



Theology of inclusivity and hospitality in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in South Africa

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Abstract

This article examines the liturgical practices of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in South Africa (EPCSA), focusing on its Sunday liturgy, within the broader context of cultural and linguistic considerations. The EPCSA, formerly known as the Tsonga Presbyterian Church (TPC), has a diverse array of liturgies, each composed in Tsonga. Liturgy, as an integral part of worship, has evolved over the history of Christian practices, influenced by various cultures and people. This study emphasizes the cultural aspect of liturgy, asserting that the incorporation of nature into the relationship with God holds cultural significance. While the Tsonga language remains central to the EPCSA's tradition, the changing demographic landscape, with the church previously comprising Tsonga-speaking members exclusively, necessitates a reconsideration of its liturgical approach. The article utilizes a literature review to argue that the current Sunday liturgy may exhibit exclusivity. It underscores the importance of adapting liturgical practices to accommodate changes in the composition of the congregation, emphasizing the unity of diverse individuals coming together to worship a shared God despite their differences.

Keywords: Cultural diversity; Evangelical Presbyterian Church in South Africa; inclusivity; liturgy; Tsonga language; worship practices.

Abstrak

Artikel ini mengkaji praktik liturgis dari *Evangelical Presbyterian Church in South Africa* (EPCSA), dengan fokus pada liturgi Minggu, dalam konteks yang lebih luas dari pertimbangan budaya dan linguistik. EPCSA, yang sebelumnya dikenal sebagai *Tsonga Presbyterian Church* (TPC), memiliki beragam liturgi, masing-masing ditulis dalam bahasa Tsonga. Liturgi, sebagai bagian integral dari ibadah, telah berkembang sepanjang sejarah praktik Kristen, dipengaruhi oleh berbagai budaya dan masyarakat. Studi ini menekankan aspek budaya dari liturgi, dengan menegaskan bahwa integrasi alam ke dalam hubungan dengan Tuhan memiliki signifikansi budaya. Meskipun bahasa Tsonga tetap menjadi bagian sentral dari tradisi EPCSA, perubahan lanskap demografis, dengan gereja sebelumnya terdiri dari anggota yang berbicara Tsonga secara eksklusif, menuntut pemikiran ulang pendekatan liturgisnya. Artikel ini menggunakan tinjauan literatur untuk mengargumentasikan bahwa liturgi Minggu saat ini mungkin menunjukkan eksklusivitas. Ini menekankan pentingnya beradaptasi dengan praktik liturgis untuk menyesuaikan perubahan dalam komposisi jemaat, dengan menekankan kesatuan individu yang beragam yang berkumpul untuk memuja Tuhan bersama meskipun perbedaan mereka.

Kata Kunci: Keanekaragaman budaya; Evangelical Presbyterian Church in South Africa; inklusivitas; liturgi; bahasa Tsonga; praktik ibadah.

INTRODUCTION

The intricate interplay among religious institutions, theology, culture, and inclusivity constitutes a compelling and multifaceted global social phenomenon (Eliasoph & Lichterman, 2003). Across diverse religious landscapes, institutions grapple with the intricate challenge of preserving cultural and linguistic traditions while simultaneously adapting to the evolving needs of their communities (Hirschman, 2004;

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Mekonnen, Bires, & Berhanu, 2022; Newson & Richerson, 2014). The intersection of theology and language emerges as a pivotal focal point, significantly shaping the identity of religious organizations (Willhauck, 2013). Within these contexts, the dynamics of inclusivity mirror broader societal shifts towards embracing diversity and accommodating individuals with varying cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Religious institutions globally are navigating this complex terrain, seeking a delicate balance between preserving their unique cultural and linguistic heritage and fostering an inclusive environment that transcends these boundaries. This global perspective highlights the universality of the challenges faced by religious communities as they respond to changing societal dynamics, thereby providing a foundation for a nuanced exploration of similar phenomena in specific case studies.

Building upon this global context, the study then turns its attention to the specific case of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in South Africa (EPCSA). This particular religious institution serves as a microcosm through which the broader themes of theology, language, and inclusivity can be examined in a localized setting. The EPCSA's unique historical trajectory, influenced by missionary activities and sociocultural dynamics, offers a distinctive lens to explore how a religious community grapples with the tensions between linguistic traditions, theological identity, and the imperative of inclusivity within a specific cultural and historical context.

Looking at the use of language when dealing with those individuals is not something new in the church history. Paul's official priesthood, which existed to mediate between God and man, is shared by the whole community and never by one member or group as distinct from others. The point made here about what Paul considered to be a community is what led to the research, that the word of God should not be closed and should not be meant only for certain groups, as the church should be a community and not a society. Maluleke (1994, p. 94) The EPCSA's relations with Swiss Protestant churches are now a hundred and twenty odd years old. 2 This church was initially known as the "Swiss Mission in South Africa," after its founding missionary society - La Mission Suisse dans l'Afrique du Sud. 3 Later (in 1962) it became the Tsonga Presbyterian Church, and in 1982, it became known as the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in South Africa. According to Pieterse (2004, p. 5) the people of our time are matured, autonomous human beings. South African people, too, insist on their rights as creatures endowed with human dignity. The Bill of Rights, the cornerstone of our political system, is evidence that our people no longer want to be oppressed and dictated to by others. The same applies for church: people do not want to feel oppressed and dictated in church and no church should make one feel that way. The metaphorical door of a church building should be open at all times, and it should also be open to all, regardless of different tribes within it. South Africa is known as a rainbow nation (as coined by Desmond Tutu), it would not be wrong for one to say that churches within this rainbow nation country should also show rainbow nation qualities in view of some biblical scriptures in the New Testament about unity: 1 Corinthians 1:10-13

I appeal to you, dear brothers, and sisters, by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, to live in harmony with each other. Let there be no divisions in church. Rather, be of one mind, united in thoughts and purpose. 11. for some members of Chloe's household have told me about your quarrels, my dear brother and sister. 12 Some of you are saying, "I am a follower of Paul. 'Others are saying', 'I follow Apollo's, or 'I follow Peter', or 'I follow only Christ.' 13. Has Christ been divided into functions? Was I, Paul, crucified for you? Were any of you baptised in the name of Paul? Of course not!

Here we read about the importance of unity among Christians Often people spend most of their time being Presbyterians, Methodist, Dutch Reformed Church members or Zionist and less time on being

Christian. The very same thing can be said of the EPCSA, it spends most of its time being identified as a Tsonga Church instead of moving to being a church for Christ and Christ that is for all. In Colossians 3:10-11 it is written:

Put on your new nature and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him.¹¹ In this new life, it doesn't matter if you are Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized, slave, or free. Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us.

Christ is for us all. Therefore, it does not matter whether you are Tsonga or Venda. It is not only the EPCSA that is facing this problem of hospitality in South Africa. As affirmed by Jeanneval, Monier-Gerard, and Peclav (2011) the Swiss Mission was a dynamic and shifting institution that had constantly to adapt and reshape itself, while negotiating its role in Africa with a host of individuals and organisations. Some other churches in South Africa as well? This rhetorical question is raised as a way to help the church being anything in South Africa or anywhere in the world to review its church and the issue of language not just in its liturgy but the service as a whole (Ephesians 4:19:22).

So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God's holy people. You are members of God's family. ²⁰ Together, we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself ²¹ we are carefully joined together in him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord.²² Through him you Gentiles are also being made part of this dwelling where God lives by his Spirit.

We are all members of God's family, and it is in the Bible verses that we learn about the importance of welcoming those who are not one of us in the sense of language or nationality—after all, we all form part of the one body of Christ. Still in terms of language, the author cannot say for certain that this applies to all of us, but one can always argue that many people find it easier to express themselves in their mother tongue: especially those who grew up within their own tribe and were also taught at school in their mother tongue. According to Ramshaw (1996, p. 7), liturgical language must be crafted so as to be both metaphoric and inclusive. Ramshaw (1996, p. 10) argues that liturgy is an expression of all the people of God, and all those people need to have their voices heard and that this goal is called inclusivity. Ramshaw (1996, p. 11) affirms:

Perhaps this characteristic religious tendency to separate the insiders from the outsiders, the sacred from the profane, was the foil behind Paul's radical manifesto that in Christ there is no difference between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male, and female. But although this inclusivity may have been the goal of the primitive Christian community, two thousand years has not yet brought the church here. The New Testament chronicles the Church's struggle to see Jew and Greek as equal before God. Only in the last few hundred years was a consensus of Christian seen "slave and free" as distinction inappropriate within the Christian community, and in our time the distinction between male and female is the tumult of the Church. Paul's extraordinary vision would encourage a liturgy enacted without distinction of race and class, unmarked by economic divisions, free from androcentrism (1996, p.11).

According to Keifert (1992, p. 144), culture has its influence on power; one cannot possibly plan or lead effective worship without listening carefully to the profound power of the culture within our lives. To support Keifert, it is true that one needs to understand the power of culture within our lives. The same culture that was used to develop the liturgy of the EPCSA might have died with many that loved it during that time; chances are that it might not hold water today in the very same church. For some argue that culture changed with times and that it is culture that influenced the first EPCSA Tsonga liturgy. Makhubu (1988, p. 19) argues that the frustrations caused by missionaries, who transmitted Christianity to Africans without minding the holistic approach and the impact of spiritual forces on Africans, an act which only y

brought frustration to African. The same frustration cannot be brought by one following excluded in a black church due to language barriers. Keifert (1992), in his book *welcoming the stranger* he wrote strongly about welcoming those who are not of us. He spoke about how the experience of being excluded can be a painful experience. This is also the experience the author shared in chapter one:

The pain of being excluded is particularly deep for the “inside strangers”, those members of the congregation who are not a part of the extended family but who maybe long-time members. Some of them may have at one time been members of the inner circle but, for one reason or another, left the core, and now when they come to worship, they have an acute understanding of what they are missing. Other members indeed, perhaps those who most desperately need intimate support were never invited or never joined; they may suffer the shame of not being thought good enough to be included (Keifert, 1992, p. 29).

According to Keifert (1992, p. 55), the liturgical renewal movement of the previous century have been contaminated by modern undercurrents, and those very same modern undercurrents prevented the church from ensuring the health of its own public worship and of aiding in the establishment of viable public life outside of the church. However, he does not argue with the need for a place for liturgical renewal. He has made critique of the renewals’ efforts in the previous century can be overcome with positive proposals consistent with many of the concerns of the green current for continued liturgical renewal and committed to effective evangelism. One cannot ignore Keifert’s strong views on a church being an open space or institution for all.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Paul’s theology of inclusiveness

Often Paul spoke of the church as being people who gathered to worship; he referred to them as the body, the body of Christ with different parts (Corinthians 12:27). A church consists, amongst other things, of different individuals who come together from time to time to worship the same God despite their differences. Looking at the use of language when dealing with those individuals is not something new in the church history. Paul’s official priesthood, which existed to mediate between God and man, is shared by the whole community and never by one member or group as distinct from others. The point made here about what Paul considered to be a community is what led to the research, that the word of God should not be closed and should not be meant only for certain groups, as the church should be a community and not a society. It is here that we have a common priesthood, with no distinction between clergy and laity. The EPCSA might argue to be a welcoming church considering the fact that most of their members are Tsonga-speaking, especially the ones they consider to be full members of the church. It is here that the research will use Paul’s theology regarding the difference the church any church—might use to define the difference between officials and ordinary members. According to Banks (1980, pp. 134–135), Paul rejected any formal distinction between official figures and ordinary members in the community.

Biblically (Holy Bible, 2011), we are taught to welcome strangers and make them welcomed: To give a few examples:

- a. Hebrew 13:2 do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.
- b. 3 John 1:5, 5 Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers and sisters, even though they are strangers to you.
- c. Titus 1:8 but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled.

- d. Galatians 3:28 there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

According to an article by Ellis Paul (September 27, 2013), the reasons why the doctrine of inclusion is not good news according to him, is that one must appreciate the positive and this sometimes means that you have to highlight the negative. I agree with him. I appreciate the history of the EPCSA and respect it as part of the body of Christ, but I cannot ignore the language factors that are my main study in liturgy. He shared his experience he had with a man who got caught up in exclusionism: "It ruined me and destroyed my faith". When he could not reconcile exclusionism with the words of Jesus, it filled him with anxiety and caused him to doubt God.

The church starts transforming when it moves from being just a church and turns into a community. A community, according to my personal experience, should consist of different people with different ideas, from different tribes and different races. A church has defined Christianity when it becomes that community.

The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up the whole body. So, it is with the body of Christ. Some of us are Jews, some are gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit. Yes, the body has many different parts, not just one part. If the foot says, "I am not part of the body because I am not a hand," that does not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear says, "I am not part of the body because I am not an eye", would that make it less a part of the body? If the whole body were an eye, how would you hear? Or if the whole body were an ear, how would you smell anything? But our bodies have many parts, and God has put each part where he wants it. Yes, there are many parts, and only one body. The eye can never say to thee hand, "I don't need you", and the head can't say to the feet, "I don't need you (Holy Bible; New Living Translation; 1 Corinthians 12; 12-21).

As we are all part of the body of Christ, we cannot say, "We do not need non-Tsonga-speaking people in our church that is for Christ". The body of Christ being the church in this case, should also consist of different people who form part of that body, who cannot say to each other that they don't need each other. For years black South Africans complained about being treated like outsiders in their own country, because they were not white—how different are we from those who oppressed black people, who made them, feel like outsiders in their own country? We too make people feel like outsiders in their own homes, 'homes' being the church of the Lord that should be open for all, if we say, "You are not Tsonga enough", then what are we saying about our theology as a church.

Christology and inculturation: Biblical perspective

According to Weaver (2002, p. 9) the New Testament does not give us a fully developed Christian liturgy, but only glimpses of the rites and practices that served as the foundation for the liturgy that would develop over the next two millennia and which continues to develop today. Acts tells us that the earliest Christian believers lived in a communal fellowship, devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to prayer (services of daily prayer), a common meal, which included the Lord's supper, and participation in the synagogue service (Acts 2:42). The baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch by Philip (Acts 8:26ff.) gives us a description of an early Christian baptism. Of course, the New Testament also contains the institution narratives of the Lord's Supper (Matt 26:26-29); Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22: 15-20; 1 Cor.11:23-26). There are, as well, examples of early Christian canticles and hymns: Mary's Magnificent (Luke 1:46-55), the Canticle of Zechariah (Luke 1:68-79), the Canticle of Simeon (Luke 2:29-32), perhaps the kenosis passage in Philippians 2, and Paul's beautiful hymn of love in 1 Corinthians 13.

In her essay Ramshaw (1996, p. 5) used the term “liturgical language” to refer to the words used by assemblies of Christians in their corporate praise and prayer. Liturgical language is not the whole of the vocabulary of the Christian faith. Mystics speak and write in words and syntax less tamed, more idiosyncratic, and more fragmented, than can be the speech of public worship.” Systematic theologians write language more philosophical, speculative or arguments than a typical assembly could tolerate. While liturgical language is only one of the several types of Christian speech, the basic language from which all other speech flows in exposition and reflection and to which, when Sunday comes around again, all Christian talk returns. The precise list of words, phrases, and forms in the language of liturgy varies from one denomination to another. In some Christian communities, the words admitted to Sunday worship are prescribed by past tradition or by contemporary authorities. All the appropriate words are written down, and all the participants, including all leaders of worship, read or recite their parts with no variation. In other communities, the congregation or perhaps the ordained ministers has the continual task of reviewing and selecting texts. Prayer is expected, rather than forbidden, it will not be long before a particular denomination or assembly regularizes a pattern for preferred improvisation. One way or another, a canon of words will be approved for corporate worship and will constitute the liturgical language of that community. Ramshaw (1996) says forms of language of liturgy varies from one denomination to another which I agree within language here he is referring to the sound of the text, prayers, and hymns. Ramshaw also spoke of other communities, the particular congregation or perhaps the ordained ministers having the task of reviewing and selecting texts prayers etc. This can be a good thing especially if the ordained minister is part of that community, he/she is about to review and select prayers and hymns within the context of the people and within the language of the people. It does not really make sense to have someone sitting in a congregation in central Cape Town to review a liturgy for a congregation in Mamelodi, a township in Pretoria.

According to Neelankavil (2010, p. 10) in his article: From inculturation to interculturality: a methodological move in Asian churches’ encounters with culture. In his conclusion he wrote: Conclusion – The First Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15, 1-35). In his conclusion, he wanted to leave his paper as a reflection on the first Council of Jerusalem in the Acts of the Apostles from the intercultural perspective we have proposed in this paper. The Council witnesses the encounter of not only two seemingly opposing theological/dogmatic propositions, but also of two cultural milieus-one, Pharisees in Judea and the other represented by the gentiles in Antioch. He gave an example of his former presupposed the Jewish custom of circumcision as part of Christian identity and faith. But their encounter with the gentile Christians initiated a collegial gathering to ‘consider this matter’. The intervention of Peter broadens the dogmatic framework of the Jewish Christians beyond their Jewish identity. The sharing of Barnabas and Paul broadened their theological horizon, and thus, they learned from the cultural expressions of faith other than theirs. This sharing shows humanity and unity regardless of cultural differences. The Jewish culture could also speak to the gentiles recognizing them as they are. The cultural identity of either group was not lost; instead, a harmony between them was developed. Is it not the real spirit of *koinonia*, the fundamental aspect of being church? Thus, the intercultural encounter not only resulted in a mutual and critical learning at the level of culture but also resulted in a furthering of Christian faith/doctrinal tradition and in living truly as one church. Being a one church is welcoming and accepting those that are different from us without reminding them through our liturgy Sunday after Sunday that they are different.

Inculturation and liturgy

According to Wolterstorff (2011, p. 19) every Sunday morning for almost 2000 years now we Christian have left our beds, our tables, our fireplaces, and gone out onto the paths and roads and streets of our world, by foot, by bicycle, by car, from dispersion of our daily existence to our liturgical assemblies. Then after our divine service is finished, we go back again over the paths and roads and streets to our homes and places of work and recreation. Some things in our Christianity have become patterns of lives, tradition and what we are. We preached unity but because it is not new to our ears after hearing it, we go on with our normal lives. We sing "God is for us all," but because we have been singing the same songs for so many years, such songs do not minister to us, so we come back to our normal lives.

According to Neelankavil (Neelankavil, 2010, p. 5) an inculturated theology better expresses the incarnational nature. God so loved the world that he became a particular human being in history with all its particularities and finitudes so that his salvation is not something general, something abstract, but very much concrete. Hence Wolterstorff (2011, p. 21) says the liturgy nourishes our daily lives while being also the summit of the Christian life. That is clear, for example, in these passages from *The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy of Vatican II*. Every liturgical celebration, because it is an action of Christ the Priest and his body, which is the church, is a sacred action surpassing all others. No other action of the church can equal its efficacy by the same title and at the same degree. He also said our sacred liturgy does not exhaust the entire activity of the church. The author agree with Wolterstorff (2011, p. 121) that before men can come to the liturgy they must be called to faith and to conversation. To believers also the church must ever preach faith and penance; That one must prepare them for the sacraments, teach them to observe all that Christ has commanded and encourage them to engage in all the works of charity, piety and the apostolate, thus making it clear that Christ is faithful, though not of this world, are to be the light of the world and are to glorify the Father before men. Wolterstorff (2011, p. 121) affirms that the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the church is directed; it is also the fountain from which all her power flows. For the goal of apostolic endeavor is that all who are made sons of God by faith and baptism should come together to praise God during his church, to take part in the sacrifice and to eat at the Lord's supper. The Lord's Supper is for all of us for we are all the Lord's children. How great would it be to receive it in a language you fully understand and can relate to?

Changing the language of worship needs a careful study of the community church. Language :can be a sensitive thing to others especially in South Africa hence there is still separation between different tribes. It would not be surprising to find, for example, a Zulu speaking man who swears to never date nor marry outside his own Zulu tribe. Within African cultures you also find mothers-in-law not talking to their daughters-in-law, because their sons chose to marry someone outside his own tribe. Those who grew up in South Africa, especially in places where people carry their language with so much pride, would consider that as an example of reality. Change in language of anything will always create tension whether in church or the country's identity document and that is why change is a process.

In his Master of Arts degree with the University of Pretoria: *The exodus from the mainline churches to the African Independent Churches: a case study of the community of Mashashane in the Pietersburg (now known as Polokwane) West district of the Northern Province (now known as the Limpopo province)*, Ledwaba (2000, p. 2) used Isichei (Isichei, 1995, p. 331) to define inculturation. In his definition he referred inculturation to that process whereby the basic core (which represent the essential of the Christian faith) and historical forms of Christian ritual and government which originated in the Middle East and Europe are reconstituted, according to the culture and customary forms of an indigenous people who were originally introduced to the Christian faith by missionaries during the process of the colonization of the 'new world' (The 'indigenous people' referred to in this study are those African people who historically

lived, and still do live in the Mashashane region of the Northern Province of South Africa). Inculturation refers to the process whereby traditional forms of the Christian faith are harmonized with historical and cultural forms of an indigenous people. The latter half of the twentieth century saw a deepening appreciation of the fact that all people are entitled to worship God, and other affairs of a church in ways that are harmonious with their historical, cultural, linguistic and customary preferences. Inculturation only becomes possible if Christians respect their own historical and ethnic legacies and strive to give form to their own distinctive communal identities, whilst respecting the culture and ethnic identity of other communities. Respecting the culture and ethnic identity of other communities should also include acknowledging them as well.

Kunzler (2001, p. 85) believes that because of the body-spirit composition of man there is no relationship with God which is devoid of a cultural dimension. For this reason, the task of liturgical inculturation is one which can never be regarded as completed. The mentioned danger it came with, the danger of absorption of the religious elements by a self-glorifying culture should be kept in mind. It is very dangerous to tie the expression of faith. "Is faith more than the culture? That this cultural expression becomes mistaken for the faith? Is faith more than the cultural garments in which it is clothed? Can it be translated into another culture? What are the criteria by which the accuracy of such a translation is measured?"

According to Kunzler (2001, p. 86) the theological basis of inculturation, and with it for all new development stemming from it, is the need, to make man able to experience God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ so that he can receive it and respond to it.

For this reason, all inculturation remains bound to the Christ-even, to the incarnation, life and Death, Resurrection and Glorification of Christ. Thus, this reference has a memorial quality and creates a tradition in which loyalty to what was established by Christ finds its form as a response of faith under the impulse of spirit. But again, this development of tradition may not be broken off arbitrarily but must proceed in the measure in which the spirit directs history to its completion. Since however, this world historical process, in contrast to God's becoming man in Jesus Christ, unfolds not only in an historically defined and culturally contained time and place, but at all time and in all places in the world, it is culturally contained time and place, but at all the times and in all places in the world, it is possible only by taking many forms: as in the events of Pentecost, God's self-revelation is heard and answered in many languages. Thus, what is needed is not uniformity but a legitimate pluriformity. In all of this it should be remembered that every inculturation of Christian faith and with it of the liturgy, must articulate undermined for the new culture that which is specifically Christian, i.e., the increase of life of those addressed by the son of God made man. There can be no inculturation of Christianity into an atheistic culture, but only a radical critique of that culture by Christianity (Kunzler, 2001, p. 86).

Ukpong (1994) in his article titled: "Christology and inculturation: A New Testament perspective defines the term inculturation as a new term in Christian theology, and that its meaning is still developing, but in his article, he used it in the terms of it being understood as an approach in mission/evangelization, and that it involves evangelizing a culture from within the perspective of their culture. Inculturation is a process, it can never be fully developed, and it is a developing process.

Ukpong (1994, p. 42) says that culture needs to be opened to the gospel and converted to Christ, and the gospel also needs to be opened to African cultures so that it may attain fullness of meaning. In concluding Ukpong (1994, pp. 57-58) article titled: Christology and inculturation: A New Testament perspective used the following words: 'Jesus' was a Jew. He was born into Judaism, subject to the Law of Moses, and lived within the limits of that Law. The movement he founded stood in the tradition of the Old

Testament prophetic movement and that of John the Baptist. It was a sectarian movement whose purpose was to call Israel back to God and restore the true meaning and observance of the Law. Later the movement developed into an independent religion of its own Christianity. The Law of Moses, sacred to the Jews, was also for Jesus the sacred Law of God. But Jesus had come as a fulfillment of this Law. New Testament scholars would agree that Jesus did not introduce any new set of laws or commandments. The Old Testament Law of love of God and neighbor was central for him, and he gave a new and wider interpretation of it. The Ten Commandments, a norm of Christianity morality today, is an inheritance from the Old Testament. But Jesus did something new: He revealed the imitate bond between God and humanity that transcends all laws. This may be said to characterize 'Jesus' approach to evangelization. Liturgical inculturation is important in congregations and Christianity.

Theology of inclusivity and hospitality in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in South Africa (EPCSA)

A community is best defined as a group of people who, regardless of the diversity of their backgrounds, have been able to accept and transcend their differences, enabling them to communicate effectively and openly and to work together toward goals identified for their common good (Mello, 2018, p. 7). The EPCSA has many liturgies, namely the liturgy to bury the elderly, the liturgy to bury children, the liturgy for blessing a wedding, one for tombstone unveiling, one for Easter services, one for Christmas services (Katekisma Kumba masungulo ya Vukriste: 1971, Vumbiwa bya kereke: 1978, Xipfuno xa mulanteri wa kereke: 1979, Tivani ta vukriste: 1958), etc. These liturgies are all written in one language, namely Tsonga. This focused used for the Sunday service. According to Kunzler (2001, p. 83); the liturgy is unthinkable without culture and its achievements. In the course of the history of Christian worship, the various liturgies have been stamped by many cultures and people. Speech, music and song, the visual arts, including architecture, bear cultural witness of various epochs that have become interwoven with the liturgy. Thus, the necessary drawing of nature into the relationship with God always has a cultural aspect. The Tsonga language is part of the tradition of the EPCSA, because of the fact that it is part of who and what they are (Tsonga Presbyterian Church), and by taking that away from them, we would take away who and what they are. We cannot take that away from them, but we can enable them to welcome these are not part of that history so that they create a future with them. According to Maluleke (1993, pp. 241–242) when missionary came to the Tsonga people (now known as the EPCSA) they lacked tribal cohesion and a uniform lingua franca were serious obstacles in the way of speedy evangelistic work among these peoples. Creux and Berthoud, in their endeavor to learn and write what they called the "a" language, tackled the problem of this lack of both ethnic coherence and linguistic homogeneity head. This affirms the importance of receiving the gospel in a language one understands.

According to Kunzler (2001, p. 93), liturgy scholars of the Enlightenment period were motivated not only by historical interest, but also by a desire to renew liturgical life, so that it may adapt to changes and times. "While giving all due credit to the pastoral liturgical intentions of this period one cannot ignore the general tendencies of the Enlightenment, which were antagonistic towards the church and even towards faith" (Kunzler, 2001, p. 93). This study confirms Kunzler's statement that liturgy needs to adapt to change and times. And times have changed for the EPCSA, in that it used to have Tsonga speaking church members only and that change should be considered by the church's current liturgical team. Kunzler (2001, p. 86) stated that the theological basis of inculturation and all new development stemming from it, is the need, 'to make man able to experience God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ, so that he can receive it and respond to it'. John Calvin is still honoured today as the founder of an enduring family of churches and

one of the core texts of Protestantism. According to Mckim (2004, pp. 46–47) “Calvin appeals for the renewal of the old church. According to Mckim (2004, p. 174), the fact that the TPC was being anchored within an ethnic category was not problematized either in the mission church or the Native Church at the time of the convention. It came up only in the context of discussions with the Presbyterian Church of South Africa (PCSA) in 1959 about a possible union between the Native church and the PCSA. In this context, Theo Schneider raised the point that the choice of an ethnic name for the Native church might make it difficult to unite with the PCSA which was based on a multi-racial membership. As much as the Native Church raised that it might be difficult for the TPC to unite with the PCSA which was based on a multi-racial membership, it is also different for members who were interviewed and not Tsonga-speaking, but full and active members of the EPCSA. Some raised a concern that it is difficult for them to fully unite with the church, because of the language. Some said to have made ‘peace’ with it and have taken time to learn the Tsonga language. These suggests that the church take a step back into history where it was asked to change its name, ‘Tsonga Presbyterian Church’, because the name excluded anyone that was not Tsonga. If it considered others in changing its name in the past, it is yet again necessary to consider reviewing its liturgical language, as not to exclude others, in the present time and also in the future. cation by faith, but it is with the meaning of this term that Calvin takes issue. A nest of attitude that together posit that the main purpose of human life is the development of autonomous, individual personalities and this development takes place only within the context of warm, intimate, interior-directed relationships. In *Welcoming the stranger: A public Theology of worship and Evangelism*, theologian Patrick Keifert builds on Palmer’s critique and provides a provocative assessment of the damage this “ideology of intimacy” can do to public worship. When congregations import private and intimate images into their worship planning, Keifert (1992) argues that the attempt to make the church a warm, friendly, family like environment backfires. “It is precisely this projection of the private onto the public that excludes so many strangers, both inside and outside”. Keifert (1992) calls upon the intimacy with the biblical category of hospitality to the stranger.” Keifert (1992) states, “Hospitality to the stranger implies wisdom, love and justice, rather than intimacy warmth, and familiarity in our dealing with others.” Long (2001, p. 33) also shares the reality that these people are not exactly like you; indeed, they may not be much like you at all. They are “the others”, “strangers”, different. Because they are “the other”, they bring the promise of gifts and wisdom the congregation does not yet have. Because they are different, they also bring challenges and potential dangers. They may be hard to accept, disruptive, or even violent, or they may have needs, financial or otherwise, beyond the capacities of your congregation to meet. Regardless of their promise or their danger, the church is called to be hospitable to these strangers, and you are the front line of this ministry. This hospitality goes beyond the narrow bounds of modern notions of intimacy and self-fulfilling friendship. Like Abraham and Sarah by the oaks of Mamre, Christians are commanded to show hospitality when strangers appear at the flap of their tent, to open our house and table and God’s house to these strangers so that they will find lodging, nourishment, cool water for the face, the oil of blessing and rest for the soul. As different as they are the church should open its heart to them by allowing them the opportunity to understand and connect with ‘Our’ Sunday liturgy just as much as we do because it is within a language that we are familiar with, hence Maluleke (1993, p. 236) argues that Few churches have experienced the implications of ethnicity for mission in apartheid South Africa to the extent that the EPCSA has. Harries (2007) found that we depends on language for the unity and coherence of the Tonga tribe/nation he had discovered, if not invented. Harries (2007) does not simply use language and culture as markers of identity; he conflates linguistic and social categories. In fact, he reifies linguistic concepts (Bantu, Ronga, Thonga) into social entities with a mind and soul.

CONCLUSION

In the context of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in South Africa (EPCSA), inclusivity theology and hospitality emerge as key aspects in understanding and responding to the changes of time. With Tsonga language being an integral part of the church's tradition, the importance of preserving this language aligns with the church's identity and history. Nevertheless, this study underscores the need for adapting liturgy to encompass members who may not speak Tsonga. The history of missionaries and social dynamics in EPCSA illustrates that the acceptance of the Gospel in understandable languages is crucial for unity and the continuity of evangelism. These findings also depict the church's dilemma in responding to changing times and diversity, with name changes and evaluations of liturgical languages being considered necessary steps. Therefore, a crucial conclusion is that to maintain inclusivity and hospitality, the church must continually adapt and open itself to change, creating a worship environment that welcomes everyone indiscriminately.

This research makes significant contributions to the understanding of how religious institutions navigate linguistic and cultural diversity. By emphasizing the integral role of the Tsonga language in the church's identity while also highlighting the necessity for adapting liturgy to include members who may not speak Tsonga, the study sheds light on the complex dynamics of language, tradition, and inclusivity within religious communities. Additionally, the examination of the historical influence of missionaries and the social dynamics of EPCSA contributes to the broader discourse on the role of language in evangelism and the unity of diverse congregations. The findings underscore the importance of accommodating linguistic diversity to ensure the continued relevance and accessibility of religious practices, offering insights that can inform future strategies for maintaining inclusivity and hospitality in evolving religious landscapes.

Despite its valuable contributions, this research has certain limitations that should be acknowledged. Firstly, the study focuses primarily on the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in South Africa (EPCSA), which may limit the generalizability of findings to other religious institutions or contexts. Additionally, the research predominantly centers on the Tsonga language, and while this is integral to the church's identity, it may not fully capture the linguistic diversity present in other congregations. The historical analysis, while insightful, may not encompass all relevant factors influencing the church's response to linguistic and cultural changes. Furthermore, the study primarily relies on existing literature and historical accounts, and the perspectives of current members may not be fully represented. Lastly, the dynamic nature of language and culture suggests that the findings may have a temporal aspect, and ongoing developments within the church may impact the relevance of the conclusions over time. These limitations highlight the need for caution in generalizing the findings and point towards avenues for future research to explore a broader range of contexts and factors influencing language and inclusivity in religious settings.

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