

the issue of an interim constitution that would replace the old constitution that formed the basis of apartheid legislation. Among other things, one of the more controversial aspects of this interim constitution was the issue over whether the advent of democracy would include the possibility of amnesty. However, it is John de Gruchy (2002) who reminds us that reconciliation was crucial in trying to uncover the truth, also, in terms of how the country should deal with the past as well as defining the future. Moreover, reconciliation was now seen as part of defining the national goals of democratic transformation and reconstruction. (de Gruchy, 2002, pp. 25, 41).

In the context of South Africa, it is evident that the process of reconciliation in South Africa continues to exhibit a delicate state, marked by its fragile nature, and the overarching social and economic project pursued within the country remains far from achieving comprehensive fulfilment. Despite notable progress made in the aftermath of the apartheid era, it is evident that deep-seated divisions and unresolved historical grievances continue to exert influence, impeding the consolidation of a harmonious and united society. The scars left by decades of institutionalised racial discrimination and violence persist, manifesting in persistent social inequalities, racial tensions, and sporadic outbreaks of unrest. These challenges underline the ongoing need for sustained efforts to address the root causes of division, engender meaningful dialogue, and pursue restorative justice mechanisms. Moreover, the incompleteness of South Africa's social and economic project is evident in the enduring disparities and disparities experienced by marginalised communities, particularly those historically disadvantaged by apartheid policies. Widespread poverty, limited access to quality education and healthcare, and persistently high levels of unemployment pose formidable barriers to inclusive development and hinder the realisation of true reconciliation. To achieve a lasting and comprehensive reconciliation, South Africa must navigate these complex issues, engage in inclusive policy-making processes, and strive for equitable resource distribution to rectify the historical inequities and foster a more inclusive, cohesive, and prosperous society. Ubuntu Theology emerges as a critical theoretical lens and practical tool in the ongoing journey towards social healing, cohesion, and the pursuit of a more equitable and harmonious South African society.

In Tutu's work 'No Future Without Forgiveness,' (1999), and as the Chairman of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), he offers reflective insights into his role and approach during this transformative phase in South Africa's history. Tutu underscores the significant influence of both his Christian beliefs and cultural heritage in shaping his leadership

and decision-making processes. Particularly noteworthy is Tutu's recurrent reliance on the concept of Ubuntu when providing guidance and counsel to individuals appearing before the Commission, including witnesses, victims, and perpetrators. Ubuntu, deeply ingrained in African traditions, represents a collective worldview centred on interconnectedness, empathy, and the recognition of inherent human dignity. Tutu's deliberate invocation of Ubuntu during the Commission's hearings reflects his commitment to engendering a sense of shared responsibility, compassion, and restorative justice within the South African context. By drawing upon his religious and cultural values, Tutu sought to create a moral framework that encouraged reconciliation, fostered dialogue, and facilitated the healing of deep-seated wounds inflicted by the apartheid era.

Vellem's (2013) scholarly exploration of reconciliation revolves around a comprehensive understanding that encompasses both intellectual comprehension and experiential engagement. Grounded in the liberation theology tradition, Vellem's theological framework draws upon the interplay of experiential encounters, theoretical underpinnings, and hermeneutical interpretations. By merging lived experiences with theoretical insights, Vellem seeks to unveil a holistic understanding of reconciliation. This approach acknowledges the significance of engaging with the practical realities and complexities of human existence, while also delving into the theoretical constructs that inform and guide the process of reconciliation. Through his liberation theology framework, Vellem strives to bridge the gap between abstract concepts and concrete manifestations of reconciliation, thereby fostering a more nuanced and contextualised understanding of this transformative process. By intertwining experience, theory, and hermeneutics, Vellem's theological approach provides a valuable lens through which to analyse and navigate the multifaceted dimensions of reconciliation, ultimately enriching the scholarly discourse on this critical subject matter. A contesting view is that of Klaasen (2018, p. 4), who notes: 'My own use of the concept of reconciliation is theological and includes restoring relationships with self, community, other, the rest of creation, and God.' Klaasen argues that reconciliation pertains to the endeavour of re-establishing various forms of connections among individuals with themselves, others, the community, the wider natural world, and the divine.

Central to the process of reconciliation is the underlying premise of relationships, which necessitates a fundamental understanding of the parties involved. Such comprehension encompasses the awareness of identity, both inherent and perceived, pertaining to the individuals engaged in the reconciliatory efforts. Moreover, reconciliation entails a crucial

element of critical engagement and reciprocal dialogue among those impacted by fractured relationships. This interactive and transformative interchange serves as a means to address and rectify the distortions that have arisen within these relationships, fostering an environment conducive to reconciliation. By embracing these multifaceted dimensions, reconciliation strives to restore harmonious connections at both interpersonal and communal levels, acknowledging the significance of knowledge, critical engagement, and transformative processes within the pursuit of reconciliation. Therefore, reconciliation is seen as a powerful root metaphor for Ubuntu Theology in South Africa, reflecting a journey towards healing and unity. Rooted in the deep-seated values of interconnectedness, empathy, and communal responsibility, Ubuntu Theology offers a framework that emphasises the restoration of relationships and the recognition of shared humanity. Ubuntu Theology and its embodiment in reconciliation can serve as an inspiration not only for South Africa but for the world, highlighting the transformative potential of forgiveness and the power of communal healing. By embracing reconciliation as a root metaphor, humanity is invited to demonstrate their unwavering belief in the possibility of a more just, inclusive, and harmonious society.

5.7 Conclusion

In comparing Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology, it is sobering to note that Tutu, the one who appropriates Ubuntu Theology, does not distinguish between the two, as Battle (1997, p. 133) notes, 'Tutu sought in his spirituality to take up the positive elements of Black Theology and African theology.' Central to Tutu's appropriation of Ubuntu and the coming to life of Ubuntu Theology has been the understanding and theological acceptance of *Imago Dei*. Battle (1997, p. 133) rightfully notes in the South African context, 'The *Imago Dei* was claimed by Blacks and whites as something that one group possessed but the other lacked.' According to Battle (p. 133), it was in this context that 'Tutu sought a common theological understanding to which both white and Black people could ascent.' Tutu understood that it is a discovery, a state of mind, a conversion, and an affirmation of being, which is power. It is an insight that has to do with wisdom and responsibility. Black Theology sought a God who would not rest until His children were liberated and who would permit a lie to exist without being challenged.

It is noteworthy that there is a misconception that Tutu, one of the leading figures of Ubuntu Theology, is not a student and activist of Black Theology. In fact, Tutu has acknowledged the influence of Black Theology on his own theological perspective, but has also highlighted the unique aspects of Ubuntu Theology. Thus, while there may be similarities between Black

Theology and Ubuntu Theology, it is important to recognise their distinct theological frameworks and their respective contributions to theological discourse. Many have compared these two theologies and, in so doing, dismissed Tutu as a proprietor of Black Theology. Tutu (1975, p. 32) counters this when weighing up African Theology and Black Theology: 'I believe I am an exponent of Black Theology coming as I do from South Africa.'

Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology are two distinct theological frameworks with significant differences, despite both originating from the African continent. One such difference is in their approach to justice and reconciliation. While Ubuntu Theology emphasises the importance of reconciliation and restoration of relationships, Black Theology places a greater emphasis on justice. This is evident in the way Black Theology focuses on the structural and systemic issues that contribute to the oppression of Black people, rather than solely on personal relationships. Another area of distinction is identity. Ubuntu Theology places a strong emphasis on community and interconnectedness, whereas Black Theology recognises the importance of community but also asserts the unique identity and experiences of Black individuals within that community. These differences highlight the unique contributions and perspectives of both Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology to theological discourse.

In his 1997 book, 'Reconciliation: The Ubuntu Theology of Desmond Tutu,' Michael Battle reflects on Tutu's belief that African and Black theologies are particularly concerned with the concept of liberation. According to Tutu, liberation is a crucial component of these theologies, as they emerged in response to the suffering and oppression experienced by Black people throughout history. Tutu contends that the struggle for liberation should not lead to further division and conflict, as identities are often used as weapons in these battles. Instead, the pursuit of liberation must be grounded in a commitment to reconciliation and unity. Tutu's understanding of liberation reflects the broader trend within Black Theology of emphasising the importance of social justice and the liberation of oppressed groups. The concept of liberation has been a driving force behind the evolution of Black Theology, from its early phases that focused primarily on race analysis, to its current emphasis on intersectionality and the consideration of multiple social categories in the pursuit of justice. Tutu's insights on the importance of reconciliation and unity in the struggle for liberation highlight the ongoing relevance of Black Theology in the contemporary context, as it continues to offer critical perspectives on the pursuit of justice and equality.

In conclusion, this chapter has highlighted the notion that the complex relationship between Ubuntu Theology and Black Theology requires a deeper exploration of their similarities and differences. While I argue that Ubuntu Theology has been influenced by Black Theology, there are clear distinctions between the two, particularly around matters of justice, reconciliation, and identity. This is notwithstanding that both theologies share a concern for social justice and liberation, highlighting the need to bridge the gap between them. Through a continued examination of their relationship and engagement with their respective starting points and orientations, a deeper understanding of these two theologies can be achieved, leading to a more holistic approach to theology and its implications for the struggle for liberation.



CHAPTER 6: BLACK THEOLOGY AND UBUNTU THEOLOGY – ANTAGONISTS OR SOULMATES?

6.1 Introduction

Desmond Tutu has played a pivotal role in shaping the discourse surrounding African Theology and its relation to Black Theology. His 1975 thought-provoking paper ‘Black Theology/African Theology: Soulmates or antagonists?’ raises an important question: Are African Theology and Black Theology soulmates, united by their shared concerns and aspirations, or are they antagonists, reflecting divergent approaches and objectives? Tutu contends that ‘Black Theology is like the inner and smaller circles in a series of concentric circles’ (1975). Therefore, it can be concluded that Black Theology challenges the hegemonic theological narratives and asserts the importance of centring the marginalised and oppressed voices within theological discourse, creating space for their distinct theological contributions.

When we examine these two theological frameworks – Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology in South Africa, we encounter a crossroads where their paths converge or diverge. While both theologies share a commitment to social transformation and the promotion of human dignity, they may also diverge in their theological emphases, cultural contexts, and methodologies. I posit that the convergence of Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology engenders a pivotal intersection, which compels us to engage in a profound examination of whether these two frameworks are fundamentally opposed or mutually harmonious. By embarking upon this intellectual exploration, I endeavour to explore the intricate dynamics and potential synergies that arise when these two theological perspectives, each with its own distinct historical and cultural underpinnings, intertwine.

This chapter delves into the complex interplay between Black Theology, which centres the liberation and empowerment of the African diaspora within the context of systemic oppression, and Ubuntu Theology, which emphasises communal interconnectedness and a collective human identity grounded in shared humanity. By scrutinising the nuanced intersections of these two theological frameworks, this study seeks to unravel the underlying tensions, alignments, or symbiotic resonances that may emerge, thereby enriching a deeper comprehension of their entwined philosophical tenets. Ultimately, this investigation serves as an exercise that beckons us to navigate the dialectical relationship between Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology,

fostering a deeper understanding of their potential compatibility or discordance, and contributing to the broader discourse on theological synthesis and interconnectivity.

6.2 Critical analysis of the two theologies

When seeking to respond to the question whether Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology are antagonists or soulmates, after considering the two theologies, one begins to notice that which holds the two together (soulmates) and that which splits (antagonists) them apart. I draw attention to an aspect that holds them together, and an aspect that splits them apart. That which holds these two together is the quest for humanity, and that which splits them apart is an understanding of reconciliation.

Both Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology in South Africa seek to restore the human face of the oppressed. Black Theology speaks of this as an understanding of Black being beautiful, Ubuntu Theology speaks of it as the rainbow people of God; both carry with them a semblance of the Imago Dei. While Black Theology is very specific around restoring the human image of Black people, Ubuntu Theology seeks to discount the experience of Black people in favour of all oppressed people, without making the oppressor guilty of anything.

That which separates these two, is the understanding and expression of reconciliation. Ubuntu by its very nature, what many would deem a nation builder, much of Tutu's energies have been exerted around the notion of being a rainbow nation, and thus limits Ubuntu Theology's interaction to that of reconciling people and communities. Of course, because of Tutu's influence, one needs to appreciate that the reconciliation advocated for by Ubuntu Theology is one deeply embedded in the understanding of the church and its teachings, we have to recognise that reconciliation was at the heart of the church's struggle against apartheid.

Boesak (2020, p. 51) comments on our incomplete revolution:

Since 1994, we have rubbed our Ubuntu-ness in Africa's face. We have preened and basked in the admiration of the world because we were the ones who knew what 'reconciliation' meant. We deemed ourselves fit to teach other nations from Rwanda to Ireland to Serbia how it worked and how they should follow our example. We have so much to learn still, and the first seems to be a lesson in humility. The second is to learn to embrace the painful healing of honest self-critical reflection as necessary for our

growth toward what Biko called our ‘envisioned self,’ for our ability to give South Africa and the world a human face.

The role of Black Theology in South Africa lies in its potential to empower individuals, particularly Black South Africans, in fostering an environment where the recognition of shared humanity transcends power dynamics. Black Theology endeavours to promote a sense of Ubuntu, whereby individuals acknowledge and value each other's inherent dignity and worth, irrespective of societal hierarchies or power differentials. By embracing the principles of Ubuntu, Black Theology seeks to dismantle oppressive structures, challenge systemic injustices, and create spaces where individuals can authentically engage with one another, free from the limitations imposed by power dynamics. In doing so, Black Theology serves as a catalyst for cultivating a society that upholds the principles of equality, respect, and communal interdependence, fostering an environment where all individuals are afforded the opportunity to flourish and contribute to the collective well-being of South Africa.

6.2.1 Black Theology/Ubuntu Theology and their search for human dignity

At the core of the convergence between Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology lies a shared pursuit of a human face, reflecting their status as soulmates. To demonstrate this interconnection, I wish to highlight how these two theological frameworks respond to the search for human dignity within the contemporary context of the LGBTIQ+ community.

Both Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology are animated by a fundamental concern for the human condition, seeking to challenge and dismantle oppressive structures that impede the full realisation of human dignity. By engaging with these theological perspectives, we can deepen our understanding of their shared commitment to affirming the intrinsic humanity and inherent rights of all individuals, irrespective of their sexual orientations or gender identities. Ultimately, this analysis underscores the significant overlap between Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology in their endeavours to foster inclusivity, justice, and the recognition of the profound value of every human being.

In his critique, Boesak (2020) draws attention to a notable shortcoming within Black Theology, namely its failure to adequately address the pressing issues of gender-based violence and the recognition of the LGBTIQ+ community within the context of South Africa. This he does as he speaks of an ‘incomplete revolution.’ Despite its emphasis on justice, liberation, and dismantling oppressive structures, Black Theology has often overlooked the unique

experiences and struggles faced by women and members of the LGBTIQ+ community. By neglecting to engage with these critical issues, Black Theology inadvertently perpetuates systems of gender inequality and exclusion. Boesak's observation underscores the necessity for Black Theology to broaden its scope and deepen its analysis, incorporating an intersectional perspective that accounts for the complex interplay of race, gender, and sexuality. By actively addressing gender-based violence and affirming the rights and dignity of the LGBTIQ+ community, Black Theology can better align itself with its fundamental objectives of liberation, justice, and inclusivity within the South African context.

In examining Ubuntu Theology and Black Theology and its interplay between elements that foster solidarity (soulmates) and elements that create divisions (antagonism), an area of significant relevance emerges concerning the response to the LGBTIQ+ community. Within this context, the focus of this research pertains to Tutu's response, as a figure closely associated with Ubuntu Theology. Tutu's stance on issues related to the LGBTIQ+ community becomes a crucial point of analysis within the broader exploration of Ubuntu Theology. By investigating Tutu's response to the LGBTIQ+ community, this study aims to shed light on the complex dynamics within Ubuntu Theology, exploring how it navigates the tension between inclusivity and divergence. By engaging with Tutu's views and actions, this research seeks to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of Ubuntu Theology's perspective on the LGBTIQ+ community, thereby deepening our comprehension of its capacity to address diverse identities and challenges within the framework of communal interconnectedness. It is worth noting that, 'Although Tutu has not systematically reflected on questions of sexuality from the perspective of his theology of *Ubuntu*, it is obvious that it shapes his thinking about sexuality considerably' (Klinken & Chitando, 2021, p. 105).

Furthermore, Tutu's staunch advocacy for equality in his engagement with individuals who identify as LGBTIQ+ is deeply rooted in his adoption of Ubuntu Theology. Tutu's adherence to Ubuntu Theology, a philosophical and theological framework grounded in African cultural and communal values, significantly influences his stance on social justice issues, including the rights and inclusion of the LGBTIQ+ community. Ubuntu Theology underscores the interconnectedness and inherent worth of all individuals, emphasising the fundamental principle of recognising and respecting the humanity in others. Guided by this theological perspective, Tutu champions equality and human rights for individuals regardless of their sexual orientations or gender identities, viewing their inherent worth as integral to the fabric of

human community and harmony. His adoption of Ubuntu Theology enables Tutu to articulate a robust theological foundation for his support of LGBTIQ+ rights, challenging societal norms and promoting inclusivity within the broader discourse on equality and social justice. As such, Tutu's alignment with Ubuntu Theology provides a compelling lens through which to understand and contextualise his unwavering commitment to equality when engaging with the LGBTIQ+ community.

This is underscored in an essay in honour of Tutu, when West (2021, p. 85) writes:

The gift of Archbishop Tutu's witness is experienced as a dynamic resource in this New York City-based project that defies the enduring political imprint of colonialism and transatlantic slavery on black church morality. Gratefulness for this gift means claiming African heritage as a resource for defining the power of black church tradition in terms of its welcoming embrace of black LGBTIQ+ Christians.

This is affirmed by Jakobsen (2021, p. 88) in the same collection of essays:

He (Tutu) became more vocal towards the end of his Anglican episcopate and after he retired, was unequivocally clear that God is not a man, God is not homophobic, God is not a Christian, and all human beings, all people – all are made in the image of God.

In his authorised biography of Desmond Tutu, John Allen (2006, p. 372) explores Tutu's longstanding advocacy for gay rights, tracing its origins to as early as the 1970s:

In the 1970s he had been tolerant of gays but had mentioned them in his sermons alongside drug addicts and the poor; by the turn of the century, however, he had become perhaps the world's most prominent leader advocating gay and lesbian rights.

The affirmation of human dignity emerges as a compelling factor that positions Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology as soulmates. Through an exploration of their respective responses to the LGBTIQ+ community, it becomes evident that these theological frameworks are indeed aligned in their commitment to serving as theologies that embrace and affirm the inherent humanity of all individuals, transcending boundaries of colour, creed, race, and sexuality. By acknowledging the intrinsic worth and equality of every person, irrespective of their diverse identities, Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology embody a shared mission to create inclusive spaces that promote justice, liberation, and the recognition of human rights. This convergence

underscores the profound resonance between these theologies, as they converge in their pursuit of universal human dignity, thereby fostering a comprehensive theological framework that emphasises the inherent value and worth of every individual, regardless of their differences.

6.2.2 Black Theology/Ubuntu Theology and their expression of reconciliation

The concept of reconciliation represents a contested terrain where Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology exhibit potential divergence, leading to a perception of antagonism between these two theological frameworks. While both Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology are committed to addressing systemic injustices and pursuing social transformation, they diverge in their approaches to the notion of reconciliation. Reconciliation is a widely acknowledged and celebrated notion that frequently permeates the political discourse and public policy of post-conflict nations committed to the task of rebuilding their respective countries. Its significance lies in its potential to heal the wounds of past conflicts and foster a sense of collective responsibility for a shared future. As a concept, reconciliation transcends mere tolerance and calls for active engagement with the past, acknowledgement of wrongdoing, and a commitment to building a more equitable and just society. The allure of reconciliation lies in its ability to transcend divisions and promote national unity, making it a crucial aspect of post-conflict nation building.

Black Theology places emphasis on the struggle for justice and the dismantling of oppressive structures as prerequisites for genuine reconciliation. In contrast, Ubuntu Theology emphasises communal interconnectedness and the restoration of harmonious relationships as central to the process of reconciliation. This discrepancy in emphasis raises questions about the extent to which justice and reconciliation can be effectively pursued in isolation from one another. The tension between these two perspectives invites further exploration and critical analysis. Boesak, in a webinar discussing reparations in his book, ‘Radical Reconciliation: Beyond Political Pietism and Christian Quietism,’ co-authored with Curtiss Paul DeYoung, notes: ‘Reconciliation not only changes the way we feel, it transforms us and our identities as agents of God’s love, God’s justice and God’s reconciliation’ (Warren, 2021).

It is evident at the outset that engaging in acts of reconciliation, individuals undergo a profound shift in their perspectives, beliefs, and behaviours, embracing a new understanding of themselves as agents of God's love. This transformation encompasses a holistic reorientation, encompassing not only emotional responses but also cognitive and behavioural changes.

Through reconciliation, individuals align themselves with the divine purpose of promoting love and justice, transcending personal inclinations and self-interests to embrace a higher calling. Moreover, reconciliation serves as a catalyst for the transformation of individual identities by aligning them with God's justice. This entails a commitment to fairness, equity, and ethical conduct, guided by divine principles rather than self-serving motives. As individuals internalise the ideals of justice, they become agents who actively strive to rectify past wrongs, combat injustice, and establish social harmony. Consequently, their identities become intertwined with the pursuit of justice, shaping their actions, and motivating them to effect positive change in society. By actively engaging in acts of reconciliation, individuals become ambassadors of peace, bridge builders between divided communities, and advocates for healing and restoration. Their identities are characterised by a commitment to facilitating understanding, fostering dialogue, and promoting forgiveness. In this capacity, they actively participate in the divine mission of reconciling individuals and communities, embodying the transformative power of God's love and reconciliation.

It is imperative to acknowledge the pivotal role of justice within the context of Black Theology when considering the concept of reconciliation. Black theologians place significant emphasis on justice as a central objective intertwined with the pursuit of reconciliation. This academic analysis underscores the importance of justice in the framework of Black Theology, highlighting its integral role in the quest for reconciliation. Within the context of Black Theology, justice is viewed as an indispensable component in the process of reconciliation. Black theologians recognise that true reconciliation cannot be achieved in the absence of justice. They contend that addressing historical and ongoing injustices is a fundamental prerequisite for genuine healing and restoration. In this regard, justice is not perceived merely as a legalistic or punitive measure, but as a transformative force that rectifies systemic imbalances and fosters equity. Black Theology contends that reconciliation without justice risks perpetuating oppression and maintaining oppressive structures. As surveyed in this thesis, one could argue that true reconciliation necessitates confronting and dismantling systems of power and privilege that perpetuate racial injustice. By foregrounding justice within the framework of reconciliation, Black Theology advocates for a comprehensive approach that addresses both the interpersonal and structural dimensions of inequality. Moreover, justice serves as a vital mechanism for empowering marginalised communities and enabling their active participation in the reconciliation process. Black Theology emphasises the importance of redressing historical and contemporary injustices as a means to restore agency and dignity

to those who have been systematically marginalised and oppressed. Through this lens, justice becomes a catalyst for transformative change and social liberation, laying the foundation for authentic reconciliation.

Reconciliation as interpreted through the lens of Ubuntu Theology is seen as ‘a process of restoration or creation of socially harmonious relations between victims and aggressors’ (Cordeiro-Rodrigues, 2018, p. 432). In Ubuntu Theology the pursuit of reconciliation extends beyond the individual level, encompassing social, political, and economic dimensions, with the ultimate goal of fostering justice, peace, and collective well-being. Thus, Ubuntu Theology offers a comprehensive understanding of reconciliation that encompasses both personal and communal dimensions, emphasising the importance of interconnectedness and ubuntu values in achieving a state of reconciliation. Metz (2017, p. 295) describes Ubuntu-shaped reconciliation as a ‘step on the path towards realising a society that fully respects communal relationships, ones of identity and solidarity.’ The significance of solidarity within the context of Ubuntu Theology is underscored, even to the extent of extending solidarity towards the oppressor. By embodying the principles of empathy, forgiveness, and ubuntu, individuals are encouraged to extend solidarity towards those who perpetrate harm, with the aim of promoting their own healing and transformation as well as fostering reconciliation and communal well-being. This inclusive perspective on solidarity, extending even to the oppressor, serves as a testament to the profound commitment to healing, restoration, and the pursuit of a just and harmonious society within Ubuntu Theology. Metz (2017) takes it a step further and introduces the idea of an ‘ubuntu-oriented reconciliation.’ The challenge herein is that we begin to redefine reconciliation. Solomons (2021, p. 258), reflecting on an Ubuntu-shaped reconciliation, argues that reconciliation emerges as the central tenet, embodying a kenotic manifestation of love that recognises the essential interconnectedness and inherent unity of diverse individuals, transcending the societal boundaries and markers that often serve to differentiate and separate them.

It could thus be deduced that the concept of reconciliation assumes a pivotal role within the discourse, as it evolves into a transformative force characterised by a kenotic expression of love. This transformative understanding goes beyond mere conflict resolution and encompasses a profound recognition of the interconnectedness and interdependence of individuals, regardless of the societal constructs and divisions that traditionally separate them. In this paradigm, reconciliation becomes a powerful tool for acknowledging the inherent unity

and diversity of humanity. It calls for a deliberate shift in perspective, encouraging individuals to embrace an inclusive and empathetic mindset that transcends social markers and embraces the shared humanity that binds them together. By centring reconciliation as an expression of kenotic love, the narrative broadens to encompass a deeper understanding of the complexities of human relationships and the potential for profound healing and unity. This reimagined concept of reconciliation challenges existing paradigms, inviting scholars and practitioners to explore novel approaches that prioritise unity, empathy, and the dismantling of divisive social structures, ultimately fostering a more harmonious and interconnected society.

Furthermore, Haws (2009, p. 477) notes:

This notion called 'ubuntu' counters segregation and violence with reconciliation and justice. It refuses to execute retribution upon transgressors, instead committing itself to re-membering the disinherited of Christ's inclusive body. Forgiveness is the only future for this body and, though it remains an aporia in the context of radical evils such as apartheid, it is the only way to achieve justice without economising balance. That is, only forgiveness can realise ubuntu because it progresses forward toward justice not backward toward vengeance. Ubuntu is the prophetic balance of a divine gift that transforms the wretchedness of human atrocities.

Within the context of Ubuntu Theology in South Africa, a notable inclination towards forgiveness over justice emerges as a distinct characteristic. Forgiveness is viewed as a transformative and healing force that promotes reconciliation, restoration, and the reintegration of individuals into the community. Rather than seeking punitive measures, Ubuntu Theology encourages the acknowledgement of wrongdoing, the expression of remorse, and the granting of forgiveness as a means of facilitating healing and communal harmony. By prioritising forgiveness, Ubuntu Theology seeks to break the cycle of revenge and resentment, promoting a collective ethos of empathy, healing, and shared responsibility. Ubuntu Theology presents a departure from the conventional pursuit of justice and the notion of balancing the scales. In this framework, the process does not commence with retribution as a prerequisite for forgiveness. Instead, forgiveness is given primacy, serving as the starting point for transformative change. This approach recognises the profound power of forgiveness to initiate healing and reconciliation. By prioritising forgiveness, this Ubuntu Theology allows for the transformative work that forgiveness can accomplish. It embraces the understanding that forgiveness has the potential to disrupt cycles of violence and foster a sense of communal harmony. In this

paradigm, the emphasis is placed on the restoration of relationships and the creation of a more compassionate and inclusive society. While justice and the rebalancing of societal inequalities are not dismissed, they are understood to be intricately intertwined with the process of forgiveness and reconciliation. Thus, this model within Ubuntu Theology underscores the transformative potential of forgiveness as a catalyst for societal healing and the restoration of communal well-being.

Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology in South Africa manifest as antagonists due to their differing approaches to the concept of reconciliation. Black Theology places a strong emphasis on justice. It seeks to address historical injustices, advocate for the rights of the marginalised, and challenge systemic oppression. In contrast, Ubuntu Theology emphasises forgiveness and communal harmony, focusing on the interconnectedness and shared humanity of all individuals. While both theologies emerge from the same context of injustice and oppression, their contrasting approaches to reconciliation engender tension and divergence. Black Theology argues that justice must be pursued in order to dismantle oppressive structures and secure restitution for the victims. Ubuntu Theology, on the other hand, prioritises forgiveness as a means of healing and restoring broken relationships. While their perspectives may appear to be antagonistic, they also offer opportunities for dialogue and mutual learning as scholars and practitioners grapple with the complex challenges of reconciliation and social change.

6.3 Examining Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology

In examining the relationship between Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology, one can observe both similarities and differences between the two. However, it is important to note that there is no direct comparison between Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology. The common ground for comparison lies mainly in their expression of identity. One of the significant differences between these two theologies is their focus on justice, reconciliation, and identity. Black Theology emphasises the importance of justice and equality in the struggle for Black liberation, while Ubuntu Theology centres on the concepts of interconnectedness and community. Black Theology thus proclaims the totality of God's liberation and in total liberation seeks the realisation of the wholeness of life and speaks of hope to people without power. Black Theology calls for Blacks to be aware that they wield economic and political power as a group (Boesak, 1978, p. 26). Black Theology means a search for a totally new social order, a utopia, in the hope that there is a land beyond Jordan. This, I suspect, had been the pushing creed and statement of faith that helped and made Black people realise that, as a group, they had a voice

that could free them from bondage. Ubuntu Theology should have embraced this as a vehicle to freedom and thus set a Black agenda for the rebirth of a post-apartheid South Africa.

One of the challenges of Ubuntu Theology lays in its resistance to Black Theology in favour of a plurality of theologies, which Battle (1997, p. 33) also highlights: ‘There must be a plurality of theologies, because we do not all apprehend or respond to the transcendent in exactly the same way, nor can we [be] expected to express our experience in the same way.’ This is a direct challenge to Black Theology, as Boesak (1978, p. 16) asserts, that it is in the first place a theology of the oppressed people. But not only that. It is a theology of liberation and it is the focus on liberation that makes the contextuality of Black Theology truly ecumenical and universal. In this sense, Black Theology is not an exclusive, theological apartheid in which whites have no part. On the contrary, Blacks know only too well the terrible estrangement of white people; they know only too well how sorely whites need to be liberated – even if whites themselves do not! Black Theology is a passionate call to freedom, and although it directs its voice to all people, it nonetheless hopes that white people will hear and be saved.

The interpretation of Ubuntu Theology, as suggested by Desmond Tutu, has, in my view, been misguided, first by the understanding of what it means to be Black, rather than understanding it solely as a pigmentation of our skin. Thus, Ubuntu Theology pays hardly any attention to anything else but colour. This is illustrated in Tutu’s book ‘The Rainbow People of God’ (1994, p. 134):

‘My sisters and brothers, my sons and daughters, let us accept the gift of God, let us accept the freedom the God wants to give us, so that you and I, all of us, black and white will know that they are members of one family, God’s family, the human family.’

If we were to compare this to the sentiments of Boesak, the difference is obvious: Black Theology sincerely believes that it is possible to recapture what was sacred in the African community long before white people came – solidarity, respect for life, humanity, and community. It must be possible not only to recapture it, but to enhance it and bring it to full fruition in contemporary society (Boesak, 1978, p. 152).

Solomons (2021, p. 3) argues that the relationship between liberation and reconciliation as key precepts in Black theological thought is particularly important. Solomons, earlier in his writing,

narrows down a theological disposition by highlighting the Christian characteristics for reconciliation. He notes (2017, p. 6):

The Christian discourse on reconciliation presents at least three additional layers of meaning:

- a) reconciliation with God following alienation as a result of sin; this is understood in the light of a broken relationship with God;
- b) reconciliation through being one with Christ in the Body of Christ (the church); and
- c) the ministry of reconciliation through the Holy Spirit in church and society.

The examination of Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology in South Africa reveals a complex relationship characterised by elements of being both antagonists and soulmates. While these differences and similarities create tensions and conflicts, they also provide opportunities for critical engagement, fruitful dialogue, and the cultivation of a more comprehensive understanding of reconciliation.

In making an argument for Ubuntu and the theology of Ubuntu by Tutu as an African, and an Anglican, Battle (1997, p. 125) notes: 'New theologies need to arise in order to address the perplexities and issues in new contexts as Africa were asking or likely to ask.' I argue that when Tutu asks the question: Black Theology/African Theology – Soulmates or antagonists? It is an attempt to recognise that African Theology and Black Theology emerged within distinct contexts but share common ground in their commitment to challenging oppressive structures and promoting liberation and justice.

When we consider the understanding and role of Ubuntu Theology, and juxtapose it incorrectly to Black Theology or even African Theology, we have to take Battle's (1997, p. 7) understanding of Tutu into account: 'Instead of the primacy of race, Tutu makes the spiritual central to life. The spiritual transforms all human realms, including the political, removing the justification to manipulate persons on the basis of their race.' Again, this is the utopia upon which Tutu premises his Ubuntu Theology. In fact, Black Theology is about liberating the oppressed who continue to be Black communities, and thus, if we were to speak of the spiritual, we ought to ground the spirituality of Ubuntu in Black Theology:

For Blacks, this is the courage to be Black. But again, this need be no other worldly dream; it is real as Africa itself. Indeed, motho ke motho ka batho babang. This age-old

African proverb equivalent in almost all African languages, and its meaning is still as profound as ever, even more so: One is only human because of others, with others, for others. This is Black Theology. It is authentic, it is worthwhile. It is, in the most profound sense of the word, gospel truth (Boesak, 1978, p. 152).

Through the analysis of Black Theology in South Africa, we begin to notice contrasts in identity; from Black Theology that calls on Black people to use biblical understanding and interpretation, to fight against injustice and oppression; Black Consciousness that advocates for the agency and humanity of Black people, in particular, and now Ubuntu that almost suggests that we are one, irrespective of the colour of our skin. However, all these ideologies recognise the struggle for liberation and living out a post-liberation life is the gift of being human, made in the image of God. Both Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology have, as part of their DNA, Black Consciousness, which calls us to a space of being cognisant of the deliberateness of God's plan in creating Black people Black. It seeks to infuse the Black community with a new-found pride in themselves, their efforts, their value systems, their culture, their religion, and their outlook on life. When Ubuntu Theology and Black Theology converge at this point of Black Consciousness, Ubuntu Theology's interpretation of the 'rainbow nation' is given the space to walk alongside Black Theology, without eradicating the Blackness for the sake of being all right with the notion of 'a rainbow people of God,' but rather to embrace the Blackness, in this rainbow, rather than relegating Blackness to the sides as a colour of sadness, depression, worthlessness, or even less-than.

We cannot lose sight of the fact that 'Black Theology is a situational interpretation of Christianity. It seeks to relate the present-day black man to God within the given context of the black man suffering and his attempts to get out of it' (Biko, [1978] 2017, p. 64).

Ubuntu Theology, as presented, interpreted, and demonstrated by Tutu, builds interdependent communities, as Battle (1997, p. 40) reports: 'Ubuntu, for Tutu, is the environment of vulnerability that builds true community. This vulnerability begins when human divisions are set aside.' Accordingly, we begin to see an Ubuntu Theology calling for a neutral ground to rebuild, while Black Theology calls for an unequivocal sense of retribution from the oppressors and the privileged. Herein lies a disconnect. However, this disconnect is remedied when we begin to consider Ubuntu Theology as a theology of community that is founded on the Black experience rather than the romanticising of the colours of the rainbow.

When one begins to answer the question around Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology being soulmates or antagonists, we will do ourselves a disservice, if we fail to remember that Black Theology is a theology of liberation, so too, Ubuntu Theology considers itself a theology which liberates, albeit based on two very different interpretations of what liberation means. While Black Theology is deeply connected with the oppressed, Ubuntu Theology is willing to take the oppressor into account on the basis of reconciliation. It would thus cause us to consider, if it is indeed the ‘soft’ approach of Ubuntu Theology that has caused it to be more popular in contrast to the ‘radical’ calls of Black Theology.

6.4 Conclusion

It is thus my contention that Ubuntu Theology possesses the capacity to embrace a more radical stance while maintaining its distinctive identity rooted in the values of reconciliation. By appropriating such a radical stance, Ubuntu Theology can expand its conceptual framework to encompass the pursuit of radical justice. This evolution does not necessitate a departure from its foundational principles but rather enables Ubuntu Theology to create space for a more assertive pursuit of justice. Ubuntu Theology, with its emphasis on communal interconnectedness and the inherent worth of each individual, provides a fertile ground for advocating for transformative change and challenging systemic injustices. By integrating the pursuit of radical justice into its core principles of reconciliation and communal harmony, Ubuntu Theology can effectively address the structural barriers and power imbalances that perpetuate inequality and oppression. This synthesis of radicalism and reconciliation within Ubuntu Theology has the potential to generate a more comprehensive theological framework that recognises the imperative of social transformation and embodies a commitment to advancing justice in all its dimensions. Again, we must hear Vellem (2012, p. 4), when he reminds us that, ‘Too much emphasis on reconciliation, for example, might compromise justice and vice versa.’ Therefore, I contend that, amid the differences highlighted, Ubuntu Theology and Black Theology are indeed soulmates, from a perspective of Black Theology. Both of these theological perspectives share a common objective of pursuing a state of reconciliation. Thus, embracing Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology as soulmates rather than antagonists, we begin to enter the realm of what Boesak calls ‘radical reconciliation,’ rather than Bonhoeffer’s (2012), ‘cheap grace.’ In holding the two together, rather than antagonists, we begin to engage the work of justice and restitution, the exact space that birthed both Ubuntu Theology and Black Theology.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

7.1 Introduction

My analysis and examination of the research question, and my endeavours at addressing the objectives of this study, lead me to acknowledge that for too long, matters concerning Black Theology have been rendered inferior to Western theologies dictating how Black people should respond to matters of justice, reconciliation, and restitution.

It is imperative to recognise and challenge the historical marginalisation of Black Theology in South Africa in relation to Western theologies, particularly concerning how Black people are expected to respond to issues of justice, reconciliation, and restitution. Throughout history, Western theological frameworks have often held hegemonic influence, imposing their perspectives and dictating the terms by which Black individuals and communities should engage with these crucial matters. This has perpetuated a hierarchy in which Black Theology is positioned as inferior, overshadowed by dominant Western theological discourses. Such a power dynamic undermines the voices, experiences, and agency of Black theologians and communities, limiting their ability to shape theologies that resonate with their own lived realities and cultural contexts. Recognising the inherent value and richness of Black Theology is essential in dismantling this oppressive paradigm and creating space for a more inclusive theological discourse that centres the experiences and aspirations of Black individuals and communities. By fostering a genuine engagement with Black theological perspectives, we can promote a more equitable and pluralistic theological landscape that recognises the diverse expressions of faith, justice, and reconciliation within different cultural and social contexts.

7.2 Discussion and Analysis

Solomons (2021a, p. 2) succinctly encapsulates the apprehensions surrounding the Black Theology agenda:

Concerns over the relevance of Black Liberation Theology are somewhat of a moot point because its purpose has always transcended political utility; in other words, it has always been about more than a simplistic focus on apartheid.

The concerns surrounding the relevance of Black Liberation Theology in South Africa can be viewed as somewhat inconsequential, as its purpose has consistently transcended mere political utility. This theological framework has always encompassed a broader scope, extending

beyond a simplistic emphasis on apartheid. Its significance lies in its capacity to address the multifaceted aspects of oppression, fostering a deeper understanding of the intricate intersections between race, religion, and social justice. Black Liberation Theology has continually sought to challenge systemic injustices, provide a spiritual foundation for empowerment, and instigate transformative change within individuals and communities. Therefore, reducing its importance solely to its political implications fails to acknowledge the profound spiritual and cultural dimensions that define this theological framework.

We can no longer develop new theologies simply because the Western world is not comfortable with the word 'Black.' The development of new theologies cannot be solely constrained by the discomfort that the Western world may foster towards the term 'Black.' Such limitations overlook the essential nature of theological exploration, which involves the continuous examination and reinterpretation of religious concepts and frameworks to address the evolving needs and realities of diverse communities.

While acknowledging the historical and sociocultural contexts that shape theological discourse, it is crucial to move beyond a restricted perspective that hinders the exploration of new theological paradigms. The pursuit of theological innovation should encompass a broader understanding that transcends external biases and embraces the richness and diversity of human experiences and identities.

It remains imperative to embrace the inherent Blackness of Black Theology and facilitate its manifestation across various spheres, including academia, churches, communities, and individual lives, necessitates an active and engaged stance. Remaining passive spectators as students and activists of Black Theology is insufficient. By actively embracing the Blackness of Black Theology, scholars, practitioners, and communities have the opportunity to integrate its principles, perspectives, and transformative potential into their respective domains. This necessitates a departure from the sidelines and a willingness to confront and challenge established norms, systems, and power structures that perpetuate racial injustice. To fully harness the vitality of Black Theology, it is essential to create spaces that actively foster dialogue, collaboration, and action, thus cultivating an environment where the Blackness of Black Theology can be experienced, appreciated, and mobilised for lasting social change. We ought to demonstrate our consciousness and live out Biko's (1972, pp. 26–27) call:

Blacks have had enough experience as objects of racism not to wish to reverse the tables. While it may be relevant now to talk about black in relation to white, we must not make this our preoccupation for it can be a negative exercise. As we proceed more towards the achievement of our goals, let us talk more about ourselves and less about whites.

The accumulated experiences of Black individuals as recipients of racism have engendered a reluctance to seek a reversal of roles. While it is presently pertinent to discuss the Black-white relationship, it is crucial not to allow this preoccupation to overshadow our progress, as it can potentially devolve into a counterproductive endeavour. As we advance towards the realisation of our aspirations, it becomes imperative to prioritise conversations centred on our own experiences and identities, rather than fixating excessively on the actions and perspectives of white individuals. By shifting the focus towards self-affirmation and self-determination, we empower ourselves and foster an environment conducive to the achievement of our goals. This redirection of discourse facilitates the cultivation of a positive and constructive framework that empowers Black individuals and communities, enabling them to shape their own narratives and define their own destinies.

We cannot allow the West to become the adoptive parent of Ubuntu Theology, while they made us believe that we were its parents, when in praxis it appears as if we were simply the foster parents. The West's appropriation of Ubuntu Theology can be seen as a form of intellectual colonisation, whereby the dominant narratives and perspectives of the West are imposed upon the marginalised voices and experiences of its true creators. Recognising this disparity is crucial to reclaim agency and ownership over Ubuntu Theology, re-establishing its roots in the lived experiences and wisdom of those who have long been marginalised and silenced. Moving forward, it is imperative to engage in a more inclusive and equitable discourse that acknowledges and amplifies the voices of the true parents of Ubuntu Theology, while challenging the historical narratives that perpetuate the erasure of their contributions.

I conclude that Ubuntu Theology and Black Theology are indeed soulmates, but in the words of Boesak, with great humility, I echo a call for a 'Farewell to Innocence.' In this instance, I call for a farewell to the innocence of Ubuntu Theology, which allows us to find comfort while claiming to be advocates of Black Theology. Black Theology calls for radical justice and a radical acknowledgement of our identity as those who espouse to live out Biko's ([1978] 2017,

p. 52) call: 'Being black is not a matter of pigmentation – Being black is a reflection of mental attitude.'

This farewell to the innocence of Ubuntu Theology is indeed rooted in the teachings of Biko ([1978] 2017, p. 5):

What we want, is not black visibility but real black participation. In other words, it does not help us to see several quiet black faces in a multiracial student gathering, which ultimately concentrates on what the white students believe are the needs of the black students.

In a parallel manner to how white individuals were compelled to confront their complicity and relinquish their innocence with regards to apartheid, the 'rainbow nation,' encompassing the diverse population of South Africa, finds itself facing a similar need to bid farewell to its own innocence. This entails embracing the authentic gospel that espouses solidarity with the impoverished and oppressed, who persistently bear the label of 'Blacks' even within the utopian ideal of community espoused by Tutu's Ubuntu Theology. This call for farewell to innocence necessitates a profound reckoning with the systemic injustices and historical legacies that have perpetuated inequality and marginalisation. By adopting the authentic gospel of the poor and oppressed, the 'rainbow nation' can embody a transformative commitment to justice, empathy, and collective responsibility. It entails recognising that the pursuit of true equality and reconciliation demands active engagement with the realities and experiences of those who have endured marginalisation and systemic oppression.

In our capacity as Black theologians, it becomes imperative to transcend the inclination towards embracing Ubuntu Theology as a superficial, feel-good framework. Rather, we are called to fully embrace our Blackness within the context of an Ubuntu community. This entails confidently occupying our rightful place within the multifaceted spectrum of the rainbow, allowing our Blackness to radiate with equal magnificence. Rather than striving to conform to the various hues of the rainbow, our approach should focus on inviting and challenging the colours of the rainbow to recognise and appreciate the vibrant and resplendent essence inherent in being Black. This transformative mindset encourages a reevaluation of societal constructs that have historically marginalised and devalued Blackness, while affirming the intrinsic worth and beauty of Black individuals and communities. By embracing and celebrating our Blackness

within an Ubuntu framework, we foster a more inclusive and harmonious society, wherein the richness of diverse identities is acknowledged, respected, and collectively cherished.

Ubuntu calls us to live out the image of God. Let us be bold enough to recognise that we have not achieved a community of Ubuntu, because we have separated Ubuntu Theology and Black Theology and thus, as a people, we first need to embrace Black Theology and then exemplify in Ubuntu-shaped expression as we say farewell to the innocence of the ‘rainbow nation’! This requires a deliberate and courageous departure from the prevailing innocence of the ‘rainbow nation,’ as we recognise the unfinished work and systemic challenges that persist. By reconciling and uniting Ubuntu Theology and Black Theology, we can embark on a profound journey towards a more authentic, inclusive, and transformative community founded on the principles of Ubuntu. Ubuntu offers an alternative means of conceptualizing Black humanity, which is not based on racial classification and skin colour, enslavement, colonialism, and neo-colonialism – themes that dehumanise people of African descent (Lewis, 2010).

Through recognising Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology as soulmates, it becomes evident that Ubuntu Theology provides a distinctive framework for re-imagining and redefining the essence of Black humanity, free from the shackles of racial classification, skin colour, enslavement, colonialism, and neo-colonialism. This alternative perspective challenges and transcends the dehumanising themes that have historically marginalised and oppressed people of African descent. Ubuntu Theology recognises the interconnectedness and interdependence of all individuals, emphasising the inherent dignity, worth, and interconnectedness of every human being, regardless of their racial or cultural background. By shifting the focus from divisive markers to the shared essence of humanity, Ubuntu fosters a paradigm that celebrates the diverse contributions and experiences of Black individuals. It invites us to collectively embrace our common humanity, promoting a transformative vision that empowers and affirms the full and equal participation of people of African descent in all aspects of society.

Within theological discourse, the concepts of soulmates and antagonists offer valuable frameworks for comparing different theologies. The notion of soulmates often conveys a sense of deep connection, harmony, and spiritual alignment between individuals or entities. It signifies a belief in the existence of profound and enduring connections that transcend physical or temporal boundaries. In theological contexts, soulmates may be seen as representing theological systems or perspectives that resonate harmoniously, complementing and enriching one another in a mutually beneficial manner. On the other hand, antagonists symbolise

contrasting and conflicting forces that challenge or oppose each other within a theological framework. Antagonistic theologies may engage in critical dialogue, highlighting divergent perspectives, and prompting a deeper examination of underlying assumptions and beliefs. By exploring the dynamics between soulmates and antagonists in theology, scholars can gain insights into the ways different theological systems interact, influence, or challenge one another, ultimately contributing to a more nuanced understanding of theological diversity and the dynamics of theological dialogue and engagement.

7.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, a thorough examination of the relationship between Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology reveals their interconnectedness as soulmates, yet also highlights the original intention and subsequent misappropriation of Tutu's vision. Desmond Tutu's intention was to utilise Black Theology as a catalyst to bring Ubuntu to fruition, resulting in the development of an Ubuntu-shaped theology. Black Theology, with its emphasis on liberation, justice, and the dismantling of oppressive structures, served as a powerful vehicle for promoting the principles of Ubuntu within the context of South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy.

However, as the theological landscape evolved, some individuals and institutions sought to temper the perceived radicalism of Black Theology and sought a softer, more palatable approach. In this process, Tutu's Ubuntu-shaped theology was misappropriated and romanticised, obscuring the original intention behind the integration of Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology. The misappropriation aimed to create a more comfortable theological framework that aligned with the transition from apartheid to democracy but may have diluted the transformative potential of both Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology.

This misappropriation could be viewed as a misinterpretation of Tutu's intention and a departure from the prophetic and transformative nature of Black Theology. By seeking a softer transition theologically, there was a risk of diminishing the radical call for justice and liberation inherent within Black Theology. The shift towards a more harmonious and reconciliatory tone may have overshadowed the urgent need for addressing the deep-rooted systemic injustices and structural inequalities perpetuated during the apartheid era. Nevertheless, it is essential to acknowledge the complexities and nuances surrounding the integration of Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology. The attempt to forge a relationship between these theological frameworks

was rooted in a genuine desire to cultivate a society guided by principles of justice, equality, and interconnectedness. While the misappropriation may have diluted the transformative potential of both theologies, it also served as a testament to the evolving nature of theological discourse and the challenges of translating theory into praxis.

In light of these considerations, it becomes evident that the relationship between Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology is multifaceted. It requires ongoing critical engagement, rigorous theological examination, and a commitment to social action. The original intention of Tutu to utilise Black Theology as a vehicle for promoting Ubuntu Theology remains significant, as it embodies the necessity of grounding theological frameworks in the pursuit of justice, liberation, and the recognition of shared humanity.

Moving forward, it is crucial to engage in reflective theological practices that continuously interrogate the integration of Black Theology and Ubuntu Theology. This involves recentring the radical nature of Black Theology and the transformative potential of Ubuntu Theology, while remaining vigilant against the dilution or misappropriation of these frameworks. By cultivating a nuanced understanding and application of both theologies, scholars, theologians, and practitioners can work towards fostering a society that embodies the principles of justice, reconciliation, and the flourishing of all individuals within the spirit of Ubuntu.



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