishing human community inspired by the Spirit of God that is in deep harmony with God. It is towards this 'preferred future' vision that religious leaders lead communities.

For religious leaders to continuously work and lead towards God's preferred future, Niemandt asserts that they spiritually contemplate the questions: What is God up to? What is God busy doing in his creation? What does God want to do? These questions place us in God's future and compels leaders to attend to God's preferred future (Niemandt, 2017:133). To participate in God's preferred future is thus to ask: What does God's 'preferred future' want from us?

4.11. Can the 'preferred future' speak back?

When reflecting on the shifts in modern temporality, Aleida Assmann[47] (in Lorenz & Bevernage, 2013:46) ends her article with the following thought-provoking question: We should not only ask what do we want of the past and the future, but: what do the past and the future want from us? This is quite an introspective question. As there is an oscillation (movement back and forth in a regular rhythm) between the present and the future, since they influence each other mutually, what does God's future want from our present?

This is an interesting thought. If we believe that God is in our future, what does God's preferred future want and expect from us? Such a confrontational question not only invites appropriate reflection, but also calls for participatory action. As our future has an influence in the present, what influence does God's preferred future ask from us, and how does it call us into action? This is where anticipation comes in, as anticipation is acting with the future in mind.

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[47] Assmann is a German professor who focuses on cultural anthropology and communicative memory.

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4.12. Eschatological expectation and anticipation

Like a pregnant mother full of hope while expecting and anticipating the new life that will soon arrive, eschatology invites us into anticipation and expectation of God's work, which is consistently birthing a *novum* (new thing) bringing 'new life'. The creative God who has brought a new life out of death, and brought creation itself out of nothing, is constantly 'birthing' a 'new thing'. Eschatologically, this 'new thing' is God's creative activity of intervention. For this reason, the future is full of promise and possibilities and, as a result, Christian eschatology is inseparable from expectation and anticipation. Irish scholar Andrew Cyprian Love (2017) contributes valuable insights on this topic and highlights that the Christian disposition towards the second coming of Christ is anticipatory by nature.

While expectation can be defined as a strong belief that something will happen, anticipation goes beyond this and also entails actions carried out in preparation for those things (Love, 2017:2) As mentioned in a previous example: When rain is forecasted, one might anticipate rainfall, but it becomes anticipatory when it is acted upon and one takes an umbrella. Thus, anticipation is more than just the expectation of particular events. Expectation is accompanied by preparation. Love (2017:2) indicates that anticipation has a twofold character, consisting of awareness and action. There is a mental expectation, followed by an anticipation that consists of action.

Love (2017:3) differentiates between *natural anticipation* and *Christian anticipation* to distinctly identify the dynamics of eschatological anticipation. The two forms differ in their relationships from the present to the future. *Natural anticipation* consists of actions performed in view of an expected future, but is not in itself part of the future. It keeps the present and future apart. Christian anticipation, on the other hand, has a theological eschatology embedded in it which identifies with the present and the future, thus joining the two. For Christian anticipation, the present and the future comingle. Love (2019:3) elaborates:

> The anticipatory acts which Christians perform become part of the present and the future at the same time or to make the same point differently: whereas, in natural anticipation, present and future are held distinct, in Christian eschatological

anticipation the present and the future interpenetrate, and so the anticipatory actions done in the present somehow participate in the future, belong to the future, in a way which goes beyond the mere "looking forward" characteristic of the actions of purely natural anticipation.

Love conveys that Christian anticipation embeds an anticipatory dynamic in which actions are not just executed in view of a future, but in some sense participate in the future. The future (as the not yet) has entered the 'here and now', and so the anticipatory actions of Christians belong to a future already made present now (Love, 2017:5). It is a sort of 'anticipatory participation'. Cilliers (2019:89) also mentions that anticipation is not just merely a passive 'waiting', but is about 'participating in the future'. This has crucial consequences for religious leadership and begs the question: Are religious leaders' perceptions of the future filled with *adventus* expectations? Is there an accompanying anticipation that entails actions carried out when leaders think about the future? Are religious leaders even mindful that their present actions are participating in and creating a future? These are some of the essential questions guiding this study to appropriately respond to how religious leaders lead in an age of uncertainty and perplexity.

As mentioned, eschatological expectation is centred and sustained by God, who created the world and who promises the redemption and completion of his creation. English Anglican scholar, Richard Bauckman 2007:336), elaborates:

> It is not the result of extrapolation from the trends of history or the present, nor is it based on scientific predictions of the future. … The future of the divine promise is not limited by the potentialities of this world, but comes from the transcendent possibilities of the God who created this world with all its potentialities.

Because the future is open with divine possibilities, as Bauckman mentions, Christian eschatology cultivates the capacity to imagine an alternate possibility to the present reality. Eschatological imagination helps to facilitate the anticipation of divine possibilities in our future, and is elaborated on in the next section.

4.13. Eschatological imagination and the future

As highlighted in the previous chapter, imagination is a forward-looking stance that defies boundaries and creates new realities. Imagination faces the future which is why

Bachelard (2014:VIII) proclaims: "If we cannot imagine, we cannot foresee". For this reason, Garret Green (in Sarot & Fergusson, 2000:74-75) states that, when it comes to the future, we have few if any other resources to access it other than imagination. Imagination provides us entrance into something that is inaccessible and not present. Imagination equips us to look at the world differently than it currently is. Without it one cannot venture into the unknown. A failure of imagination renders us incapable of transcending the apparent limits of the here and now and ultimately will cause us to be 'stuck' in the present (Sarot & Fergusson, 2000:62).

It is for this reason that imagination is always directed at the future and continuously propels us towards the horizon of the future by suggesting images that are invariably new (Love, 2017:11-12). This makes imagination a futural power. It challenges the status quo and what people define as possible. It has the potential to create new realities. Barnard, Cilliers and Wepener (192:2014) cite the French sociologist, Baudrillard (1994), who terms imagination and anticipation, in short, as 'simulation': it designs other, unknown spaces in such a way that they become reality. By imagining new, 'alternative' futures, we are contributing to bringing these futures to 'life'.

Referring back to Moltmann's cosmic eschatology, the cosmos is 'space' that God created and thus dwells in. God enters humankind to make this (earth) sphere his house (Barnard et al., 2014:197-198). As God's spirit is distributed over the entire world (Acts 8), the Spirit always creates new milieus of imagination and spaces of anticipation, and this is the new frontier where people find new meanings and purposes (Barnard et al., 2014:197-198). Imagination and its accompanying anticipation are therefore a sort of multi-sensing of time and space as a place in which the Spirit also moves. Imagination, for this reason, boosts our expectations and encourages our being mindful about the 'presence of transcendence', not only in the present, but also in the future. Eschatology assist us to shift imagination towards the future, but not just the future per se – rather, God in our future. It is for this reason that imagination is a 'sacred act'. Barnard et al. (2014:212) elaborate on this by quoting the Dutch phenomenologist and liturgical scholar, Gerardus van der Leeuw: "Imagination is a sacred act, because it creates a second reality next to the first one, which has an essential relation to the first, but is nevertheless a different reality. This quality of being 'a different one' makes imagination a religious activity."

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Imagination is therefore an openness to a different reality than what is currently perceived. It separates us from the past as well as from reality and faces the future (Bachelard, 2014:VIII). It is thinking creatively and envisioning how different the world could be, one with a renewed heaven and earth where God dwells in its midst. Imagination is the only way for expressing a vision of the world to come, and thus, where imagination flourishes, alternate futures will blossom. Eschatological imagination is consequently a unique religious mental 'muscle' that religious leaders need to grow and cultivate. When thinking about the future, religious leaders need to imagine it from an eschatological viewpoint. Such an eschatologically conscious future outlook has immense consequences for how leaders view the future and its associated uncertainty.

4.14. How eschatology affects uncertainty

As the chapter has already stated, eschatology is a 'forward-looking' stance that consists of strong convictions about the future. The beliefs instilled by eschatological views affect not only how we think about the future, but also our actions. As one is living towards the future, eschatological principles guide a person's attitudes and behaviour in the present.

With this being stated, the contrary is also of note. If leaders are not conscious of eschatological convictions, they might be prone to live mostly for the present, which can lead to the development of a sort of 'presentism' and the danger that they become 'stuck in time'. Without a strong eschatological anchor in religious leaders' theological foundation, they might be swept up by the ruthless VUCA world that leaves people rootless (Bauman, 2000). A rapid VUCA world easily fills people with despair and voids the future of hope, leading to a nihilistic outlook.

Referring back to the modern VUCA world described in the first chapter: Fluid VUCA environments driven by 'social acceleration' can be particularly threatening, thereby fuelling uncertainty and thereby gaining substantial potential to become perplexing. When religious leaders become so overwhelmed by societal changes, the future can become bereft of 'hope'. When this occurs, they might easily develop a 'breaking in time' – a notion of loss in continuity between the past, present and, especially, the

future. This escalates a 'present proximity bias' – the preference not to engage with the future, but instead to live more towards the present.

A strong eschatological vision can assist leaders living out their calling and fend off the perplexing and overwhelming uncertainty experienced by society. Cognitive scientist Tali Sharot (2011:1) says this hope, and its accompanying element of optimism, keep our minds at ease in the face of an unknown future. Developing a resilient eschatological foundation bears in mind that God is actively participating in our unknown future. Such an outlook on the future can provide much peace in the face of staggering uncertainty. It assist us not to suffer from a kind of 'future blindness', in which we venture directionless into the unknown. This, in turn, changes our relationship towards the future.

The uncertain future might be distressing and startling to some, but for religious leaders it can and may never be hopeless. Leaders may lament the lack of certainty arising from a VUCA world, but may never give in to a dystopian future bereft of hope. This would be to neglect theology's eschatological roots and even the Christology it embeds. The future is thus always present with hope. The future's present (gift) is the presence of God. This is what eschatology as a human consciousness wants to instil in believers' hearts and minds. It is for this reason that religious leaders are filled with an expectant hope and why Barentsen (2018:153) calls religious leaders "harbingers of hope".

4.15. Creative connections between futures studies and eschatology

There are noticeably creative connections between futures studies and eschatology. Both fields are concerned with expectations and attitudes concerning the future, and consequently their focus is the future horizon. Both subjects advocate that this future horizon is crucial not only for prospective thinking, but plays a critical role in present thinking. Both fields aim to bring the vista of the future nearer and to realise its potential power in the present. Grasping the future can only be done by means of anticipation, another aspect that both fields highlight as pivotal.

Where futures studies assists in understanding how thinking about the future influences our decision-making, eschatology, from a religious vantage point, provides strong convictions about the future. Not only does eschatology postulate strong convictions, it portrays a horizon of hope that a VUCA world does not provide. Where

the two fields differ in thinking about the future is that eschatology points out that anticipation of the future should be more about *adventus.* Christians believe that the future is a promise in the form of a concrete anticipation of Christ's coming (Bauckman, 2007:336).

The insights in this chapter are valuable in answering the research question to understand how to cope with the overwhelming effects of uncertainty. Equipped with these insights, one can begin to explore pragmatic possibilities that help to combat the overwhelming uncertainties a VUCA world imposes and that help religious leaders stay grounded. This is done in the next chapter, in which leadership capacity is formulated.

4.16. Conclusion

This chapter was dedicated to understanding relevant concepts of Christian eschatology. It started with introductory explanations of eschatology, with a focus on the contributions of Reformed theologian Jürgen Moltmann. Linked concepts, such as time, anticipation, imagination and hope, were explored and their connection with futures studies was indicated. These connections bring some provocative correspondences to light on how the future can be perceived.

By venturing into this field, the research has drawn on theological wisdom from valuable sources within the Christian tradition of eschatology to assist in answering the research question: How do religious leaders lead faithfully in a VUCA world? As stated in the first chapter, the magnitude of uncertainty associated with modern living can be overwhelming and lead to perplexing perturbation (mental uneasiness). Eschatology can assist in mitigating these uncertainties, because it has strong and deeply rooted convictions about a future that is charged with hope. Cultivating eschatological enthusiasm by nurturing grounded eschatological convictions can therefore be quite beneficial, and also necessary, for religious leaders.

This chapter has stated that eschatology enriches a future-oriented mindset. This is a crucial aspect to elevate religious leaders' future outlook, which futures studies highlights as being very important. Being mindful of an eschatological reality fosters a future-oriented mindset that can lessen the overwhelming effects of uncertainty. This will assist religious leaders in the context of the 21st century VUCA world and all its staggering realities. On the basis of these understandings, this chapter has explored

the task of 'theological reflection' that the research methodology requires. In the next chapter, all the accumulated insights will be interconnected and translated into a religious leadership capacity, titled 'anticipatory leadership'.

Chapter 5: Anticipatory leadership for ministry

5.1   Introduction

In this chapter, a case will be made for what this study calls "anticipatory leadership". Utilising the knowledge from the chapters of futures studies and eschatology, this section of the research will formulate a leadership competency that incorporates futures-focused thinking and an eschatological consciousness. A cross-pollination of ideas and concepts that share commonalities will be fused in this chapter. "Anticipatory leadership" could assist religious leaders to not become perplexed by an uncertain and fluid VUCA world but can help ministers endure it. Elements of what such a competency entails will be set out in this chapter. By unpacking "anticipatory leadership", this section will be focusing on the pastoral action task of the research design and set out a suitable reaction to the research question. This chapter formulates an appropriate response and action to the question: How do ministers lead in an age of uncertainty and perplexity? Since the locus of this research is in the field of practical theology the approach of this chapter also has a pragmatic nature.

5.2   The necessity of new leadership competencies

In the second chapter, light was shed on how incessant global changes are creating a fluid VUCA world. This disruptive context raises the need for leadership in those circumstances (Niemandt 2019:169). As the contexts in which leaders lead shift[48], it raises new challenges and consequently asks new innovative[49] leadership competencies of leaders. A relevant example of this is the Covid-19 pandemic and the unique and immediate skillsets (especially digital) it introduced upon leaders. As churches (in South Africa) were banned from physically gathering and were forced into various digital mediums to spread the gospel, religious leaders and their ministries had to learn and develop new skillsets and competencies. The same is true for the VUCA

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[48] Jack Barentsen, professor of Practical Theology at Evangelische Theologische Faculteit in Leuven, has mapped how the shifting of times has influenced the role and outlook of ministers. Barentsen paints a well-informed scope of how the role of ministers has changed as the major social contexts have shifted from a modern to postmodern world. He explains due to professionalisation, the role of the religious leader has developed from a denominational representative to a professional counsellor to an organisational leader and finally towards a spiritual sensemaking guide (Barentsen in Storey et al., 2016:270).

[49] Barentsen highlights that in a societal context where the rate of change continues to increase, the innovative task of the leader is bound to receive more attention (Barentsen & Nullens, 2014:3).

world churches find themselves in. The VUCA world demands new competencies for ministers to guide faith communities in times of staggering uncertainties. This is underlined by Marais and Niemandt (2020:1) who note: A VUCA world (combined with Covid-19) accentuates the urgent need to reconceptualise congregational leadership. They further highlight, that "… the church finds itself in an unparalleled leadership crisis where everything needs to be re-evaluated" (2020:1). This brings a challenge especially for religious leadership which demands an appropriate response.

Nell and Nell (2014:29) rightfully state that religious leadership is a contested field. Multiple leadership theories arise which Nell and Nell (2014:30) according to Bolden and Kirk (2009) categorises into four theories namely: (a) essentialist theories that concentrate on identifying leadership traits and behaviours; (b) critical theories that observe leadership used to maintain power and status, rather than empower followers; (c) relational theories that view leadership as a group quality that resides within the relationship between leaders and followers; and (d) constructionist theories that assess how leadership constructs meaning and helps people to make sense of situations. These categories help to clarify some of the conceptual contestations on religious leadership (Nell and Nell, 2014:30).

Nell (2020) furthermore provides a competency framework that is considered useful to plot where this study's proposed leadership competency fits in. Nell (2020) uses four meta-categories to differentiate between the religious leadership competencies (see Appendix A). These four meta-categories are 1) core competencies that qualify religious leaders; 2) competencies that focus on relationships within the faith community; 3) competencies that focus on relationships with those outside the faith community; and 4) competencies that focus on the environment. These four meta-categories are incorporated by the *Munus Triplex* threefold office typology, namely: priest, prophet and king leadership roles. Under the four meta-categories, ten competencies arise, namely symbolic, spiritual, hermeneutical, pastoral, visionary, reconciling, communicative, innovative, entrepreneurial and ecological competencies. The following is a visual representation of Nell's (2020:275) outlined competencies (see appendix A for additional details).

Core competencies
- Symbolic competency
- Spiritual competency
- Hermeneutical competency

Competencies that focus on relationships within the faith community
- Pastoral competency
- Visionary competency
- Reconciling competency

Competencies that focus on relationships with those outside the faith community
- Communicative competency
- Innovative competency
- Entrepreneurial competency

Competencies that focus on the environment
- Ecological competency

This representation gives an overview of religious leadership competencies. Anticipatory leadership has strong associations with hermeneutic, visionary, innovative and entrepreneurial competencies. These connections will be established at the end of this chapter after there is elaborated what constitutes anticipatory leadership.

Furthermore, this chapter adds a voice to the ongoing search and response of religious leadership in light of an ever-changing world and the uncertainties it imposes. In the face of staggering uncertainty, the modern context also brings about new understandings and challenges to religious leadership. The previous two chapters have been dedicated to exploring creative ways to appropriately respond to the current VUCA context. Their insights will now be fused into a leadership competency to respond to the research question.

5.3   Incorporating the insights of Christian eschatology and anticipation into a leadership competency

As futures studies have pointed out, there is immense value in forward-focused thinking. Our complex and uncertain future unfortunately cannot be outsmarted. It is impossible to out-think the future, but religious leaders can enhance their "future literacy" by developing a future-oriented mindset. This action requires intellectual capacity that is spent on the future.

Eschatology has a deep-rooted tradition in future-oriented thinking. It directs thoughts and actions toward the anticipated future. Christian eschatology has strong convictions that the future is filled with *adventus* (that which is "to come") as Jürgen Moltmann (1996) mentions and therefore eschatological thinking is living with anticipation for the One who comes. This is where eschatological convictions assist religious leadership and tapping into Christian eschatology is a focal necessity. Eschatology indexes religious leaders' hearts and actions towards God's anticipated future. It reminds leaders of the incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection and how these eschatological events change both the world and our perceptions of it. It changes our attitude and relationship not only of the present but also towards the future. Eschatology prompts us that God is not only co-creating in our present but also participating[50] in our future. It is more than merely an attitude or mentality about the future, but an all-conforming manner of living and leading. An eschatological consciousness confronts leaders with the inquiry in which temporal timeframe they act and lead. Are they held captive by the past, stuck in the present or are they future-oriented?

Eschatological anticipation is important as it also guards against a stance of contentment towards religious leaders' calling. On the contrary. An eschatological anticipation fuels theological vitality. Living and leading with anticipation is to be in expectancy of God's immanency – his presence in the here and now. Anticipation

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[50] As Boeve and Ries (2001:VIII) states, in the Christian tradition there is little doubt that one of its core convictions is that God is actively present in the world. We believe in an infinite God who is actually "present" in the finite. This "presence of transcendence" speaks of God's incarnation. Boeve and Ries (2001:IX) go further and state: "… the incarnationality of Christianity means that the transcendent God is indeed present, yet in such a way that this presence does not lie in our grasp, but we in its". It is for this reason that Cilliers (2019:74) remarks God's presence is always an "elusive, moving presence". One can speak of the "Deus absconditus" – hidden and elusive but not absent God. God is thus immanently active in his creation.

does not happen in a vacuum though. It is to live in awe and wonder of what God is creatively doing in the world. It is paying attention and being attentive to what God is doing in religious communities. Anticipatory leaders, therefore, have a relentless curiosity to discern God's workings. They yearn for God's *kairos* moments that convert people's hearts and minds. It is for these reasons that ministry leaders should be leading from the future.

5.4 Ministry leaders leading from the future

The previous chapters have touched on the ontology of temporality or in simple terms, how a person thinks of their life's time and time beyond it. As reiterated, historical time is irreversible; it cannot be changed. The future can become the past, but the past can never become the future. Thus, the future is like a canvas that is open to be changed. It is a time-to-come of which leaders can dream and render a more humane world. This can only be done if religious leaders are intentional about the future. For these reasons, ministry leaders should be leading from the future.

Christian eschatology coaxes that the greatest future of all is the second coming of Christ. But this reality does not only have the potential for the not-yet future, it also equips the present with an expectant agency. It is a constant awareness that God is interjecting the present to converse it. This openness is an anticipation for the Christ who emerges and not only interrupts time but converses it. Such an expectation and anticipation should be a significant influence on clergy's leadership qualities. Due to this, religious leaders should be future-focused and have an imperative of "leading from the future".

Leading from the future insists that one faces the future with a "preferential focus". It is proverbially "leaning" into the future. Niemandt adds to this and promotes that "the art of leadership is not to focus on the rear-view-mirror but to journey into the future" (2019:153). It is to not only look at the past as grounds for action but into the future. It is having the future (which is filled with God's presence) in mind. This guides religious leaders not to become a "victim" of time, trapped by the confines of the present, but to labour with a future-oriented anticipation. Such anticipation is activated by an eschatological consciousness that purposefully enquires: "What is God up to?"

This discernment is a sort of future "clairvoyance". In psychology, clairvoyance (French: "clear seeing") is knowledge of information that is not necessarily known to any other person, not obtained by ordinary channels of perceiving or reasoning, thus a form of extrasensory perception. It is a kind of multisensory of this spirit that can be attributed to the term "presencing". This neologism is a unifying of the words "presence" and 'sensing". Scharmer[51] from a less theological viewpoint views "presencing" as "to sense, tune in, and act from one's highest future potential—the future that depends on us to bring it into being" (2016:8). Cilliers (2019:10) on a spiritual note relates "pre-sencing" as the sensing of a Presence in the present. He expresses the words of Louw (2019) to elaborate on this:

> With 'presencing' is meant a kind of encounter wherein past, present and future intersect in such a way that sensing (experience) and present moment (state of being) coincide in such a way that a linear understanding of time makes place for circularity and a spiral interpretation. Presencing is about the 'opening of the human mind' (significant reflection) and the 'opening of the heart' (wisdom). It implies the paradigm shift from analytical causative thinking to integrative circular thinking. In Old testament thinking, presencing refers to the notion of fellowship with God – coram Deo.

For these reasons, it is vital to lead from the future. Does this however mean the past is made obsolete?

5.5   A future-oriented memory – leading from the future with the present (and past) in mind

The emphasis of this study thus far has been futures focused, but does this mean that the past is to be made obsolete? Certainly not. It is impossible to remove the past as it is actively present in our memory and our imagination (Vosloo, 2015:461). Although the future has an immense influence on our present (as put forth in the previous chapter), religious leaders should not be alluded to forgetting the past or letting it be devalued. The Christian tradition after all is a "memory tradition" and so religious leaders should continuously remember it and draw on it as a source for the embodiment of their faith (Vosloo, 2015:468). The Christian tradition is thus a living

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[51] See Otto Scharmer, *Theory U* (2009) for more detail of his work on "presencing".

tradition of remembering[52] and for this reason we are called to re-tell the message of Christ's death "until He comes again"[53] (Cilliers, 2011:2). Believers are called to commemorate the suffering, death and resurrection of Christ. The past therefore cannot be ruled out. Green (in Sarot and Fergusson, 2000:79) affirms this and states that Christians envision the world to come by analogy with the past, and a very specific past, contained in Holy Scripture.

It is for this reason that the past, present and future co-mingle and are inextricably linked. The past informs the present to reframe the future, or as Cilliers (2019:88) puts it "remembering the Christ of the past in hope of the future recreates (reframes) the present". The past evolves into a paradigm of the future and in remembering the past we anticipate the future. To keep the past, present and future in a responsible relationship, Vosloo (2015:461) calls for a theology of "future-oriented memory". This begs the question: What would a "future-oriented memory" entail? A "future-oriented memory" is a memory that presumes a choice for "privileging the possible over the existing", as Vosloo (2015:474) mentions. It is prioritising the possible with the past in mind. It is memory that dares venture into the "not yet" and connects with possibilities. It is this mindset or horizon of seeing that makes it possible to meaningfully engage with a fluid VUCA world filled with uncertain trajectories. Vosloo (2015:473) makes supplementary points to Lategan (2010) who in an article "Remembering with the future in mind" writes the following:

> For a true openness for and towards the future, the point of departure has to be the
> conscious choice for the priority of the possible ... The capacity to anticipate what is
> new is another way of describing an attitude that is open to the unexpected and
> the contingent. More often than not it is the experience of the unexpected that
> triggers the belief that the (present) reality can be overcome. (Lategan 2010:158)

What facilitates this "prioritizing the possible with the past in mind" is an eschatological consciousness. For this reason, Vosloo (2015:474), as the previous chapter also pointed out, calls for the importance of an eschatological horizon of memory also being

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[52] We see this in the life of Jesus too who during Passover took bread and said in Luke 22:19: "This is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."
[53] 1 Corinthians 11:26

accounted for. One needs an eschatological horizon to lift one's vision from the current and experienced uncertainty of an immense VUCA world. A responsible eschatological horizon has to potential to lift one from being incapacitated by vast uncertainty. A hopeful eschatological expectation therefore can equip one to engage with the immense uncertainty of a modern world and not become paralysed by it.

Although Vosloo (2015) points out that the past is of the essence, religious leaders are not solely past-oriented for guidance. Religious leaders are not hind-sighted leaders, making sense of the present using only the past as direction. They do not suffer from a sort of "myopia"[54] where they focus only on what is near to them in proximity instead of the distant future. They do not embrace the past to such an extent that it becomes a nostalgic and romanticised longing. This would make leaders "stuck" in the past and operate from "used futures", as mentioned by Inayatullah (2008:5). Such an outlook blocks one from confronting contemporary situations that require engagement. Instead, leaders have the foresight and an eagerness to reframe the present in light of the imagined future.

Arguably there is also a danger of being so future-oriented that the present moment is reduced to being futile and not fully embraced. Such an approach can also lead to not being mindful of the "present" (gift) of the present. Our hope is not only in the future full of possibilities but also, as Moltmann (1996) explains, in the present as it is the in-breaking of God's presence. Therefore the present is equally important, but anticipatory leaders are aware to not become "stranded in the present". It should also be noted that a future-oriented memory is not being in denial of contemporary challenges that an ever-changing and tumultuous world generates—quite the opposite. It is being in solidarity with its burdens. For it is only when one identifies and aims to understand the complexities of a VUCA world that one can disarm its threats and bring hope. Therefore religious leaders are not aloof about the challenges of their time and do not lead frivolously in fear of the future. They rather focus on the future and prioritise the possible with the past in mind, or as Vosloo (2015) mentions, having a "future-oriented memory".

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[54] In medical terms it refers to a near-sightedness. It is the inability to see distant objects clearly. Figuratively it refers to the lack of foresight – Oxford Dictionary, O.E. n.d. [Online], Available: https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/124516?redirectedFrom=myopia

5.6   Ministers as anticipatory leaders

Marais and Niemandt (2020) when reflecting on the "new normal" (not only referring to Covid-19 but also the fast-changing VUCA world) importantly highlight and identify that it essentially requires anticipatory leadership. A VUCA world rampant with unprecedented change that is producing a less predictable and disruptive future, adequately calls for anticipatory leadership. As the tempo of life increases and people struggle with high levels of uncertainty as Bauman (2000) mentions, anticipatory leaders seek to bring certainty in the form of eschatological hope and promise. It is for this reason that religious leaders should be anticipatory by nature. They are constantly anticipating God's presence in the present even if the present and future are full of uncertainty. Therefore religious leaders can be "certain" in an age of uncertainty and perplexity. Christian eschatological wisdom assures us of the second coming of Christ. The *parousia* will happen. Christ will come to redeem the world and cosmos. Not only is this an assurance, but eschatology encourages leaders that God is actively breaking into the present with hope. Love (2017) emphasises this too and mentions:

> Christianity fills a gap in human consciousness by revealing to us not only that the future will be, but in certain respects what the future will be, enabling us to anticipate a future definitively with our actions. It could even be said that Christianity marks the beginning of genuine anticipation. (2017:16)

He further indicates:

> Our natural future, whether in terms of its content, or, more fundamentally, its very arising, can never be certain. This uncertainty is ended by Christianity and the new certainty furnished by Christianity is emergent, for certainty regarding the future has emerged from natural uncertainty. (2017:16)

This is crucial for religious leaders to grasp. The Christian faith enables one to anticipate a definite future. Therefore although we don't know how the future will look, Christianity assures us a certain definitive future where Christ will return. This equips Christian eschatological anticipation with authority and conviction. Because religious

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leaders' eschatological future is charged with hope and promise, they live with a mindset of hopeful expectation in the face of an unknown future.

It is for this reason anticipatory leaders yearn for the future. As ministers live out their calling in the fluid VUCA environments, anticipatory leadership composes not only looking against uncertainties but also seeing the emerging opportunities of God's inbreaking. Ministry leaders seek out the possibilities amidst the uncertainty of the future. Religious leaders must lead in change or transformation and provide space for the exploration of new possibilities (Niemandt 2019:73). By doing so they are actively working towards the pending future that is envisioned. This is a "participatory eschatology" where leaders are participating in God's future (Niemandt, 2019:159). Such leaders attend to the spirituality of anticipation and eschatological participation in the mission of the Triune God (Marais & Niemandt, 2020:7).

Ministers as anticipatory leaders are also conscious that their impact is not only for this generation. They are also sensitive to how their actions are impacting future generations. Ministers should also be aware that they are not simply leading *from* the future, but also *for* the future—the coming generation, to whom the future belongs. Anticipatory leaders, therefore, are mindful that they are also making history for future generations. Thus anticipatory leaders live with a consciousness that their deeds have a future legacy and so they are rewriting the future.

5.7   Features of anticipatory leadership

Anticipatory leadership poses to add a practical theological response to the perceived conflicts a VUCA world presents. Anticipatory leadership is not just about anticipating but also about implementing the imagined future. It is not leaving the future to uncritical influences or even "used futures" (as Inayatullah, 2008:5 remarks) but to have a stake in the future and linking the present with the future. In the next sections, multiple elements are highlighted and elaborated on which have been formulated by the research thus far. This is done using a three-fold response of reclaiming, reframing and recreating the future. This response is formulated by creatively fusing connections between futures studies and Christian eschatology. The next section is dedicated to providing insights into how anticipatory leadership could be embodied. It is a

reasonable response to the research question and honours the practical theological task of "How should one respond?"

THE THREEFOLD ACTIONS OF ANTICIPATORY LEADERSHIP

Reclaiming the future   Reframing the future   Recreating the future
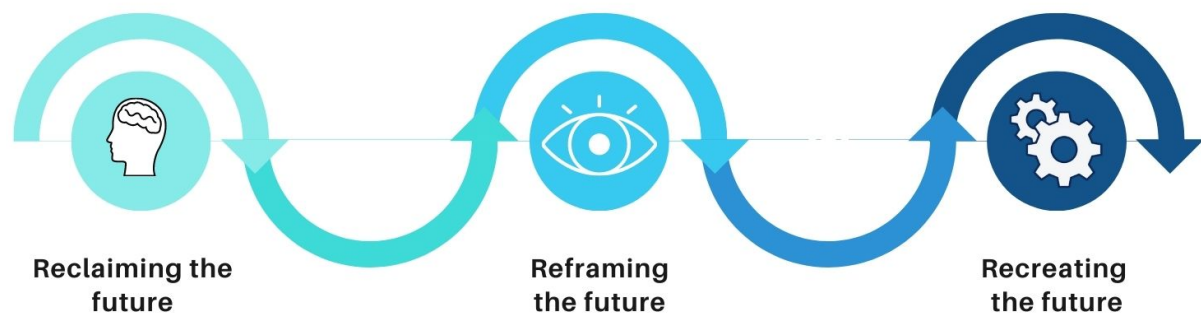
5.7.1. Reclaiming the future: non-static thinking

The first step of a religious leadership response to a fluid VUCA world and an elemental aspect of anticipatory leadership is being open to change. "Change is the only constant" is a popular axiom for a reason. Since the time of the Greek philosopher Heraclitus (535–475 BC), it has been proclaimed that there is nothing permanent except change[55]. Everything is in constant transformation (flux) and nothing remains unchanged. Niemandt (2019:75) when referring to Conradie (2015:118) also states that "Everything, including the laws of nature, is subject to change".

This manner of non-static thinking should also shape the religious leaders' mode of leadership. This kind of thinking can also be associated with what Miller (2011) calls non-ergodic thinking. In systems thinking, "ergodic" describes a model or system that remains stable over time (Miller, 2011:28). Miller (2011:28) refers to the terminology of Karl Popper which states that the ergodic system is one in which there is no "change in the conditions of change". Non-ergodic thinking, therefore, is to operate with the basic assumptions for understanding and functioning that the world around you is not fixed (Miller, 2006:6). This relates to how religious leaders view the future. The future is not static but filled with novel changes. Change therefore should not be resisted. Anticipatory leadership cannot be embraced if leaders are not open to welcome and

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[55] Graham, D.W. (2019). Heraclitus (Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy). [online] Stanford.edu. Available at: https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/heraclitus/.

also value change. Increasing the likelihood of the future that religious leaders want to create will be subjected to how they can accommodate and manage change[56]. As the world becomes increasingly fluid, it favours complexity, uncertainty, openness, disruption and non-linear change (Niemandt, 2015:4). Non-static thinking that is open to these forms is therefore crucial for leadership and consequently anticipatory leadership. Where static thinking resists environmental change and the implications it imposes on organisations (and on the church), non-static thinking embraces complex emerging change. It welcomes risk, flexibility, fluidity and exploration. Such thinking is open, adaptive and agile towards environmental changes. With such an outlook the adversity associated with a fluid world can be handled and religious leaders will not be paralysed by it.

Anticipatory leaders accordingly refuse to let the future be shaped by chance or let unwritten futures go by. They are aware that the future is open-ended and thus influenceable. Future outcomes can be changed by leaders' intervention and agency. Anticipatory leaders acknowledge that the story of creation, as Conradie (in Niemandt 2019b:153) mentions, is an open-ended story of God's mission, of God's house-holding and God's loving engagement. They know that the calling on their lives has the Influence to shape a future and therefore they metaphorically "reclaim" the future from a non-desirable trajectory by employing non-static thinking. This is the first of the three folded actions defining anticipatory leadership.

5.7.2. Reframing the future: envisioning

Leading from the future entails reframing the future. Reframing the future points to how current realities can be retranslated in connection with God's eschatological reality. Reframing in short is the art of weaving the story of God into the story of human life. It is envisioning and inviting people into the "bigger picture" of God's anticipated coming. Reframing is "seeing" differently. Niemandt (2019:159) joins thought on this with the leadership insights of Scharmer (2009) who states:

> The primary job of leadership, I have come to believe [...], is to enhance the individual and systemic capacity to see, to deeply attend to the reality that people face and

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[56] Niemandt (2019b) points to a valuable differentiation between continuous and discontinuous change. He mentions that "reading the signs of the times" is to make a distinction between continuous change and discontinuous change (2019:75). This is a vital part of interpretive leadership that needs to be understood.

enact. Thus the leader's real work is to help people discover the power of seeing and seeing together.

Niemandt (2019:159) notes that religious leaders help others to see differently. As mentioned, seeing differently requires imagination and imagination is informed by the future (2019:159). The late Prof. Russel Botman (2002:29) highlighted that we are invited to imagine the future by seeing new, surprising divine acts in the world. Therefore religious leaders see the world in its current realities but also have their eyes set on the imagined future. Anticipatory leaders, therefore, have a kind of metaphoric "stereoscopic vision": The term stereoscopic vision refers to the human ability to view with both eyes in similar but slightly different ways. This ability allows humans to judge distance, which develops their capacity to have true depth perception. This analogy symbolises an aspect of anticipatory leadership. Religious leaders observe their current physical reality but they also have a sense of a deeper spiritual reality. They have a realistic outlook of the current realities but are also interpreting it through a second viewpoint that sees deeper. It gives anticipatory leaders a kind of outside-in dimension: looking at the world through the "bigger picture" of eschatology.

Another aspect of reframing the future is giving new meaning to emerging events. Niemandt (2015:7) refers to Plowam et al. (2007) who reiterate that it is the leader's role to give meaning to emergent vents by reframing them. Reframing the future and assigning new meaning to emerging events is partly achieved through linguistic and communication processes[57]. It is assigning new language, new grammar, new ideas, new dreams, etc., which support the interpretation of events. On a practical note, reframing consists of enriching a "language house"[58]. This is part and parcel of an aspect of sensemaking[59]. Niemandt (2019,157) states that leadership is aiding people to adapt to change and changing contexts. By interpreting emerging events and giving

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[57] This includes elements of narrative identity construction and storytelling.

[58] See Niemandt (209:145) for further insights. Constructing "language houses" consists of using stories, metaphors and "narraphors" (lending a term from Sweet [2014:27]). Niemandt states that this is important as "Transformation happens when people are able to construct a new language house and give words to a new future" (2019:125).

[59] Barentsen (in Storey et al., 2016:263) mentions that due to the postmodern and pluralistic context of our time, individualism thrives, creating a sense of autonomy. The consequence is that religious leaders cannot simply proclaim time-honoured traditions but instead need to engage with people's spiritual journeys and individual sensemaking processes. It is for this reason that sensemaking is so important. This trend has given rise to religious leaders associated as spiritual guides, identity artists, spiritual entrepreneurs and culture shapers (Barentsen in Storey et al., 2016:270).

new meaning to them (sensemaking) leaders adapt to change. Barentsen (in Storey et al, 2016:268) underlines these skills and states that religious leaders play a vital role in guiding people in interpreting[60] situations or life events in religious terms to appropriate a sense of divine involvement. This has links with discursive leadership where a leader (re)frames certain situations or events so that they "make sense" within which context the leaders find themselves (Storey et al., 2016:268). Reframing the future is therefore not about foreseeing emergent changes but pre-sensing what is God doing as events emerge. It is not about predicting but reframing the future.

"Reframing" to a certain extent encompasses synchronising time. It consists of timing the truth of God's eschatological reality together with the current "now" and thus reframing "current" time. Time is brought into synchronicity with "God's-time". It is connecting the future with the present in such a way that the current now is consciously converged into a "new reality" by inviting the advent of God's intentions into the "now". It is the reframing of experiences according to God's promise and interpreting the current context in the light of the fulfilment of time through Christ, as Moltmann (1996) also promotes in his works. Eschatology is therefore of great assistance in reframing events in light of God's bigger reality (in light of God's *telos*). Synchronising time can be "tuning everyday-time into God's-time, coming into sync with the Kairos of the Christ-event – and vice versa"[61] (Cilliers, 2019:34).

Our understanding of the future is reframed by discerning our assumptions of a VUCA world and interjecting an eschatological consciousness. It is this area where Moltmann (1996) advocates that the future is filled with *adventus*. Such reframing assists counter-narratives which develop new realities for faith communities. Dominant narratives can be shifted from a VUCA world that is feared, towards a future where God's anticipated in-breaking is yearned (God's *adventus* future). On a pragmatic note, part of reframing the future is casting and sharing a vision of what an alternate future can look like. It is pioneering and portraying a compelling social vision of the future for a faith community. This is the task of leaders. Leaders create the vision and

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[60] Osmer (2008:18) builds on Gerkin's (1997) model of pastoral leadership which suggests that a minister can be perceived as an "interpretive guide". This correlates with the art of "sensemaking".
[61] Although Cilliers (2019) attributes this action to the art of preaching it is a valuable skill when it comes to reframing.

give concrete shape to what is hoped to be achieved (Barentsen, 2018:155). Niemandt notes on this: "Visionary leaders employ a vision that appeals to followers and followers are expected to play a bigger role in the execution of the vision to create the preferred future" (2019:79). They stir up the imagining of a faith community and simulate how the future could be depicted. Gibbs and Coffey (2000:39) also state that moving a church through the stormy waters of change requires "a clear sense of vision for the desired future that is significantly different from the present". It is providing an appealing and inspiring social imagery of a preferred future that the whole community works and lives towards.

This is especially important in the context of the disruptive 21st century. Rast and Hogg (in Storey et al., 2016:53) note that in circumstances of uncertainty, people particularly look to leaders to shepherd and protect them into a better future. The leaders' reaction helps followers to make sense of it (Storey et al., 2016) This is part and parcel of the responsibility of a religious leader. Cordier and Niemandt (2015a) in Niemandt (2019:145) conducted extensive research into congregational transformation in South Africa and found that the congregational leader (minister or pastor) is:

> [R]esponsible for cultivating [a] missional language and dream in such a way that the congregation buys into it and that it becomes part and parcel of the identity and ministry of the congregation.

Dreaming and cultivating a missional language is therefore a faithful act not letting communities be left at the mercy and influence of contemporary culture but to be shaped to the image of a restored world inspired by God's "preferred future"[62]. These activities constitute the second act of anticipatory leadership namely reframing.

5.7.3. Recreating the future: future-shaping

Anticipatory leadership is not just about envisioning or dreaming of a new future or "new creation" but also actively partaking in creating it. This recreating act could also be called future-shaping. This consists of intentionally and actively steering the present into the envisioned future. Recreating the future focuses on the exploration of

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[62] The consequences are dire for a faith community when the future is not reframed through an eschatological viewpoint. Niemandt (2019:71) notes, "when the local church ceases to seek God's preferred and promised future, it is neither faithful, effective, or, often, even viable".

possible and desirable futures and tracing back how actions in the present can be aligned to the future. It is translating a future vision back to the present and interjecting it with actions. It is to some extent reverse-engineering the future. This correlates with the act of "back-casting" by futures studies elaborated on in the second chapter. Such a disposition in return impacts and improves decision making, steering the present towards possible and plausible futures.

The act of recreation is not done simply by human agency. Religious leaders are deeply aware that they are actively creating and recreating creation by the invitation of God. Christology is the doctrine of continuing creation (Love, 2017:15). Jesuit theologian Roger Haight agrees on this and mentions, "God has entrusted creation to human beings not merely as caretakers of a past condition but as co-creators with God of the future" (2014:55). It is for this reason that Niemandt (2019:157) rightly advocates that religious leaders cannot resist the invitation to be co-creators of the future. They are participating by co-creating God's preferred future. Love (2017:15) links the co-creatorship of humanity with the work of the Holy Spirit. He mentions, "God invites humankind to work with Him in the perfecting of creation, in an anticipatory mode of activity undertaken in view of the end of time" (2017:15). Participating in God's future is a creative and collaborative co-creation. It is creative theurgy of activity with God. Humans thus co-create with God.

Anticipatory leaders, therefore, have a strong conviction that there is a calling to participate in the continual creation with God. Leaders realise that they are partaking and co-creating creatively with God. Niemandt (2019:159) calls the participating in God's future as it is emerging as "participatory eschatology". Participatory eschatology focuses on our awareness that the living Lord offers us a new future and invites us to participate in it (Niemandt, 2019:159). A participatory eschatology reminds us that God's future is a future where God invites us to participate in the unfolding and creation of this future (Niemandt, 2019:160). This awareness of God in breaking into our present leads to action. It is acting upon the invitation to create the preferred future with God.

Another way to understand this creative theurgy is the concept of poiesis (Greek for creation or production). In philosophy, poiesis is "the activity in which a person brings something into being that did not exist before" (Polkinghorne, 2004:115). Co-creating is bringing into existence that which is living in the imagination and hearts of believers. Baudrillard (1994:3) states that simulation of the imagination becomes reality. By using imagination and forecasting/simulating how the future might look, leaders are using this new imagination to inform the future that would become reality. This is part of *poiesis*. Niemandt (2019:157) refers to Keifert (2017) who describes *poiesis* as productive Christian creativity. It is imaginative co-creation with God.

Anticipatory leaders thus live and lead with the conviction that they are co-creating with God not only in the present but also in the unknown future. For this reason, anticipation is not about waiting for certain "apocalyptic" events but rather about participation in the future where one is co-creating in the presence of the coming One (Cilliers, 2011:2). They are mindful due to the eschatological consciousness that they are participating in the future already and this fuels their ministry to proactively co-create with God. These threefold actions conclude what anticipatory leadership consist of.

5.8   Anticipatory leadership as a religious leadership competency

As this chapter has formulated what anticipatory leadership entails, one can establish clear connections with the religious leadership competencies of Nell (2020b). Four competencies stand out with which anticipatory leadership has close associations, namely the hermeneutic, visionary, innovative and entrepreneurial competencies.

The hermeneutic competency

This competency consists of interpreting the scripture and Christian tradition not just contextually for the leader him/herself, but also in the lived experiences of believers' lives. Nell (2020b:276) notes: "The leader reframes certain events and situations so that they make sense within new contexts". This correlates with anticipatory leadership reframing action, as explained. Anticipatory leaders reframe everyday life experiences into the eschatological narrative of God's preferred future. This competency has

substantial associations with the art of sensemaking[63], as explained. Plowman (in Niemandt 2015:7) states that sensemaking is constructing meaningful explanations for situations and their experiences within those situations. As leaders do this and provide meaning to emerging events, they are consequently reframing circumstances (Niemandt 2015:7). This hermeneutic competency with its ties to sensemaking correlates with anticipatory leaderships' reframing act.

The visionary competency

This competency encompasses pioneering a vision that motivates and mobilises a faith community. This vision invites agency of change and pulls believers towards a desired future. It consists of creating a compelling sense of direction where followers strive for a shared goal. When it comes to the growth of religious communities, Nell (2020b:277) states that research has shown that the ability of a community to set a clear vision and direction is of vital importance. Visionary leaders do not wait for the future to happen by chance but take responsibility for pioneering a preferred future. They can mobilise followers on a journey towards a hopeful future (Niemandt, 2019b:79). This competency, therefore, has extensive relations to anticipatory leadership. Anticipatory leadership consists of reconstructing the present course to steer faith communities into a better world. Visionary leaders create a world to which people want to belong (Dilts, 1996). They anticipate a new praxis in the future and turn that vision into a social reality. It is for these reasons that anticipatory leadership correlates with visionary competency.

The innovative competency

Openness to change and a spirit of innovation is what Nell (2020b:278) relates this competency to. Innovation always entails risk and unpredictability and therefore it relates to taking risks to try new forms of being church, especially in a fluid VUCA world. This relates to the reclaiming action of anticipatory leadership. The reclaiming action consists of non-static thinking (open-mindedness) and therefore embracing novel change and not detracting from it. Such leaders scan their external environment to seek and discover new possibilities. Leaders with an innovative competency

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[63] See Kramer, M.W. (2016) for further understandings of the interpretive action of sensemaking. Kramer (2016:5) states that sensemaking influences actions and thus creates justification for future courses of action.

appreciate the power of creativity, for it holds the keys to solving complex challenges. Innovative decision-making favours experimentation. Such leaders facilitate critical experiments that show people another kind of future that may develop (Niemandt, 2019b:209). Anticipatory leadership as a result is associated with innovative competency.

The entrepreneurial competency

This competency closely relates to the previous, as Nell (2020b:278) states, but differs as it does not just seek out new possibilities to revitalise congregational life, it has a missional accent associated with the civic community. This matches anticipatory leadership recreation action. Anticipatory leaders recreate the future to a preferred future. God's preferred future will always entail a more humane world that entails aspects like social justice. Anticipatory leaders live with a kind of holy dissatisfaction and prophetic restlessness to create a world that is in tune with God's restorative justice. They labour therefore to create a future where God's preferred future aligns with how they envision the future. Marais and Niemandt (2020:2) note that the missional understanding of the church is an alternative community gathered by God and strives towards equality, kenosis, service and mutual respect. It is these aspects that anticipatory leaders also have in mind when recreating the preferred future. Accordingly, anticipatory leadership also resembles entrepreneurial competency.

With anticipatory leadership's connections to these relevant religious leadership competencies, as Nell (2020b) has set out, it is substantial to identify anticipatory leadership as a relevant leadership competency, especially in a fluid VUCA world. Nell (in Van den Berg, 2020:193) identifies with Shavelson (2010) who broadly defines competencies as "a combination of cognitive, affective, motivational, volitional and social dispositions that form the basis for performance". Anticipatory leadership is a combination of these aspects and assists religious leaders to perform and live out their religious calling in a fluid and perplexing VUCA world. The next section elaborates on how anticipatory leadership is relevant to the local South African context.

5.9 Anticipatory leadership in a South African context

As mentioned, South Africa is one of the most diverse countries in the world and consequently has a vast non-homogeneous cultural landscape. This makes it a racially

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charged context and consequently challenging[64]. Add to this context aspects like high levels of poverty and inequality, unemployment which stands at a record 34.4%[65], rampant political scandals, power blackouts which is crippling the economy and creating a knock-on effect on joblessness and you get a very challenging field for religious leadership. Religious leaders in South Africa consequently face the challenges of leading in a context where the unholy trinity of poverty, inequality and unemployment is rife.

South Africa is in many ways a traumatised country (Hanekom, 2019:6). It is a country that is haunted by its past of injustice. Although South Africa is 27 years into its democracy as of 2021 it remains a deeply divided country in many facets. The past leaves a residue that cannot simply be overlooked. To date, heritages of the past still plague communities in various forms even after two decades of democracy. The Dutch Reformed Church's Centre for Public Witness reiterates that inequality and identity issues such as racism, accompanied by low social trust, are attributed to low social cohesion and dividing people (Hanekom, 2019:6). These are symptoms and legacies of apartheid that are still manifesting in society. South Africa, with its legacies of the past combined with present challenges as mentioned, has considerable potential to manifest in civil bitterness, hurt and division. This demeanour can easily paralyse religious leaders.

In an article by Vosloo (2017), he amongst other things reflects on the reconfiguration of the relationship of past, present and future and explains how thoughts and actions are linked. Vosloo (2017:1) refers to Shakespeare's play *Hamlet* to display this connection. After Hamlet had an encounter with his father's ghost, he finds out the real truth of his father's murder. In the book of Simon Critchley and Jamieson Webster (2013) *The Hamlet Doctrine: Knowing Too Much, Doing Nothing,* they interpret this scene and state that the truth that Hamlet grapples with makes him incapacitate of action. The truth does not liberate him and lead to action but rather leaves him with disgust and nausea. The truth thus becomes a "curse" he has to bear relating to what

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[64] Barentsen (2018:160) acknowledges that when it comes to crafting a vision of hope which is an important religious leadership skill, it is a challenge to connect people across different groups.

[65] Kumwenda-Mtambo, O. (2021). South Africa's unemployment rate hits new record high in second quarter. Reuters. [online] 24 Aug. Available at: https://www.reuters.com/article/safrica-economy-unemployment-idUSJ8N2KH000 [Accessed 12 Nov. 2021].

Simon Critchley and Jamieson Webster call "The Hamlet Doctrine". Using this as an analogy, the "ghosts" of South Africa's past also have the potential to paralyse leaders and leave them unable to appropriately act upon current issues.

For a country such as South Africa, there is a big temptation of living in and continuously from the toxic past. Anticipatory leadership in a diverse, post-colonial context such as South Africa is therefore particularly important. The unique historical context of South Africa requires leadership that helps people not to live "stuck" in the past but to strive towards a hopeful future. Such leaders (as mentioned) certainly do not live in denial of the past, but the past of disunity should not determine the future of South Africa. Religious leaders should not be haunted by what tragedies (ghosts) lie in their past. The repositories of memories should not make them "victims" of their history and crumble their hopeful images of the future—just the opposite. Anticipatory leaders strive to reclaim, reframe and recreate the challenging conditions of a South African context and illuminate a hoped-for future. Anticipatory leadership aspires for God's preferred future and endeavours for a more humane world. It prompts the question: How does God's preferred future look for its country and communities? To sustain and strive for such endeavours leaders needs to have an eye set on the future. In a South African context, a preferred future would be one where leaders aim to unite its diverse cultures which a previous era posed to divide. Religious leaders cannot cast out or cast off the past, but leaders can reframe past issues into prospects. They can motivate and mobilise faith communities to unite, heal, restore and promote peace and justice in South Africa.

5.10   Conclusion

This chapter has been dedicated to fusing the insights of the previous chapters and formulating a leadership competency for ministry leaders. By the cross-pollination of concepts and ideas of futures studies and eschatology, creative connections have been established and pragmatically formulated into a competency called "anticipatory leadership". This competency consists of a threefold action that this chapter identifies as reclaiming, reframing and recreating the future. Each action has been elaborated on concerning how it is relatable to the endeavour of this study. Formulating this leadership competency is a way of constructively and pragmatically responding to the research question: How does one lead in an age of uncertainty and perplexity?

As highlighted, there is a residue from the relentless change of globalisation. People grapple with intense uncertainty. This has much potential to manifest in various paralysing effects. Baumann (2007:92) reminds us that the most harrowing contemporary fears are born of existential uncertainty. It is a force to reckon with in any leadership context and especially concerning religious leadership. Utilising anticipatory leadership in an age of uncertainty and perplexity can assist religious leaders to stay rooted in their calling and faith in a time which Rosa (2020:110) asserts is "becoming increasingly uncontrollable, unpredictable, and uncertain". In the next chapter, an overview and summary of all the insights will be given to conclude the research endeavour.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1   Introduction

In this chapter, a summary and outline will be formed from the accumulated research in this study. All the interdisciplinary insights will be joined and a review including a conclusion will be formulated. These findings will be evaluated against the research question set out by this study. This chapter will also confirm that the research stayed true to the practical theological research structure, namely the "pastoral cycle", as set out in the first chapter. Limitations and areas of further research will also be assessed. This chapter will conclude the research study.

6.2   Study findings in a review of the research question

The study probed into a research question that resides in the field of practical theology: How does ministry leaders lead in an age of uncertainty and perplexity? It more specifically asked: How can Christian eschatology, with its rich dimensions of time, anticipation and imagination, facilitate a vital leadership competency called "anticipatory leadership" for the ministry in an age of perplexity? To begin this research endeavour, the study has shed light on the "glocal" context that leaders are exposed to. The study has indicated how we live in an era of mega change (West, 2016). The 21st century is marked by the evolution from the industrial age to a post-industrial age and stands at the cusp of the fourth industrial revolution. This shift has resulted in dramatic societal changes. Some of these global changes can be identified as individualisation, globalisation, digitalisation, disruptive innovation, migration movements, political polarisation, as well as the resurgence and pluralisation of spiritual and religious interests (Barentsen, 2019:236).

The first chapter has recognised and acknowledged that the modern age has truly brought advantageous developments to society. Globalisation has joined countries, societies and people of all over the world unlocking synergies that have led to numerous developments. The nexus of these developments is a belief in progressivism[66]. Modernity's compulsion with progress and its accompanied optimism

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[66] The intellectual legacy of movements such as the scientific revolution, the Enlightenment and the industrial revolution has given birth to a '

does however come accompanied with underlining spinoffs. The wake of globalisation generated numerous uncertainties[67]. It is in the context of vast uncertainties that ministry leaders lead faith communities. This responsibility can be overwhelming and paralysing.

To understand the leadership challenges of the modern context and how it can potentially be unnerving, a funnel approach was used narrowing the research of the first chapter from a broad examination starting with globalisation. From the macro-level (focusing on external global shifts) the study went to a micro-level (inner psychological experiences), researching the insights of Dutch sociologist Hartmut Rosa. Rosa confirms and states: "... the late modern lifeworld is becoming increasingly uncontrollable, unpredictable, and uncertain" (2020:110). Rosa (2019) uses the term "social acceleration" as one of the spinoffs of globalisation that has an immense impact on society. He adopts three aspects to differentiate the change modern people are experiencing, namely: a) technical acceleration, b) the acceleration of social change, and c) the acceleration of the pace of life (Rosa, 2019:73). These social accelerations lead to comprehending the age of uncertainty and perplexity.

Complementary to Rosa's (2019) research, the study introduced the VUCA[68] concept to further understand the extensive subject of globalisation and the age of uncertainty. The VUCA concept explains that the modern world can be very disorientating and dawns a malaise – a general feeling of discomfort, illness, or unease whose exact cause is difficult to identify. A VUCA world dawns many ambivalences. One such example is that due to technological advancements the world is far better (referring to most people's living standards) and yet paradoxically is far worse off (referring to the current ecological crises that are unfolding). Spinoffs are new tensions that need to be

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"secular theodicy" where belief is put in a utopian progressivism. This leads to simplistic views that the human condition will inevitably improve as time progresses. Such beliefs have however been shaken by events such as the first and second World Wars, especially the horrors of the Holocaust.

[67] A simple and relevant example of this is the uncertainty birthed by "the age of the automation". Humanity stands at the cusp of a new industrial revolution that is evolving: the fourth industrial revolution. With advanced data analytics and machine learning, new waves of rapid change will affect all spheres of live. A growing number of academics has already warned of the impacts of job losses that will arise in the wake of the fallout produced by "The age of the automation". These changes are an example of how uncertainty of the future is fuelled.

[68] In short, the acronym refers to: volatility (increased instability), uncertainty (increased difficulty to predict the future), complexity (difficulty to analyse contexts with no clear causality) and ambiguity (paradoxical situations filled with contradictions).

embraced. Navigating a VUCA environment is a critical factor for ministry leaders. The VUCA world shows that uncertainty and disruption will characterise our future going forward (Shallowe et al., 2020:11). Going into the future, the only thing constant about change is that it is speeding up at a bewildering pace in modern life.

The scope of the second chapter was further narrowed down to focus on the well-known Polish sociologist Zygmunt Bauman. This was obtained to further decipher and understand the impact of globalisation on society. Bauman (1998, 2000, 2007, 2013) asserts that globalisation has borne much uncertainty as society has become "liquid". Society is undergoing a retreat from classic institutions like state, class, nuclear family and church (Joubert, 2013:1). This marks a shift of epistemic proportions toward a more fluid culture (Joubert, 2013:1). Bauman's metaphoric concept of "fluidness" correlates with the findings of Rosa (2019).

One of the consequential fluid tensions modern people are living with is the disquietudes often experienced as a kind of "time famine" (Rosa & Scheuerman, 2009:9). Some would say people suffer from "time sickness"[69]. Globalisation and its associated economic reforms have "contaminated" time to such an extent that "time is money" has become a popular axiom and this increases the "social acceleration" that is felt in people's lives. People get exposed to a new and faster rhythm of life in modern society. This relationship with time plagues contemporary society. People experience a frazzle as the tempo of living increases. The intensification of change has increased the pace of modern living. This is confirmed by sociologist Rosa (2009, 2013). As the acceleration of change progresses, feelings of unfamiliarity and uncertainty enter people's behaviour. It can manifest in a restless iteration that one can never be content because if a person is not adapting and conforming to new changes one is "falling behind".

All these factors constitute what Bauman (2017) calls an age of uncertainty. These findings were established to give attention to the "experience task" of the "pastoral cycle" which focuses on the context of the problem. The finding in the second chapter of this study portrays a perplexing environment for ministry leaders. To further fathom

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[69] See Schulte-Strathaus (1999) in Rosa (2013:403)

the uncertainty generated by a VUCA world, the study utilised South African scholar Kathy Bennett's work in the area of leadership uncertainty. Modern living easily reflects a sense of disquietude (a state of uneasiness or anxiety) which resides in state uncertainties, effect uncertainties and response uncertainty (Bennett, 2017). The second chapter of this study unpacks the complexities of the modern age and how it constitutes the age of uncertainty and perplexity.

Societal shifts, as described, have definitive consequences for leadership. As society changes so do forms of leadership (Barentsen, 2015:49). It confronts leaders with a challenge: how to lead in an age of uncertainty and perplexity. The residue of a fluid VUCA world can easily lead leaders to a perplexing outlook of the future that is no longer worth hoping for and can even be a source of concern. The first chapter of this study sets the ground for the age of uncertainty and consequently the research question.

On the path of answering this question, an interdisciplinary approach was used by tapping into the knowledge of social sciences and futures studies. By introducing futures studies, the study has given attention to the social analysis task of the pastoral cycle. This task calls for theoretical interpretation and consists of probing the consequences of the research problem, identifying its factors and delineating linkages. Futures studies grapple with a similar problem: how to deal with the unknowable and novelty-rich future (Miller, 2012:40). Futures studies assist in understanding that to know the future involves understanding how present thinking is shaped.

The study has shown that there is a link between the present and the future. The present influences the future, but the future also has an active influence on our present. These insights were relevant to the study as it probes if religious leaders are only present thinking or also forward-oriented? The interdisciplinary field of futures studies promotes that people broaden their time horizons, embrace uncertainty and leverage long-term thinking. This increases leaders' foresight which is to identify the landscape of change. These factors are necessary for having a bigger influence on the future.

Futures studies are intrinsically linked to the concept of time and therefore this study has, at an elementary level, looked into the ontology of temporality. Reflecting on the impact of time on our lives is a vast exploration. Time is a transient topic and therefore extremely difficult to describe. It is a fleeting phenomenon that is constantly escaping our grasp but still drawing us along its wake (Cilliers, 2009:26). By providing insight from psychology and sociology the study has featured the power of thinking about time (temporality) and the future. The study has shown that there is great value in having a future-oriented mindset. Future-focused thinking assists that the future is not left to chance but can be intentionally steered towards the imagined future. The study has shown why imagination is of importance. The future is presently imagined "later in time" and without it, the future cannot be envisioned (Miller 2012:41). Equipped with an imagined future, leaders lead reciprocating from past and present towards the future they foresee.

Moving systematically, the study has undertaken the theological reflection task of the pastoral cycle. This task consists of a theological reflection to shed light on the research question. The research problem is viewed against the backdrop of theology to analyse how one might respond to the research problem. The VUCA world heralding in massive disruptive change can look immensely uncertain, to such an extent that religious leaders become perplexed by the future and fail to intentionally engage with it. The climate of the 21st century, how disturbing its intensification of change might be, should not define how leaders think about the future. There is however a rich tradition in the Christian belief that has much to say about the future. It is Christian theology's eschatological foundation. Christian eschatology was researched in this study with a focus on the work of Jürgen Moltmann. Moltmann's work was of great value regarding the research question. A fluid VUCA world has much potential to perplex religious leadership but the future is also an active force of promise and hope, as Moltmann (1996:177) highlights.

From eschatology's dimension, aspects like anticipation, eschatological imagination, hope and its associated promise were explored. Eschatological hope is founded on Christ's resurrection. Schwobel (in Sarot & Fergusson, 2000:238) emphasises this and states that the Christ event is the criterion of Christian eschatological hope. The future is therefore not an empty promise but a compromise of the presence of the coming

One. This is one of the core convictions of eschatology and a crucial foundation of anticipatory leadership. Without an eschatological consciousness, there is no need for hopeful anticipation and expectation.

The research has shown that eschatology calls for the reconfigurations of the past, present and future and that each is inextricably linked. It has elaborated on how these timeframes are in a kind of "symbiotic" relationship where the past and present influences the future, but the future also has an active impact on the present. Being mindful of this is crucial for the competency the study has proposed. For this reason, religious leaders should not compartmentalise times and live as if the past, present and future are individualistic silo's. Only living for the present and increasing dominance of the present can give rise to a sort of "presentism" (Vosloo, 2017:7). This can leave religious leaders "stuck in time", unable and unconscious of influencing the future. Cilliers (2009:23) states that "In order for us to understand the present (*hic et nunc*; here and now) and consequently the future, we need discernment (phronēsis)". Part of discernment is synchronising time by linking the eschatological (not yet) and the historical "now already". The study has shown that having an eschatological consciousness is to be deeply aware of Christ's second coming to restore humankind, but not only at the end of God's *telos*, also for the present as God's in-breaking presence is omnipotent. Because the omnipotence of God is not bound by linear time, the past, present and future are intrinsically intertwined. God is actively present in the present but also participating in the future.

It is for this reason that eschatology activates anticipation and expectancy. This induces a kind of waiting upon God or as Cilliers (2008:70) describes it, "the hermeneutics of expectation". It is the expectation that God is indeed "doing a new" thing, as the prophet proclaims in Isaiah 43. Anticipatory leaders are, therefore "forward-thinking". They reach out for God's preferred future and this expectation reinforces their actions. Anticipatory leaders live and lead having an expectant appetite for what is beyond. Their eschatological expectancy equipped them with a sense of urgency and relentless curiosity to discern God's preferred future.

Eschatology is vital for a hopeful future outlook and therefore this study has promoted cultivating a strong eschatological consciousness. When religious leaders neglect to

live and lead with the vitality of eschatology, it leads to living "disembodiment" towards the future and ultimately "disembodied" from hope. If leaders are unaware of their eschatological roots, they are robbed of hope for tomorrow.

Anticipatory leaders live with hope. Hope is a vital quality in leadership and a highly influential factor (Barentsen, 2018:153). "Hope, identity and leadership form a close trio" (Barentsen, 2018:159). A VUCA world with all its uncertainties tends to erode hope into despair. It is therefore crucial that religious leaders should live and lead with an eschatological consciousness and conviction. Because the eschatological future is charged with hope, religious leaders can live with the audacity of hope even in the face of a myriad of uncertainty. Living without an eschatological consciousness would be to live at the mercy of a VUCA world which easily births despair; therefore an eschatological horizon is of paramount importance. Eschatological anticipation seeks the potentialities of tomorrow to recreate God's preferred future.

Lastly, the pastoral action task was undertaken. This task consists of formulating an appropriate action to bring about change. It engages in developing a specific response to shape a desirable direction and aim. The study has highlighted that the church and its leaders are not immune to the vast global changes, as expressed in the second chapter. As religious leaders respond to a world that Nijs (2015:1) notes is less predictable, more uncertain and more interdependent, it forces leadership reflections to continually be revitalised. It is against the backdrop of these mega changes that this study proposes a leadership competency called "anticipatory leadership". The study has set out to fuse the insights of futures studies and eschatology and has proposed that ministers lead from the future.

In response to the above statements, the study has introduced a pragmatic threefold action of anticipatory leadership. This consist of reclaiming, reframing and recreating the future. Reclaiming entails being open to change and possessing non-static thinking. Reframing the future points to how current realities can be retranslated in connection with God's eschatological reality. Lastly, anticipatory leaders aren't just heralding an eschatological vision but also embody this vision and therefore they recreate the future. This study has shown that ministers are co-creators of the future with God. This action consists of intentionally and actively steering the present into the

envisioned future. They have their eyes set on the future and envisage a hopeful future. The fifth chapter concluded the pastoral action task on a practical note and showed that anticipatory leadership is an important competency for religious leadership in a fluid VUCA world.

The study has also undertaken to contextualise its proposed leadership competency to give it a localised orientation. It noted at the start of this study that not all contexts are the famous Western perspective that some of the material might be written from. South Africa is a diverse country and therefore there are geographical "pockets" where modern and post-modern contexts may arise, and even very primitive contexts. It has portrayed that the poignant historical moments of South Africa can be a big challenge for religious leadership. Anticipatory leadership is therefore quite relevant against South Africa's historical backdrop and advocates that past behaviours must not become the catalyst for future actions and performance.

6.3 Limitations and areas of future research

This section proposes possible areas for future study and research.

Firstly, the scope of this study has limited it in venturing further into various subjects. As this study interlinks aspects of futures studies, eschatology and its quintessential subjects of Christology, soteriology and time, an in-depth exploration of these fields is not possible in the confines of this study. The study can be further enriched by adding academic voice to these aspects. One aspect that would appreciate another voice is that of eschatology. Where Moltmann's views were presented on the topic, more theologians' views could be further explored to enrich studies on this eschatological dimension. Eschatology is a vast subject in theology and bringing more theologians' voices into this subject could give more substance. Nevertheless, relevant concepts were introductorily explored and applicable elements examined.

Secondly, the study could gain from providing even more practical examples of what the threefold action of anticipatory leadership entails. Although some actions were highlighted, further research can be done to unpack numerous decision-making

frameworks like visioning, horizon scanning, futures mapping, forecasting and strategic foresight.

Thirdly, to improve comprehension of what is meant by postulating possible, plausible, probable and preferable futures, a useful iconic representation is using the "futures cone"[70] (see Voros in Poli, 2019b:435, as shown in Appendix B). It is a visual representation explaining how to postulate alternative futures. Featuring and elaborating on this in the study would give some additional clarity and further understanding of the aspect of imagining and venturing into different futures.

6.4   General conclusion

From all the interdisciplinary academic insights, the study has concluded with a pragmatic response to the research question. It has formulated an appropriate outcome to the research question: How can Christian eschatology, with its rich dimensions of time, anticipation and imagination, facilitate a vital leadership competency for the ministry? The research has formulated a reposeful competency, namely "anticipatory leadership". Features of what such a competency entails have been unpacked. Its contextual relevance in terms of South Africa has also been noted. This would assist theologians to reimagine the unknown future when confronted by the realities of a fast-changing and disruptive VUCA world.

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[70] For additional insights, see Shallowe et al. (2020:50) as well.

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Appendix A

Extract from Nell (2020b:275) - Competency framework

Meta-categories	Competencies	Description
Core competencies (Priest)	**Symbolic**	**Representing and mediating** the Sacred to the followers and celebrating the community's culture and identity
	Spiritual	**Living** an authentic and transparent spiritual life by embodying the community's identity and empower and inspire followers to live similarly
	Hermeneutical	**Interpreting** the religious tradition to engage followers in experiencing its relevance in daily life
Competencies inside (King)	**Pastoral**	**Caring** for the spiritual needs of followers to foster belonging to the community and its traditions
	Visionary	**Mobilizing** followers for a common goal and empowering them for a variety of inputs as part of a team
	Reconciling	**Enabling** the community to cope with conflict, tension and differences through meaning-making and managing
Competencies outside (Prophet)	**Communicative**	**Speaking** out publicly on behalf of the religious community and leading followers to do the same in their sphere of influence
	Innovative	**Leading** followers in innovative ways to engage in the social needs of the public and liberating people from oppressive social and political conditions
	Entrepreneurial	**Developing** a new sense of community that is both religiously and socially based by making place for a variety of spiritual experiences
Competency that focuses on the earth (Steward)	**Ecological**	**Sustaining** and nurturing the earth and her resources through mobilizing the faith community to participate in earth keeping

Appendix B

Extract from Voros (in Poli, 2019b:435) - The 'futures cone'