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Title:

Imago Dei and faith-healing practices in the Newer Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches (NPCCs) in South Africa: a human dignity perspective.

DECLARATION

I, Nkanyiso Kingdom Maphumulo declare that:

a) The research report in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my own original work.

b) This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

c) This thesis does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.

d) Where other written sources have been quoted:

    i. Their words have been re-written but the general information attributed to them has been referenced;

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ABSTRACT

Faith-healing practices in the third wave movement of Pentecostals, the Newer Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches, hereafter referred to as the NPCCs, have been in the public domain recently. These unorthodox faith-healing practices depicted, among others, pastors making congregants eat grass, snakes, drink petrol; pastors were shown jumping on prostrated bodies of the congregants, and spraying them with doom (house-hold insecticide). These faith-healing practices have raised issues for concern of human dignity in the church. Consequently, the government intervened by establishing a commission of inquiry into *the commercialisation of religion and abuse of belief systems* (2017), to investigate and make submissions to parliament about how to regulate religion in South Africa. During the proceedings of this Commission of inquiry, theologies underpinning faith-healing practices were unearthed; namely, health and wealth gospel, NPCCs' Pneumatology and Hermeneutic principles, and 'exclusive' name-and-claim-it gospel.

Using the human dignity perspective, this study investigates these theologies through the theoretical framework of Christian anthropology, namely the royal functional model of *imago Dei*. The study demonstrates that underpinning faith-healing practices in the NPCCs are theologies that have undergone a paradigm shift from the principles of the 'first' wave of Pentecostalism, the classical Pentecostals, to the degradation of the dignity of its adherers. I, therefore, argue that *imago Dei* has practical ethical implications that can be used to scrutinize Church practices in general and faith-healing practices in the NPCCs in particular.

Keywords: Faith-healing, *Imago Dei*, Newer Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches, human dignity.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AICs	African Independent/Initiated Churches
CRL Rights Commission	Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the rights of Cultural, Religious, and Linguistic Communities
NPCCs	Newer Pentecostal Charismatic Churches
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament
APC	Afro-Pentecostal Churches
PCC	Pentecostal Charismatic Churches
NPC	Neo Charismatic Churches
MP	Modern Pentecostalism
PC	Prophetic Churches
AOG	Assemblies of God
AFM	Apostolic Faith Mission
NIV	New International Version
FGC	Full Gospel Church
IMF	International Monetary Fund

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CHAPTER ONE

The phenomenon of faith-healing practices in the Newer Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches (NPCCs) in South Africa

1.1 Introduction

Faith-healing practices in the Newer Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches hereafter referred to as the *NPCCs*, have recently been in the public domain in South Africa. These practices have been characterised by unorthodox *modus oparandi*, which raised concerns for human dignity. In 2014, for instance, Prophet Lesego Daniel, *of Rabboni Centre Ministries*, made news headlines when video clips showings him commanding his congregants to eat grass, flower, and to drink petrol, went viral on social media networks (www.news24.com 16 April 2017). The following year (2015) Prophet Penuel Mnguni, of *End Times Disciples Ministries*, became the sudden national and international centre of attraction when pictures of him feeding his congregants snakes and jumping on their prostrated bodies went viral on social media network (http://www.news24.com 23 July 2015: 06:00).

Still, Phumzile Topi from Kwa-Zulu Natal Province and Prophet Rufus Phala from Makgodu in Limpopo continued with this *modus oparandi*. Both made headlines by making their congregants drink antiseptic liquids (i.e. Dettol) as demonstrations of God's power (http://www.news24.com 09 December 2016 22:51). Furthermore, in 2017 a Pastor, from *Mount Zion General Assembly*, who has accorded himself a title 'Doom' Pastor, made national and international news headlines when he claimed that by spraying his congregants with Doom ("a household insecticides aerosol brand") they received healing from all social ills (http://www.news24.com 09 December 2016).

These faith-healing practices have gone viral on social media networks, causing public outburst at best and public outrage at worse – for instance, it was reported that a community around Mnguni's church reacted by burning it down. Without condoning this outrage, these faith-healing practices raised questions of human dignity. In the collective memory of South Africa, human dignity has concrete connotations.

South Africa is a country with a deep hurtful past. From centuries of slavery, colonialism, and *Apartheid* (Ngcukaitobi 2018: 1), this Southern tip of the continent has a past that is replete with shame, division and a gross violation of human dignity. As Botman (2006: 72) comments about the Apartheid regime, "human dignity has been threatened in South Africa under the auspices of the apartheid regime. Apartheid's encroachment on human dignity emerged from a complex of theological, political, and historical dimensions." The words of Nelson Mandela (1994), at his inauguration as first democratically elected president, resonate with this backdrop; "Never, never and never again shall it be that this beautiful land will again experience the oppression of one by another and suffer the indignity of being the skunk of the world" (Asmal et al 2003: 70). In a governmental attempt of ensuring that Mandela's exhortation is adhered to, a Constitution of the Republic was established in 1996.

The South African constitution is considered as among the best in the world. Ngcukaitobi (2018:1) for instance, states that "for Ruth Bader Ginsburg, a judge of the Supreme Court of the United States of America, it is not the constitution of the United States of America that is a model for the world, but the South African Constitution." It is a constitution that has human dignity as its premise. To illustrate, section 1 states that, the founding provisions of the constitution include, among others "(a) Human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms," (2006: 3); Section 7 states that "this Bill of Rights is a cornerstone of democracy in South Africa. It enshrines the rights of all people in our country and affirms the democratic value of human dignity, equality and freedoms" (2006: 6); Still section 10 states, "everyone has inherent dignity and the right to have their dignity respected and protected" (2006: 7). Hence, Ngcukaitobi concludes that the South African constitutional vision and its ambitions are unprecedented (2018: 1).

However, while the South African constitution is regarded as exemplary for the modern world, the lived experiences of citizens of the country tell a different narrative. South Africa is a country with perennial socio-economic challenges, to the degree that, having praised its constitution, Ngcukaitobi (2018:1) continues to say, "Yet, despite the admiration of the world, many of the promises contained in the constitution remain a shallow hope. Millions continue to starve, while fortunate few enjoy the wealth of the country."

There is a discrepancy, therefore, between a constitution that promotes human dignity and the lived experiences of South Africans. This discrepancy, however, is not restricted to South Africa only. Walst (2010), for instance, shows that while the modern world has seen progressive constitutions on paper, behaviours that negatively affect human dignity have also escalated. Consequently, Ngcukaitobi (2018: 1) concedes that some quarters of the society have questioned whether a constitution is suitable to address these issues; "In this climate of economic exclusion, and social and political marginalisation, where the winners take all, some question whether the constitutional framework was, in fact, the correct response to colonialism and apartheid."

1.2 Background of the study

Coming out of the ashes of the Apartheid regime, South Africa adopted a constitutional democracy that aimed at restoring and protecting the human dignity of its citizens. Among the rights enshrined in the constitution is the right to freely practice one's religion. This right has been a catalyst of public debate amidst the recent eruption of faith-healing practices in the NPCCs. Speaking on a radio interview, Mrs Thoko Mkhwanazi-Xaluva, chairperson of the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious, and Linguistic Communities – hereafter referred to as the CRL Rights Commission – confirms this social unrest; "although our constitution protects the right to practice religion, recent practices in the new churches have raised concern in our country" (SA FM Radio: 2016-04-23). Noting these concerns, the South African government conducted an investigative study through the CRL Rights Commission.

The commission sought to understand two aspects of contemporary religious milieu. Firstly, the commercialization of religion; that is, "deliberate exploitation of the poor and vulnerable people because of the commercialisation of religious practices, through assumption of divine/missionary right to directly solicit and receive gift/offering/tithes in cash or in-kind from members" (CRL Rights Commission 2017: 19). Secondly, the commission aimed at unearthing the abuse suffered by congregants at the hand of religious leaders in the case where such leaders were "subjecting members to practices and rituals that evoke questions of human rights and ethics" (CRL Rights Commission 2017: 20).

This study is not so much motivated by findings of the Commission, as much as it is motivated by what transpired during the proceedings of the Commission. During the proceedings of the commission, religious leaders from Newer Charismatic Churches used scripture, an evocation of the Holy Spirit, and revelations to defend some of their "questionable" faith-healing practices. On the other hand, the panel of the Commission used the South African Constitution in general, and aspects of human dignity in particular to question some of these practices. These different trajectories at times resulted in a lack of common ground between the panel and religious leaders appearing before the commission. To illustrate, a Church in the Eastern Cape called The Angel Ministry was asked by the panel to explain its practice of disallowing prohibiting children to attend school. According to the panel such practice violates human right and dignity of a child. The response of church leaders was; "God gave us an instruction that our time has come…we healed people…here we are saying that education is wrong…because Satan has taken over the schools…and we say people must not listen to the constitution because Satan drives it…" (CRL Rights Commission 2017: 21).

1.3 Motivation of the study

As an ordained minister in the Anglican Church, I have been confronted by my own ambiguous response to these developments. While faith-healing is an important aspect of religion in my community – and an important contributor to the drastic growth of the NPCCs – recent faith-healing practices have raised concerns for human dignity. Also, during the CRL Right Commission of inquiry, the NPCCs' religious leaders seemed to offer responses that appeared to bring Christianity into disrepute. For instance, audio-visual recordings of religious leaders who appeared in the commission, which were freely available for public consumption on social media networks, showed NPCCs' religious leaders defending their unorthodox faith-healing practices through Scripture, invocation of the Holy Spirit, Sacramental theology, and so on. One witnessed, how Christian theology was used as a defence.

1.4 Key research question

Noting the concern for human dignity raised by recent faith-healing phenomenon in the NPCCs, and the theology employed by NPCCs' religious leaders during the CRL Right Commission, the study seeks to answer the following key research question;

How does the recent phenomenon of faith-healing practices in the NPCCs measure against the Christian doctrine of *imago Dei*? This key research question shall be answered through responding to the following sub-questions;

1.4.1 Sub-questions

  a) What are theologies underpinning the phenomenon of faith-healing practices in the NPCCs?
  b) Why do faith-healing practices in the NPCCs raise concerns for human dignity?
  c) How to critique the phenomenon of faith-healing practices in the NPCCs through the doctrine of i*mago Dei*?

1.4.1 Objectives of the study

Considering the key research questions above, the objectives of this study are;

  a) To unearth theologies underpinning faith-healing practices in the NPCCs.
  b) To demonstrate why do faith-healing practices in the NPCCs raise concerns for human dignity.
  c) To show that faith-healing practices in the church should be guided by the principles of human dignity as affirmed by the doctrine of *Imago Dei*.

1.5 Outline of the study

This study begins by contextualising faith-healing practices within the South African Constitutional democracy. Chapter one outlines the recent spread of the phenomenon of faith-healing practices in the NPCCs and the concern of human dignity which they raise. This chapter also discusses the background and motivation of this study.

Chapter two is a historical and thematic literature review. It traces theological development of the doctrine of *imago Dei*. It shows that, due to scarcity of biblical reference to the concept of *imago Dei* in the Genesis text, systematic theologians resorted to extra-biblical anthropology sources (i.e. Ancient Greek Philosophy) to discuss what it means to be created in the image of God. Biblical scholars, on the other hand, have interpreted the *imago Dei* in Genesis by drawing parallels between the texts and the Mesopotamian anthropological ideas. Consequently, the former use

either substantialistic or relational models to interpret the *imago Dei* in Genesis. The latter favour the royal functional model. Also, this chapter discusses themes related to *imago Dei* as a religious foundation for human dignity.

Chapter three discusses the methodology and the theoretical framework of this study. These are; the qualitative content analysis and the royal functional model of imago Dei, respectively. This chapter also discusses the ethical implications and limitations of this study.

The fourth chapter considers the study context of this research, namely the NPCCs in South Africa. It, therefore, traces the origins of this brand of Christianity in South Africa. Through the three-wave approach, it demonstrates that NPCCs are 'progenies' of the first wave movement of Pentecostals (early/classical Pentecostals), albeit in a different social context.

Chapter five is data analysis of audio-visual recordings from CRL Rights Commission of inquiry into *the commercialisation of religion and the abuse of faith* (2017). This data is analysed through the royal functional model of *imago Dei*. This analysis shows that faith-healing practices in the NPCCs are underpinned by theologies that fuel practices which degrade the dignity of its members.

Chapter six concludes by arguing that Christian anthropology as understood by the royal functional model of *imago Dei* can be used to scrutinise faith-healing practices in the NPCCs, and general practices of the church at large.

<center>**CHAPTER TWO**</center>

<center>Literature review: *Imago Dei* and its implication for human dignity</center>

2.1 Introduction:

Christianity generally associates *imago Dei* (Gen. 1: 26-7) with human dignity. According to Vanhoozer (1997: 163), for instance, "Christians ground their affirmation of human dignity and personhood in the special resemblance of the human creature to its Creator." Considering, therefore, that recent faith-healing practices in the NPCCs have raised concerns for human dignity (Resane 2017: 5) – a concept that is "foundational for any discussion of human person" (Regan 2010: 85) – this calls for a theological reflection on the doctrine of *imago Dei* in relation to human dignity.

This chapter, therefore, discusses the historical development of the Christian doctrine of *imago Dei*. It shows that historical discussions of the meaning of *imago Dei* have been dominated by two approaches; the 'classical' systematic and biblical approaches. The classical systematic approach involves Christian thinkers who, faced with the scarcity of *imago Dei* concept in the Genesis text, have resorted to extra-biblical sources of anthropology (i.e. ancient Greek philosophy). On the other hand, the biblical approach involves biblical scholars who approached the *imago Dei* in Genesis through drawing parallels between the Genesis texts and the Mesopotamian anthropological ideas. Also, this chapter shall discuss themes relating to human dignity which are underpinned by Christian anthropology of *imago Dei*.

Thus, this chapter presents a literature review that is both historical and thematic. It is historical in so far as its discussion of the development of the doctrine of *imago Dei* (through classical systematics and biblical scholars' approaches); and thematic in so far as its discussion of human dignity as grounded in Christian anthropology of *imago Dei*.

2.2 Christian anthropology of *imago Dei*

Since "discourse about God illuminates what humanity is," "theology and anthropology are intimately connected" (Marmion & Van Nieuwenhove 2011: 18). The doctrine of creation, as found in the Jewish creation stories, is thus a theological stance with anthropological implications; particularly the concept of *imago Dei*. This

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is because, "*imago Dei* is evocative rather than descriptive, upholding human dignity through the assertion of the likeness – and unlikeness – of the human person to God" (Regan 2010: 70).

Set in the creation story, Gen 1:26-27 marks the beginning of the human race:

> Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So, God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them (Gen 1: 26-27: New International Version 1973)

Middleton (2005: 15) correctly states "for nearly two thousand years the Christian tradition has singled out Genesis 1: 26-27 for special attention." The text has become a "*locus classicus* of the doctrine of *imago Dei*…" (Middleton 2005:15). Marmion & Van Nieuwenhove (2011: 18) concurs; "the starting point of any Christian anthropology is that the human person is made in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1: 26-7)." However, "just what it is to be in God's image is a matter of some theological dispute" (Vanhoozer 1997: 163). To an extent that Gonzalez (2007: ix) notes, "perhaps no other section of the Hebrew Scriptures and Christian Bible has provoked as much creativity and debate as the first three chapters of Genesis."

Creativity and subsequent debates are emboldened by the scarcity of biblical references to *imago Dei*. Ruston (2004 277) rightfully observes that "it is striking that, after the opening chapters of Genesis, the Bible nowhere repeats the doctrine of creation in God's image and gives no explanation of it beyond what can be gained from these verses and its application to homicide in Genesis 9:6." For instance, Biblical scholar, such as Middleton (2005: 16), identifies only three explicit references to *imago Dei*, that are found in Old Testament; "Genesis 1: 26-27; 5:1; and 9:6." Hence Gonzalez (2007: 10) comments that "in spite of *[imago Dei's]* prominence within Christian theology, however, creation in the image of God receives little attention in the Hebrew scriptures" *(my emphases added).* Consequently, *imago Dei* has produced a variety of opinions regarding its meaning (Middleton 2005: 17).

According to Middleton (2005: 17) both paucity of biblical reference to *imago Dei* and isolated reading of Gen 1: 26-27 result in "many interpreters turn*[ing]* to extra-biblical, usually philosophical, sources to interpret the image and end up reading contemporaneous conceptions of being human back into the Genesis text" (Middleton 2005: 17 *my emphasis added*). To this end theologians of all generations who have engaged with this text have "typically asked not an exegetical, but a speculative, question: In what way are humans like God and unlike animals?" (Middleton 2005: 18-19). Therefore, an endeavour that seeks to understand Christian thinkers' interpretations of *imago Dei* must be cognisant of philosophy which informed these interpretations; particularly the classical philosophical anthropology of Plato and Aristotle.

2.3 The role of ancient Greek philosophy in the interpretation of *imago Dei*

According to Gonzalez (2007: 18) "…philosophy and theology have historically been very closely united, and many would argue that it was only in the Middle ages that the two became divorced into a distinct discipline." Thus "traces of both Plato and Aristotle…have marked Christian theology throughout its history" (Gonzalez 2007: 18). Plato's theory of sexes, for instance, which was based on his dualistic approach of soul and mind, influenced Augustine of Hippo (Gonzalez 2007: 19). Based on this theory, men and women have equal souls, which accords women equal reasoning capabilities with men; as indicated by Plato's idea that women can attain education (Gonzalez 2007: 19). However, women's bodies were considered weaker than men, and thus women would have to work harder if they wanted to be as educated as men due to their 'weaker' body" (Gonzalez 2007: 19-20). This renders Plato's anthropology ambiguous; "On one hand, women are given certain equality with men based on the Platonic belief that souls are not shaped by one's embodied sexuality. Also, women are given opportunities in education, even to aspire to become philosophers within the Platonic world view. However, within their embodied existence they are inferior and weaker" (Gonzalez 2007: 21).

Whereas Plato's anthropology was unsystematic, Aristotle provided the most influential and systematic philosophy that impacted Christianity (Gonzalez 2007: 21). His "influence in Christian theology and philosophy was cemented in the Middle Ages by Thomas Aquinas's appropriation of his thought with his own writings"

(Gonzalez 2007: 21). Aristotle presented hierarchical anthropology as opposed to an egalitarian view of anthropology (Gonzalez 2007: 22). He saw differences between men and women as having philosophical significance (Gonzalez 2007: 22). He associated men with activity and rationality while passivity and irrationality were associated with females (Gonzalez 2007: 23). Rejecting Plato's dualism, he contended that "the soul is the form of the body" (Gonzalez 2007: 24). In other words, he saw the difference of the body as indicative of the difference of the soul (Gonzalez 2007: 24). Therefore, "Aristotle rejects Plato's notion of the sexless soul and concludes that women are not only weaker in body but that their souls are, in fact, weaker" (Gonzalez 2007: 24).

Philosophical ideas of these philosophers (Plato and Aristotle) would permeate through generations of Christian thinkers as they wrestle to understand what it means to be made in the image of God. Vanhoozer sums up these various points of views as emerging from the questions, is the *imago Dei* something humans have, do or are (Vanhoozer 1997: 163)?" The different emphases on Vanhoozer's question (whether the image is something humans have, do, or are?) results in various trajectories taken by systematic theologians in their deliberations about *imago Dei*; as the meagre historical review below shall attest.

2.3.1 Irenaeus (Is imago Dei something humans have?)

Irenaeus is among the first church fathers to deliberate on the meaning of *imago Dei* (Steenberg 2009). Hence, Vanhoozer (1997: 163), considers Irenaeus as "the first Church Father to offer a systematic discussion of the *imago Dei*." His proposal unveils dualism that engulfed creation theology of the first century (McGrath 2018: 43). This was a worldview, which held that "there are two ultimately distinct principles, or spheres, such as good and evil, or matter and spirit" (McGrath 2018: 43). Irenaeus, therefore, made a "distinction between 'image' and 'likeness' (Vanhoozer 1997: 163). In explaining this distinction, Vanhoozer (1997: 163) argues that Irenaeus "suggested that the former refers to humanity's natural rational and moral capacities while the latter refers to the spiritual aspect of the human condition that had been lost through sin but restored through grace."

In terms of Vanhoozer's question, Irenaeus attempted to provide a systematic discussion of *imago Dei* that considered whether *imago Dei* is something humans have. This is because Irenaeus was "concerned to address the question of why God did not create humanity in a state of total perfection" (McGrath 2001:385). The implication being, only then could humanity be said to have the *imago Dei*, since God is perfect. Notwithstanding the imperfect state of humanity, Irenaeus maintained that human beings have the *imago Dei* (McGrath 2001: 385). His doctrine held that "the material world was created good by God, despite its subsequent contamination by sin." In other words, human beings have the *imago Dei* irrespective of the Fall.

2.3.2 St Augustine of Hippo vs Thomas Aquinas – Is imago Dei in what we do?

Influenced by Plato, Augustine's view of *imago Dei* is inconsistent (Gonzalez 2007: 36). His ideas are fused with his trinitarian doctrine and exegesis of Genesis 1: 27 (2007: 37). Marmion & Van Nieuwenhove (2011: 84) depict the context and intentions of Augustine as follows;

> At the beginning of the fourth century, Christianity was no longer a persecuted religion but the religion of the Empire. The Church needed a clearly defined and universally accepted system of belief. It, therefore, needed to think and formulate a doctrine of God in a rationally coherent fashion.

Augustine, therefore, sought to rationally connect salvation, regeneration, and anthropology with the image of the triune God (Marmion & Van Nieuwenhove 2011: 84-85). Hence, "for Augustine, the fact that the Genesis account says "let us" with regard to the creation of the human and "let there be" with regard to everything else indicates the involvement of the three Persons of the Trinity in creation" (Gonzalez 2007: 37). On this premise, Augustine concluded that the image is trinitarian (2007: 37).

Influenced by Platonic philosophy, (and the theology of Gregory), "Augustine contends that the image does not reside in the body" rather the image is located in the mind (Gonzalez 2007: 40). Since the mind is created in the image of a triune God, Augustine correlated trinity with the three faculties of the mind; memory, understanding, and will (Marmion & Van Nieuwenhove 2011: 90). Intellectual

capacities are, thus associated with the *imago Dei* (Gonzalez 2007: 37). Augustine's *imago Dei* is understood as something human beings do, as they reflect God in their intellectual capacities. In line with most patristic thinkers, for Augustine, human beings are an image of God only when they contemplate about God (Gonzalez 2007: 37). As McGrath (2018: 50) explains, "For Augustine, we have been created with the intellectual resources which can set us on the way to finding God by reflecting on the creation." Therefore, for Augustine, the *imago Dei* is located in what we do; "The task of the Christian vocation is to reintegrate this image in oneself – a task in which all the divine Persons are actively involved" (Marmion & Van Nieuwenhove 2011: 85).

By locating the image in the intellectual capacities, Augustine demonstrates that his interpretation of *imago Dei* in Genesis is influenced by Plato's philosophy of dualism. For example, Augustine contends that only the soul (i.e. the mind) is the image of God. This interpretation of the image is underpinned by Platonism (Middleton 2005: 19). As Sands (2010: 32 *my emphasis added*) states that "the first-century philosopher *[Plato]* shared this rationalism and maintained that 'mind' *(nous)* was the divine, image-bearing element in humankind." Women are thus, excluded from reflecting this image due to their bodies. As Gonzalez (2007: 41) points out Augustine's thesis, "while woman possesses the image in her rational, on a bodily level she does not reflect the image of God." Due to "their weakened intellectual powers when they are embodied as women, *[they]* are incapable of reflecting the image of God" (Gonzalez 2007: 38 *my emphasis added*). They can only achieve this in the eschaton (2007: 40).

Therefore, Augustine's understanding of *imago Dei* is, as Gonzalez (2007: 41) sums it, "an ambiguous legacy…on a certain level, women are seen as reflecting the *imago Dei*. Nonetheless, within Augustine's theology men represent the higher intellect and women the inferior level." It is an unsystematic hierarchical interpretation of Genesis 1: 27, which is influenced by Plato's dualistic philosophy, deviating from the egalitarian stance of the *imago Dei* in the Genesis text.

Whereas in Augustine we see influences of Plato, in Thomas Aquinas, we encounter Aristotle philosophy. Aquinas maintains that men *(sic)* are the image of God, albeit, imperfectly, as God is infinite while men *(sic)* are finite" (Glenn 2007: 78; Question

93 *my emphases added*). "Finite man *(sic)* cannot be a perfect image of the infinite God. Man *(sic)* is an imperfect image of God. This means that man *(sic)* is made to resemble God in some manner" (Glenn 2007: 78; Question 93). However, he maintains that, unlike animals, man *(sic)* has a true *imago Dei* because of his intellectual faculties; "But only intellectual creatures (angels and human beings) have a close likeness to God; other creatures have a trace or vestige of God rather than an image" (Glenn 2007: 78; Question 93)

According to Gonzalez (2007: 44), Aquinas differs with Augustine only as far as the question of the body being the image of God is concerned. Aquinas' thought "represents a radical break from the theology of Augustine, *[in]* that, for Aquinas, the body reflects the image" (Gonzalez 2007: 44 *my emphasis added*). As Gonzalez (2007: 44) observes, this "is based on the Aristotelian belief that the body reflects the soul."

2.3.3 Karl Barth- Is imago Dei something we are?

According to Gonzalez (2007: 62), Karl Barth is a predominant theologian of the twentieth century. Such that Livingston et al (2000: 97) comment that Barth "dominated Christian theology in the twentieth century in a quite unique way, and certainly over a period of time unmatched by other important theologians of the century." Barth's writings demonstrate his rejection of Neo-Protestant liberal theology of subjectivism and anthropocentrism (Livingston et al 2000: 97, Gonzalez 2007: 61). He contends that this had a proclivity of reducing theology to human subjectivity, which restricted theology to the human condition (Vanhoozer 1997: 171). Barth critics this theological trajectory because it "speak*(s)* of a human religious a *priori* immanent in the human subject or in history and by which theology could judge Christianity from outside Scripture and the Church" (Livingston et al 2000: 97 *my emphasis added*)." In other words, for Barth, as Livingston et al (2000: 97) states, this theology "failed to let God be God." Hence, he is "critical of the subjective and individualistic nature of theology, arguing that the discipline must return to a theocentric rather than an anthropocentric emphasis" (Gonzalez 2007: 62).

On the contrary, Barth contends that theology that begins with the human condition is in error. For Barth theology is not so much done in response to the human condition

as opposed to the word of God (Gonzalez 2007: 62). As Vanhoozer (1997: 171) comments, "Barth reverses the direction characteristic of liberal theologies: human beings must understand themselves in the light of God, not vice versa." He presents, therefore, what came to be known as "transcendent (top-down) or revelatory theology" (Gonzalez 2007: 62). His theological trajectory is solely located in the "…Word of God revealed in Jesus Christ" (Gonzalez 2007: 62) The cornerstone of his theology, therefore, is Christology (2007: 63). Vanhoozer (1997: 172) concurs, "Barth sees anthropology as a predicate or subset of Christology. Christology alone lays the proper groundwork on which to consider the human creature, both in its relation to God and in its relation to others." As Gonzalez (2007: 64) succinctly puts it; "To approach Barth's anthropology one must enter through his Christology;" For Barth, there is only one way to know God; Jesus Christ, who is the perfect *imago Dei* (2007: 64).

Barth's Christology is fuelled by two movements – Dialectical theology and Neo-orthodoxy – both reacted to enlightenment ethos (2007: 63). In a quest to differentiate between gospel and culture, the dialectical theology emphasise dissimilarity between God and humanity (2007: 63). That is, "while we are created in the image of God, our dissimilarity to God is greater than our similarity to our Creator" (Gonzalez 2007: 63). Neo orthodoxy, on the other hand, stands in sharp contrast to liberalism, which expands the revelation of God to include nature and culture (2007: 63).

Therefore, it rejects the immanency of God, instead, it emphasises God's transcendence (Gonzalez 2007: 63). For instance, whereas liberalism understands "humanity as good, neo-orthodox theology *[on the other hand]* emphasizes our need for salvation from beyond" (Gonzalez 2007: 63 *my emphases added*). As a perfect *imago Dei*, Jesus demonstrates to humanity how to express this image in us (2007: 64). For Barth, central to this demonstration is Kerygmatic theology (2007: 64). Through incarnation "Jesus reveals that God's true nature is to accompany us. Jesus as our companion teaches us that we must be companions" (Gonzalez 2007: 64). According to Regan (2010: 70), "Karl Barth's interpretation emphasizes that "God-likeness" consists not in anything the human person is or does: "He is the image of God in the fact that he is a man." Thus, arguing that *imago Dei* is something humans are.

2.4 Models of interpreting *Imago Dei*

The above, limited, historical overview of *imago Dei* reveals how Christian thinkers have developed the doctrine throughout history. These thinkers, confronted with the scarcity of *imago Dei* references in the Genesis texts, have relied on the influences of extra-biblical sources of anthropology, particularly classical Greek philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, in order to interpret what it means to be created in the image of God.

Furthermore, Sands (2010: 31) argues that theologians had to wrestle with contending views of *Imago Dei* between Old Testament and New Testament. OT views *imago Dei* as egalitarian (all human beings bear God's image); associated with instruction of dominion and dignity; and was not lost in the Fall (Sands 2010: 30). For NT, on the other hand, only Christ is the image of God, human beings attain this divine image through their Christ-like lifestyle; and taking the marred image as a result of the Fall into consideration, the realisation of the *imago Dei* "is an *eschatological* reality" (Sands 2010: 31). Sands (2010: 31), therefore, summarises this polarity succinctly; "The Old Testament embeds the *imago* in creation and ascribes it to all human beings; the New Testament assumes the *imago* has been lost due to sin and must be restored through Christ."

Christian writers, thus, have attempted to merge these opposing views "into a single coherent view of the *imago Dei*" (Sands 2010: 31). Consequently, their attempt resulted in the production of three models of interpreting imago *Dei* in Genesis. These are, the substantialistic and relational models – which are favoured by systematic theologians; and the royal functional model – which is mostly favoured by biblical scholars (Middleton 2005: 19-29, Sands 2010: 31). Thus, the *imago Dei* is generally discussed through two approaches; Systematic approach, either substantialistic or relational models, and biblical approach, which generally uses the royal functional model.

2.5 The systematic approach to *imago Dei*

2.5.1 The substantialistic model of imago Dei.

According to Sands (2010: 31), the substantialistic model of *imago Dei* sees the image of God as "an endowment given by God at creation." It works on the idea that human beings are the image of God because in their archetype they (humans) mirror God (Middleton 2005: 19). In the Latin West proponents of this idea includes St Augustine's "famous proposal of various intra-psychic Trinitarian structures (memory, intellect, and will), which correspond to the triune nature of God" (Middleton 2005: 19). It is for this reason that Sands (2010: 32) argues that "for historical reasons, this endowment came to be identified with reason."

As noted above, the proponents of substantialistic model of *imago Dei* relied on the extra-biblical texts (i.e. Plato) as opposed to the biblical exegesis. This reliance on extra-biblical source has dominated "metaphysical stream of interpretation stretching from the ante-Nicene fathers through to the high Middle Ages and until the middle of the twentieth century, *[it]* held sway even in the modern period" (Middleton 2005: 20 *my emphasis added*). However, this model of *imago Dei* has faced unsurmountable criticism.

2.5.2 Critiquing the substantialistic model

According to Sands (2010: 33) criticism levelled against the substantialistic view of *imago Dei* includes its "static character" that is inconsistent with the dynamic view of *imago Dei* found in the NT writings; Restricting the image to internal capacity (reason and will) results in an individualistic interpretations, which deviates from OT notions that the image is collectively bestowed on "human species (Gen. 1: 26-28; Ps 8: 5-6)" and NT assigning of the image to "ecclesial community."

Furthermore, Sands (2010: 33) states that substantialistic model of *imago Dei* is accused of "misogynistic tendencies, which are rooted in the assumption that men are more rational and less tied to embodiment than women and thus more perfect specimens of *imago Dei*." Above, we have already seen the ambivalence and the inconsistency of substantialistic thinkers who were subsumed by this tendency.

Lastly, Sands (2010: 32) contends that a theologian influenced by substantialistic view, "almost always places the body below the mind and ascribes the *imago* only to the latter." Such an imbalanced overemphasis on the mind (soul) has resulted in the eschewed interpretation of the *imago Dei* in humankind; and, thus, a predominant criticism levelled against the substantialistic model of *imago Dei*. As Middleton (2005: 21) observes;

> Interestingly, while the word "image" in this passage refers to a soul will become a prominent Christian interpretation, this sounds ludicrous to Judaism since the Hebrews did not even have a word for soul. The idea that we are made up of a body and soul is a Greek idea, one that heavily emphasized Christian interpretations of Genesis.

Whereas Sands (2010: 33) capitulates that not all of the criticisms levelled against substantialistic model are absolute – notions of static, individualistic, and misogynistic interpretation of the image are arguably not substantialistic – however, on the question of a non-biblical imposition of the 'soul,' he maintains that the substantialistic model is without defence. According to Sands (2010: 33), the substantialistic view, which "assumes a rationalistic, mind-body dualism *[is]* inconsistent with scripture*" (my emphasis added)*. This is because "nowhere does the Bible suggest that only the 'higher' intellectual (or 'spiritual') part of human beings is made in the image" (Sands 2010: 33). Rather, it is the whole person (body-and-soul) who is endowed with the *imago Dei* (Sands 2010: 34). Thus, Sands (2010: 34) contends, that "the substantialist view must, therefore, be rejected because it reads an extra-biblical anthropology into the Bible."

2.5.3 The relational model of imago Dei

According to Middleton (2005: 20-24), the relational model of *imago Dei* began in the reformation period, with the writings of Martin Luther; and was later developed in the modern era by Karl Barth. Therefore, Martin Luther and Karl Barth represent reformation and a modern period's interpretation of the relational model of *imago Dei*, respectively.

Reformation theologians, with their ethos of *Sola Scriptura*, were highly likely to respond suspiciously to a substantialistic interpretation of *Imago Dei* – due to its

reliance on philosophy (an extra-biblical source). As a consequence, a relational model of *imago Dei* renegaded from the substantialistic model, which viewed *imago Dei* as undynamic. As Middleton (2005: 20) contends, it was the Reformers, who "attempted to supplement the emphasis on a metaphysical, substantialistic analogy with a dynamic, relational notion of the image as ethical conformity or obedient response."

With their hermeneutic framework – Christology and 'reliance' on the Bible (especially NT) – reformers favoured the relational interpretation of *imago Dei*. According to Middleton (2005: 20) Luther "rejected the metaphysical interpretation and substituted instead a reading of the image as original righteousness, which Adam (and all humanity) lost through sin and which is restored through Christ" (Middleton 2005: 20-21). *Imago Dei*, therefore, had implication for a relational-ethical response (Middleton 2005: 21). Even though this type of relational model "does not do justice to Genesis 1: 26-27, it nevertheless draws on the New Testament's *imago Dei* texts and thus can claim some degree of exegetical support (Middleton 2005: 21)."

However, according to Middleton (2005: 21), Karl Barth accused Reformers of reading into the Genesis 1 text Christological ideas which are foreign to this early Judaeo-Christian text. Karl Barth, therefore, saw no difference between the Reformers and substantialistic interpreters of *Imago Dei*; as both developed their interpretation using extra-biblical material (Middleton 2005: 21). He thus attempted to limit his relational interpretation of *imago Dei* within Genesis 1 text. Consequently, the key to his interpretation "is the reference to "male and female" in Genesis 1: 27, along with the human-divine, I-Thou encounter presupposed in the text" (Middleton 2005: 22). Hence, Middleton (2005: 22) argues that Barth developed a two-set relationship interpretation of *Imago Dei*; "ontologically constitutive for humanness, both of which image the intradivine I-Thou relationship of the triune God" Alas, relational interpretation of *imago Dei* was in full swing. As Sands (2010: 34) states, "if the substantialist view of the *imago Dei* dominated theological opinion until the middle of the twentieth century, the relational view has been ascending since – at least among systematic theologians." Sands (2010: 34) attributes this development to Karl Barth.

With its reliance on exegesis of Genesis 1, Sands (2010: 34) argues that the relational model of *imago Dei* hangs on the coalescence of two biblical verses. It accentuates plural pronouns in Gen 1: 26 ("Let us make humankind in our image") and Gen 1: 27; the use of the word *imago* within the literal context of sexual differences ("in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them") (Sands 2010: 34). The former is said to be a harbinger of Trinitarian doctrine (i.e. God is essentially relational) and the latter is a sexual difference which is "interpreted as specifying the nature of the image" (Sands 2010: 34-35). Through this framework, a relational interpretation of *imago Dei* is produced; "the triune God is not a solitary being but one who exits in eternal relatedness, so human beings reflect the divine image not as solitary individuals but in social relatedness" (Sands 2010: 34). This takes place as human beings "enter into reciprocal relations with God and others" (Sands 2010: 35).

Thus, a substantialistic view, which saw the image as 'static' trait in human, is substituted by a dynamic view, which sees image as dynamically reflected in human relations (Sands 2010: 34). As Sands (2010: 34) argues that the premise of the relational model is that, "the *imago Dei* is not a trait found in humans but a dynamic happening that occurs when human beings are turned towards God and one another." In other words, "humans do not have the image of God, rather, they image God" (Sands 2010: 34). Notwithstanding the theological grip that relational model of *imago Dei* has enjoyed in the modern era, particularly among systematic theologians, it is not immune from serious biblical shortcomings.

2.5.4 Critiquing the relational model of imago Dei

Firstly, for all its claim of 'faithful' exegesis of Genesis 1, Sands (2010: 35) argues that relational view of *imago Dei* hangs on an exegetically unjustified "quasi-trinitarian interpretation of Genesis 1: 26…" This interpretation makes a meal out of the plural pronouns, and "claim they posit plurality within God, and then explicates them in fully trinitarian terms" (Sands 2010: 35).

However, Old Testament scholars reject this interpretation of plural pronouns (Sands 2010: 35). Their construal of v. 26 either favours God's self-summoning to action or "interpret God's words as addressed to a 'divine council' of heavenly beings" (Sands 2010: 35). Middleton (2005: 26), for instance, is swayed by the latter. Either way,

though, as Sands (2010: 35) states, "virtually all *[Old Testament scholars]* rejected the quasi-trinitarian reading upon which the relational view of the *imago Dei* depends (*my emphases added*)." Perhaps, Sands' conscientious warning suffices to highlight biblical shortcomings of the relational model of *imago Dei*; "A canonical reading may go beyond the historical sense of a text, but it must not invent meanings with no connection to the historical sense" (Sands 2010: 35).

Secondly, according to Middleton (2005: 49-50), a relational model of *imago Dei* emanates from a particular, misguided, exegesis of Genesis 1:27;

> So God created humanity in his image,
> in the image of God he created him,
> male and female he created them

Key to the Relationalists' interpretation of *imago Dei* is the hybrid made between the first two clauses Genesis 1: 27 ("So God created humanity in his image, in the image of God he created him") with the third clause ("male and female he created them") and, on the presupposition that the third clause is a reference to a continuous idea from the word image of the first two clauses, thus deducing that the image is the differences of the sexes (Middleton 2005: 49). Karl Barth, for instance, is the vanguard of this trajectory. Middleton (2005: 49) and Sands (2010: 36), critique this construal of Genesis 1: 27. At the onset, Middleton (2005: 49) insinuates that Relationalists are oblivious of the genre of these three clauses. According to Middleton (2005: 49), Genesis 1: 27, should be viewed as "a brief poem inserted in an otherwise prose text." Hence, his rather acerbically rhetorical questions; "does the third line of this poem mean, as Karl Barth claims, that "male and female" is what defines the image? Or is it simply that the image (whatever it consists) is found in both men and women? Or is there some other connection?" (Middleton 2005: 49).

Therefore, favouring "some other connection," he argues that the relationalists' "interpretations of Genesis 1: 27 are misguided, for two reasons" (Middleton 2005: 49). The crux of this 'misinterpretation' is the idea held by relationalists that the third clause is a continuation of the image concept of the first two clauses (Middleton 2005: 49). Middleton (2005: 49) strongly rejects this view; "it is clear that the third line of

the three-line Hebrew poetic units typically does not repeat a previous idea, but more usually serves a progressive function, introducing a new thought." Seen as three-line Hebrew poetic units, Middleton decouples the third clause from the ideological repetition of the first two clauses. Thus, he argues, "it is thus doubtful, on syntactical ground, that 'male and female' specifies in any way the nature of the image" (Middleton 2005: 49-50).

Secondly, the relational model of *imago Dei* uses Genesis 1: 27 as an indication that the image is manifested through relations between the different sexes. Middleton (2005:50), however, finds this interpretation misguided. This is because, if that were the case, Gen 1: 27 would have used social terms for male and female; but as things stand, "male' (*zakar*) and 'female' (*neqeba*) are biological, not social, terms and thus cannot support either notion of human relationality or culturally male/female characteristics" (Middleton 2005: 50).

Sands (2010: 36), therefore, puts summarily the shortcomings of the relational model of *imago Dei*; "(a) it cannot justify its quasi-trinitarian reading of v. 26 and (b) because it wrongly identifies the *imago Dei* with sexual differentiation and then draws unwarranted conclusions form the identification." However, an even more scathing criticism of relational model of *imago Dei* is that "like the substantialistic view, it skews the biblical concept by interpreting it in terms of an extra-biblical anthropology" (Sands 2010: 36).

2.6 Critiquing the systematic approach to *imago Dei*
According to Middleton (2005: 26-27), systematic theologians have a proclivity towards either Substantialistic or relational model of *imago Dei.* Consequently, systematic theologians have "typically asked not an exegetical, but a speculative, question: In what way are humans like God and unlike animals?" (Middleton 2005: 18-19). Middleton (2005: 27) observes that due to their speculative quest, as opposed to exegetical quest, systematic theologians succumb to these models (substantialistic or relational); and never reach consensus about the meaning of *imago Dei*. Systematic theologians' turn to extra-biblical source in general and philosophy in particular has resulted in the understanding of "the meaning of the image in terms of a metaphysical

analogy or similarity between the human soul and the being of God, in categories not likely to have occurred to the author of Genesis" (Middleton 2005: 18).

However, among Old Testament scholars there is profuse scholarly research conducted, which have resulted in almost-unanimous support of a royal functional model of *imago Dei* (Middleton 2005, Sands 2010). This virtual consensus, among OT scholars, results from interpreting Genesis 1: 26-27 within its literary and historical contexts.

2.7 The biblical approach to *imago Dei*

Unlike systematic theologians, who employ philosophical epistemologies of their time to interpret *imago Dei*, biblical scholars achieve their interpretation through illuminating parallels between primordial history in Genesis (chapter 1-11) and historical context of the Mesopotamian world (Middleton 2005: 93). Anthropological understanding of this context is, therefore, compared with Genesis with a view that this context underpinned writings about *Imago Dei* in Genesis (Middleton 2005: 93). Hence, Middleton (2005: 94) identifies four reconstructed parallels drawn between ancient Near East texts (and practices) and *imago Dei* in Genesis 2005: 93-94).

Through consideration of the historical context in which Genesis 1: 26-7 was written, the royal functional model discards the speculative task of both the substantialistic and relational models (systematic approach). As Sands (2010: 37) states, this thrust "is based on the recognition that Genesis 1: 26-28 says less about the nature of the *imago* than about the task assigned to humankind." Schuele (2011: 6) concurs; "The text in Genesis 1-11 makes virtually no attempt to define what the *imago Dei* is but what human beings as image of God are supposed to do in and for creation." Hence, criticism of both substantialistic and relational models that they engaged in a speculative quest, and thus deviate from the biblical exegesis. They are not cognisant of the notion that "*imago Dei* was left undefined in Genesis because it did not require clarification; and the conviction that the biblical concept is best explained in terms of similar ideas shared among other cultures in the ancient Near East" (Sands 2010: 37). As Schuele (2011: 6) argues, "to use modern language, the *imago Dei* has a functional and representational rather than ontological point."

2.7.1 The royal functional model of imago Dei

The biblical approach takes into cognisance the ancient Near-East anthropological worldview – as evident in its cultural practices and religious texts – and considers it as influential to Israel's writings about *imago Dei* in Genesis (Middleton 2005: 93). For Middleton (2005: 27) this reconstructionist approach leads to a virtual consensus of interpreting *imago Dei* through the royal functional model, at least among biblical scholars

Generally, two reconstructed parallels are drawn between ancient Near-East texts and practices and *imago Dei* in Genesis (2005: 93-94). These are, "the widespread practice of Egyptian and Mesopotamian kings setting up statues or images of themselves in lands where they are physically absent; and Egyptian and Mesopotamian references to kings (and sometimes priests) as the image of various deities." As Ruston (2004: 277) explains, in the "Near-Eastern royal ideology: king is a god's 'image' in the sense of the god's viceroy or representative on earth." Also "Babylonian creation texts describe the king as the image of a god, clearly a belief designed to enhance royal authority" (Ruston 2004: 277). The image was thus limited only to the royalty "while human beings in general are created to be the slaves of the gods" (Ruston 2004: 277).

Emanating from this notion of viewing kings as the image of God is the ideology that designates kings as representatives of God in a dual sense (Middleton 2005: 118). They first represent God in terms of their political duty (Middleton 2005: 118-119). Secondly, they represent God in terms of their cultic duty (Middleton 2005: 119). As Middleton (2005: 119) states, "In these political and cultic duties, the king represents the interests – and mediates the rule – of Marduk *[god*] on earth" *(my emphasis added)*. Thus, the royal ideology is such that, kings are called to function as the image of God in that they represent God and mediate between God and the masses.

This setting apart of kings as the only image of God *vis-a-vis* king's subjects had far more anthropological implications. It meant that the king "was thought in a fairly strong sense, to be a physical, local incarnation of deity, analogous to that of a cult status or image of a god." (Middleton 2005: 110). Therefore, "Just as cult statues functioned as intermediaries between the god and the people, supposedly able to

pronounce oracles and cure sickness, so the king as the image of the god was thought to mediate the god's presence and power on earth" (Middleton 2005: 111). Therefore, noting this historical context, *imago Dei* in Genesis is interpreted as Creator setting up his statues (humanity) to represent him on earth (2005: 104).

However, considering the Mesopotamian ideology that accorded *imago Dei* to a few elite people in society, Genesis 1:26-7 stands as a sharp critique of this ideology (Middleton 2005: 204).

> But whereas power in the Babylonian and Assyrian empires was concentrated in the hands of a few, power in Genesis 1 is diffused or shared. No longer is the image of God or its associated royal language ("rule" or "subdue") applied to only some privileged elite. Rather, all human beings, male and female, are created as God's royal stewards in the world, entrusted with the privileged task of ruling on God's behalf (1: 26-28)

Imago Dei of Genesis democratises the Mesopotamian royal ideology to all people giving every individual dignity and agency (Middleton 2005: 204). Tutu (2010: 1-2) marvels at the assertion of these biblical narratives, considering the purpose for which it was formed. These creation myths were to serve as a "propaganda piece designed to lift the sagging spirits of a people in exile whose fortunes are at low ebb, surrounded as they are by the impressive monuments to Babylonian hegemony" (Tutu 2010: 1-2). Against this backdrop, one would expect Jewish authors to accord the *Imago Dei* to Jews only (Tutu 2010: 2). However, in an astonishing move, the Jewish authors "assert that, it is all human beings who have been created in the divine image" (Tutu 2010: 2).

Hence, *imago Dei* in Genesis 1 is seen as a royal functional construal that challenges Mesopotamian anthropology by affirming the human dignity of every human being. As Middleton (2005: 205) states, "the starting point for a reading of the primeval history as a critique of Mesopotamian ideology is the claim in Genesis 1 that God granted a royal-priestly identity as *imago Dei* to all humanity at creation" (Middleton 2005: 205).

2.7.2 Critiquing of the royal functional model of imago Dei

However, a virtual consensus of OT scholars notwithstanding, the royal functional model has received its fair share of criticism from some of the OT scholars. Schuele (2011: 8), for instance, questions the parallels that are drawn between *imago Dei* of Genesis and the royal function of the ancient Near Eastern royal ideology. While conceding that structural parallels might exist between "*imago Dei* and ancient Near Eastern royal ideology," he, nonetheless contends that "once examined critically, these parallels are revealed to be far too general, and misleading at decisive points, to be able to comprehend the meaning of the image of God in the context of the priestly creation narrative" (Schuele 2011: 8).

Schuele (2011: 8), thus, argues that this leading model (royal functional) of interpreting *imago Dei* is faced with "some of the exegetical difficulties that arise in relation to Genesis 1: 26-28" which unveil that this model "has only limited compatibility with the concept of the *imago Dei*" To illustrate, he highlights exegetical discussion of Genesis 1: 28, considering the two terms (*kada* and *kabas*) that have been used as support of the instruction to dominate (*dominium terrae)* (Schuele 2011: 8). For Schuele (2011: 8) the issue of dominion, which he argues suggests violent rule and subjugation, is not consistent with the ideas of *imago Dei* as purported by the royal functional model. This is because one cannot wish away the violent connotation of the *dominium terrae* when considering the word *kabas* (Schuele 2011: 8). Hence, he argues "in this respect, the biblical *dominium terrae* does not at all fit with the idea of dealing carefully and considerately with creation." His rhetorical question sums up his logic; "Why then do we have this aggressive language of "rule" and "subjugation" in the context of humanity's mission in creation?" (Schuele 2011: 9).

Furthermore, the 'commission' to 'rule' is itself disingenuous, and thus inconsistent with the parallels drawn between the ancient Near Eastern royal ideology and *imago Dei* (Schuele 2011: 9). As Schuele (2011: 9) argues, "in a certain sense the order to rule seems to resist the very logic of the events of creation." This is because, by the time humanity is created everything is in order, to an extent that there is little humans can do to change things (Schuele 2011: 9). Therefore, Schuele (2011: 9) concludes that the royal functional view of *imago Dei* does not fit the sequence of creation; "If

one stays with the image of priestly creation narrative [considering how late in the sequence of creation humanity were created with nothing much to do]…then the human being is in a particularly limited position to rule over the world" (Schuele 2011: 9).

Although, Schuele offers an excogitative criticism of the most accepted model of interpreting *imago Dei*, at least among OT; and his alternative model, namely concrete forms, is 'palatable,' to say the least, however, this research thesis shall maintain the royal functional model as its theoretical framework.

Sands (2010: 39), identifies at least three reasons why the royal functional model is superior to its alternatives; (a) Against the substantialistic model, it does not rely on extra-biblical anthropologies (i.e. classical Greek philosophy) and subsequent speculative thrust, rather it relies on a "historical-critical biblical scholarship;" (b) Against the relational model, while accepting the relational ethos of humanity, however, "it merely notes that they are much else besides and claims that humans image God when the whole persons mediate the divine presence, power, and rule; (c) lastly, it offers an anthropological view that is undergirded by Theo-proxy – hence, Sand's preference of the terms Royal vocational rather than Royal functional, as he admits that this model, "provides theological grounding for an actively engaged, missional approach to the world (Sands 2011: 39)"

This limited historical review of how early Christian thinkers deliberated on *imago Dei*, shows that, central to their endeavour, was a theological quest to unpack what does it mean to be created in the image God – is it what we have, do or are (Vanhoozer 1997: 163). Contemporary theologians, building on the ideas of their predecessors, have asked not where is the *imago Dei* in humanity, rather what is the implication for being created in God's image? – Often illuminating the connection between *imago Dei* and human dignity.

2.8 *Imago Dei* and human dignity

2.8.1 A conceptual crisis of Modern concept of human dignity.
According to Witte (2013: 9), human dignity is a 'revamped principle adopted by the 'new' world in the late 1940s. This emerged as the world responded to the aftermath of World War II; "Hitler's death camps and Stalin's gulags where all sense of humanity and dignity have been brutally sacrificed" (Witte 2013: 9). Responding to this context "the world had seized anew on the ancient concept of human dignity, claiming this as the "ur-principle" of a new world order" (Witte 2013: 9). The Universal Declaration of Human Right of 1948, for instance, begins by affirming the dignity of every human being in the world as a principle underpinning human rights (Witte 2013: 9, Ruston 2004: 3) Hence Ruston (2004: 3) argues that the phrase has been in popular use following the end of World War II.

From the 1940s the utilization of the concept of human dignity has a drastic growth such that Witte (2013: 11) argues that it "has become ubiquitous to the point of cliché." Since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, for instance, "there have been more than 1,000 books and more than 10, 0000 scholarly articles on dignity and related concepts published in English alone" (Witte 2013: 11). In concurrence Soulen & Woodhead (2006: 1-2) state that human dignity is now a principal foundation of the "constitutions of many countries of diverse political compositions, such as Ireland, Greece, Guatemala, Turkey, and South Korea (to name but a few)…Moreover, the concept of human dignity shapes a range of contemporary debates on issues from war and poverty to abortion, human cloning, and euthanasia." Consequently:

> We now read regularly of the dignity of animals, plants, and nature; the dignity of luxury, pleasure, and leisure; the dignity of identity, belonging, and difference; the dignity of ethnic, cultural, and linguistic purity; the dignity of sex, gender, and sexual preference; the dignity of aging, dying, and death (Witte 2013: 11).

However, this very "pervasiveness of the discourse of dignity in modern Western life marks the extent to which the meaning and substance of the term have become vague and contested" (Soulen & Woodhead 2006: 2 *my*). For this reason, Stetson (1998: 14)

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laments trivialization of human dignity. He argues that such trivialization is symptomatic to "New liberalism" (Stetson 1998: 14). According to Stetson (1998: 14), contemporary liberalism "shares the anthropological optimism of the Enlightenment." As a consequence, new liberalism "is essentially subjectivist, deeply addicted to "change" in man *[sic],* and inveterately inclined to reliance on government as the main engine of social 'improvement'" (Stetson 1998: 14 my *emphasis added*). This Enlightenment anthropological optimism ideology, which underpins new liberalism discourse about humanity (i.e. as a changing entity whose identity is "fabrication of history and culture") overlooks basic features of humanity, including their dignity (Stetson 1998: 14).

Thus Soulen & Woodhead (2006: 9) identify two negative consequences of the modern ubiquity of the principle of human dignity; namely, the subjective trust of human dignity and decontextualization of human dignity from its religious context. These modern human dignity eventualities are worth discussing.

Firstly, the modern ubiquity of human dignity principle has coincided with modern anthropology of subjectivity. This subjective anthropology extricates humanity from its wider context but instead "sees the rise of a conception of a "substantial self," in which meaning, value, and substance are located in the self itself and, more specifically, in some aspect of subjectivity" (Soulen & Woodhead 2006: 9). Human dignity is thus, interpreted subjectively (Soulen & Woodhead 2006: 9).

The consequence of this modern anthropology regarding the human dignity principle is that opposing sides can claim the principle of human dignity for their opposing views. Schwobel (2006: 44) illustrates this crisis of human dignity. Discussing the opinions on both sides of the biotechnological research for medical intent debate, he makes the following observation;

> The critics of biotechnological research protest against production of human embryos for their use in medical research by appealing to the principle of human dignity that must also be applied to the very early stage of human life, while the protagonists of genetic engineering argue for genetic research with human embryos in order to allow

people whose dignity now seems to be restricted by a serious disability or illness…(Schwobel 2006: 44-45).

Hence, Witte (2013: 11-12) argues that on the one hand, the ubiquity of the principle of human dignity is a testament to its universality, while on the other hand, it is a threat to its universality. The latter is evident in scenarios where opposing parties resort to the same principle of human dignity to defend their opposing views, or action (as noted above).

Secondly, modernity has removed human dignity from its theological and ecclesiological context (Soulen & Woodhead 2006: 13-14). According to Soulen & Woodhead (2006: 14-15), this removal proves dangerous for the concept of human dignity. While acknowledging good intentions of removing human dignity from its theological and ecclesiological context, however, the outcomes of this removal have dire consequences, good intentions notwithstanding (Soulen & Woodhead 2006: 15). As a consequence of this removal, for example, human dignity becomes "insufficient to sustain the ethical and metaphysical weight that modern rights-talk would place upon it" (Soulen & Woodhead 2006: 15).

Secular theorists are not alone in this endeavour. Christian thinkers have also succumbed to this process. As Soulen & Woodhead (2006: 9) contend that this process of decontextualization includes the works of theologians "who chose to bracket dimensions of Christian thought as irrelevant to a conception of human dignity" (Soulen & Woodhead 2006: 9). Divorcing dignity from religion, firstly, insinuates that issues of human dignity originated in the Enlightenment era, (a period of 'Reason' that saw the separation between religion and secular). In opposition to this view, Ruston (2004: 287) correctly points out that transcendent beliefs – i.e. belief in the dignity of all human beings, "equality, natural liberty, universal human right" etc – have their origins, not in the modern secular insight, rather owes it to Christian anthropology, namely *imago Dei;*

> The universalism that is intrinsic to belief in our common origin at the hands of the one Creator God, reinforced by the gospel commands of Christ ('teach all nations';

'love your neighbour as yourself') has played an essential part in forming these transcendent beliefs, which are often taken for granted as modern, secular discoveries

The modern concept of human dignity (subjective trust and human dignity that is de-contextualised from religion) results in the human dignity is faced with a conceptual crisis in the contemporary society (Soulen & Woodhead 2006: 1-2). This crisis threatens "its ability to serve as a meaningful point of orientation for human thought and action" (Soulen & Woodhead 2006: 1). To overcome this crisis, human dignity needs a theological foundation; *imago Dei*.

2.8.2 Imago Dei as a religious foundation for human dignity

Tutu (2010) asserts that human dignity and theology are connected through the foundations of *Imago Dei*. Ruston (2004: 288) concurs:

> The image of God doctrine – and its equivalents in other major religions – delivers a belief in basic equality that would be very difficult, if not impossible, to arrive at by considering the secular reality of human life, with its multitude of ways in which human beings are ranged against each other on scales of value.

For Tutu (2010: 1) "the Bible makes some quite staggering assertions about human beings which came to be the foundations of the culture of basic human rights that have become so commonplace in our day and age." He locates scriptural foundations of Human rights in both creation stories in Genesis 1 - 2 (Tutu 2010: 1-2). According to Tutu (2010:1), both stories are unambiguous that "human beings are the pinnacle, the climax, of the creative activity." Tutu demonstrates this pinnacle by considering the first creation story. Prior to the creation of human being, the creation formula in the words, "Let there be…" remains the same (Tutu 2010: 1). By altering this formula at the point of creation of a human being, Tutu (2010: 1) argues that "the author signals that something quite out of the ordinary is about to happen…" As Tutu (2010: 1) illustrates, "At this climatic point God first invites his heavenly court to participate with him, 'Let us create man in our image' (Gen. 1: 26). Something special has come into being."

According to Tutu, these assertions have profound implications. They imply that each person is imbued with "profound dignity and worth" (Tutu 2010: 3). Thus, trampling on people's dignity is not just evil, but rather "it is positively blasphemous, for it is tantamount to spitting in the face of God" (Tutu 2010: 3). Therefore, Tutu (2010:3) maintains that these biblical assertions (i.e. *Imago Dei*) compel Christians to stand up against any form of oppression, and violation of human rights. "In the face of injustice and oppression, it is to disobey God not to stand up in opposition to that injustice and that oppression" (Tutu 2010: 3). In other words, human rights are a religious duty (Tutu 2010: 3).

While Tutu (2010), outwardly regards *imago Dei* as a religious foundation for Human rights, Waldron (2010) cautions against this tendency. Although he concedes that the doctrine of *Imago Dei* may be viewed as a religious foundation for human rights, however, he objects to the universality of this assertion (Waldron 2010: 217). According to Waldron (2010: 217), this assertion is only limited to adherence of Abrahamic religions. Beyond that community, it "excites considerable anxiety among those who reject a religious worldview or who are, for other reasons, committed to an approach to rights that can sustain itself in a multi-faith society" (Waldron 2010: 217). To highlight his views, Waldron (2010) discusses two categories of misgivings about the doctrine; those outside Christianity and those within Christianity.

In discussing misgivings from outside Christianity, Waldron (2010: 218) resorts to John Rawls' comment, which he refers to a Rawlsian. This is an idea, which rejects the use of any religious or philosophical doctrine in matters of litigations and justice (Waldron 2010: 218); as this would "problematize the legitimacy of individual rights in the eyes of many citizens" (Waldron 2010: 218). For instance, *Imago Dei* has no appeal to atheist and followers of other religions (Waldron 2010: 218).

Secondly, *Imago Dei* is not necessarily a prerequisite for the promotion of Human rights (Waldron 2010: 218). Waldron (2010: 218) cites one of the Proponents of this view, Anthony Appiah who argued, "…we do not need to agree that we are all created in the image of God…to agree that we do not want to be tortured by government officials."

Thirdly, although the doctrine of *imago Dei* is found in Judeo-Christian texts, both religions differ in how they interpret these texts (Waldron 2010: 219). Firstly, one encounters the difficulty of exegetical debates about creation stories between Christian and Jewish hermeneutics (Waldron 2010: 219). The former suggests that human beings are created in the image of God (Waldron 2010: 219). However, as far as the latter is concerned, "some Jewish rabbinical sources suggest that there might be two phases of the creation of human being, with the image of God playing a different role in each" (Waldron 2010: 219). Thus, Waldron (2010: 219) raises a question as to which hermeneutic should be accepted by human right theorists.

Within Christianity itself, attempts to understand *Imago Dei* are made complicated when one considers its meaning in relation to other doctrines (Waldron 2010: 219). For instance, when considering the doctrine of *Imago Dei* and the fall, Human right theorists must wrestle with two damning views about the image of God in us. These are "Calvin's doctrine that the image of God in us is now but a 'relic' or Martin Luther's teaching that since the Fall we are more 'like' the devil than 'like' or 'in the image of God" (Waldron 2010: 219).

Furthermore, there are complexities of theological understanding of *imago Dei*. Welz (2011: 76) contends that for much of importance placed on the doctrine of *Imago Dei*, the phrase "image of God" is only recorded three times in the Hebrew bible. Therefore, there is a discrepancy between exegetical literature and dogmatic theology (Welz 2011: 75). This is attested by different historical models of interpreting *Imago Dei*; namely, functional, mimetic, relational, and the dynamic model (Welz 2011: 76-78, 78-80, 80-83, 83-85).

However, in raising these issues, Waldron does not refute the relationship between theological agenda and human right agenda. As he states, "It is not my intention to refute the interest of *imago Dei* for human rights theory. But I want to insist on due caution and counsel against just grabbing at the doctrine because it seems like an impressive bauble to produce as a distinctive religious foundation" (Waldron 2010: 220). He further states, "I say again that awareness of these various objections…is not fatal to regarding *imago Dei* as a foundation for human rights. My arguments at this point is to slow us down, in a way that is consonant with what we all acknowledge is

the seriousness with which the foundational question should be approached" (Waldron 2010: 222). Welz (2011: 75) seems to concur when he states that *Imago Dei* must be understood as "a complex sign that is at once iconic, indexical, and symbolic" (Welz 2011: 75).

Although the above authors discussed *imago Dei* in relation to human rights, their discussion has implications for human dignity. Their calls for caution against the view which associates *imago Dei* with human right issues is simultaneously a caution against the view of associating *imago Dei* and human dignity. Punt (2013), for instance, is in agreement with this cautious trajectory in his discussion of imago Dei as a theological foundation for human dignity. Commenting about New Testament authors, he argues that, they were infused in the Mediterranean context whose inextricable makeup was hierarchical and unequal power relations (Punt 2013: 1). These authors, therefore, "could not and did not escape the ubiquitous and overwhelming impact of their social context…" (Punt 2013: 1). Hence, he maintains that using these authors in a discussion about human dignity – a concept that did not exist in their time of writings as the social context depicts – is a conflicting loyalty (Punt 2013: 1). This is because such attempt is faced with insurmountable challenges relating to temporal and spatial distance; "text written from a context and attitude based on inequality….texts exhibiting a range of different and even contradicting sentiments and positions; texts which have been enlisted as sanction for various indignant convictions and practices" (Punt 2013: 2).

Whereas Waldron (2010) and Welz (2011) caution against 'uncritical' adoption of doctrine of *imago Dei* as a religious foundation for human right – including Punt's (2013) caution against this tendency in relation to NT writings and human dignity – Witte (2010) maintains that issues of human right and dignity are in dire need of religious foundation. Using a term coined by Cotler (1998), he argues that for the past three decades the world has been living in 'Dickensian era' (Witte Jr 2010: 8). That is, for the past three decades "we have seen the best human rights protections inscribed on the books, but some of the worst human rights violations inflicted on the ground" (Witte Jr 2010: 8). According to Witte Jr (2010: 10), the discrepancy between celebrated human rights on paper and the lived experiences, which is dominated by the violation of the same rights, illuminates the limitations of secular human rights

paradigm standing on their own. On their own "human rights principles are as much the problem as they are the solution in a number of current religious and cultural conflicts" (Witte Jr 2010: 11). Thus, he insists that 'Dickensian era' highlights important lesson for the world; "human rights norms need a human rights culture to be effective" (Witte Jr 2010: 11). For Witte Jr (2010: 12) such a human right culture is found in religion; "human rights norms need religious narrative to ground them" (Witte Jr 2010: 12). In other words, "… religion and human rights need to be brought into a closer symbiosis" (Witte Jr 2010: 12).

This is because *Imago Dei* is central to the historical establishment of universal human rights (which has bearing for human dignity). According to Ruston, universal human rights have natural rights, which are underpinned by the doctrine of *imago Dei*, as their foundation (2004: 271). He demonstrates this connection by discussing two senses, in which doctrine of *imago Dei* has been used; namely, active and passive sense (Ruston 2004: 269).

The active sense of *imago Dei* emphasises the implication the doctrine has "for the way in which a person should conduct his or her life on this earth" (Ruston 2004: 269). Early thinkers such as Augustine and Aquinas were preoccupied with this sense of *imago Dei*. For instance, interpreting Gen 1: 27, Augustine argues that God bestowed honour on humankind, which is above animals when he gave them intellectual faculties; however, these must be manifested in the manner in which humankind behave, lest they are similar to animals (Ruston 2004: 269). Also, Aquinas' moral theology is influenced by this sense (Ruston 2004: 269). This sense, therefore, connects imago Dei with the expected way in which human beings must conduct themselves; how human beings must behave.

The passive sense of *imago Dei* considers how "persons bearing the image should (or should not) be treated by others" (Ruston 2004: 269). Modern thinkers emphasised this sense, as they were faced with oppressive systems that denied human dignity of others. For instance, in the campaigns against slavery in the Americas, Fredrick Douglass (1818-1895) used the passive sense of *imago Dei*, when he maintained that slavery marred the image of God in humankind (Ruston 2004: 269). This is because, Christian anthropology, maintains the intrinsic approach to human dignity. That is, it

speaks of "human dignity in its most traditional, Judeo-Christian sense" (Stetson 1998: 15). This is an acknowledgement that "the conviction that all human beings have inherent value and dignity, simply on the basis that they are human, is more often than not grounded in the confession that they are created *imago Dei*, in the image of God, in Christian thought" (Kotze 2014: 7).

2.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have reviewed literature related to one of the key research concepts of this study; the concept of *imago Dei*. I have used both the historical and the thematic approach in order to review the conceptual development of this key concept.

In the historical approach, I have shown that *imago Dei* has been approached either through 'classical' systematic or biblical approaches. The former, confronted with a paucity of biblical reference to *imago Dei* in Genesis texts, have resorted to extra-biblical anthropological sources, namely ancient Greek philosophy (Aristotelianism and Platonism) to discuss what it means to be created in the image of God – this produced two models of interpreting *imago Dei*, namely substantialistic and relational models. The latter draws parallels between the Near Eastern anthropology and the Genesis text – hence interpreting the *imago Dei* in Genesis text through the royal functional model.

In the thematic approach, I have highlighted the connection between theology and anthropology. I have discussed how *imago Dei* is a theological foundation for human dignity. This discussion was conducted through its related themes; Modern conception of human dignity, which de-contextualizes the concept from its religious context; and the concept of viewing *imago Dei* as a theological foundation for human dignity.

Methodology and the theoretical framework of the study

3.1 Conceptualising faith-healing

This study investigates faith-healing practices in the NPCCs in relation to *imago Dei*. While I am aware of faith-healing practices in other strands of Christianity in Africa (i.e. Missional churches, AICs, and classical Pentecostals), I have limited this study to NPCCs. This is because; it is this brand of Christianity which has recently reshaped discourse about faith-healing. For instance, Senah (2002: 59), argues that there is a resurgence of faith-healing in Ghana and sub-Saharan Africa, led by NPCCs that has become part of the medical discourse; "The sudden emergence of several independent churches and healing centres or camps, headed by self-appointed bishops, prophets and prophetesses, pastors, and general overseers, reflect this 'religious renaissance'" (Senah 2002: 59).

According to Pretorius (2009: 2) whereas medical practitioners can describe the process of healing – while they rarely use the concept 'healing' – faith-healing practitioners on the other hand, loosely use the term 'healing' without specifying how the healing takes place. Unlike, modern medicines, in faith-healing, the verb 'healing' has a transitive meaning; "healing is viewed as the result of Godly intervention" (Pretorius 2009:2). In other words, faith-healing is defined as "an attempt to utilise religious or spiritual means, such as prayer, mental practices, spiritual insights, or other techniques to prevent illness or to cure diseases and improve health (2009: 2)." In these processes, when health is restored, "the products of such an intervention constitute miracles" (2009: 3).

Thus, by faith-healing practices, I refer to acts of healing that utilise religious means – i.e. prayer, an invocation of the Holy Spirit, casting out of demons, and the likes. It is a practice done with a view that in an illness God will intervene; and when health is restored, it is always considered as a miracle.

3.2 Methodology of the study

This study is a non-empirical study, which uses a methodology of qualitative content analysis. Through this methodology, I have analysed data from the RCL Right

Commission of inquiry on *the commercialisation of religion and abuse of belief systems* (2017), concerning two NPCCs' religious leaders (Pastor Mnguni and Prophet Daniel). This collected data is in the form of audio-visual recordings. According to Du Plooy-Cilliers et al (2014: 191 *my emphasis added*), qualitative content analysis is a process whereby a "researcher identifies subjective themes and patterns that may emerge from a particular *data.*" I have, therefore, analysed these audio-visual recordings by unearthing some of the theological themes related to faith-healing practices in the NPCCs. In this case, I have used the thematic analysis approach for this qualitative content analysis method.

3.2.1 Thematic analysis Approach

The thematic approach involves a process of analysing data by identifying themes that emerge from the given data (Harding 2013: 4). Through this approach, I have analysed audio-visual recordings from the CRL Commission involving Pastor Mnguni and Prophet Daniel by identifying themes that emerged in this data, which is related to the phenomenon of this study, namely, faith-healing practices in the NPCCs in South Africa. Du Plooy-Cilliers et al (2014: 191) maintain that when qualitative content analysis uses thematic approach "the researcher is working in an interpretative paradigm with the goal of providing a thick description of the social reality mirrored in the texts" (du Plooy-Cilliers et al 2014: 191). Hence, Harding (2013: 4) concludes that Most often the thematic approach is "particularly associated with a deductive approach."

The deductive approach technique is normally defined in research parlances as a move "from general to the particular" (Harding 2013: 12). Often associated with qualitative content analysis methodology, the deductive approach uses general epistemology to discuss a particular phenomenon (Harding 2013: 12). Therefore, through Christian anthropology, namely *imago Dei* (General), I have investigated a particular phenomenon (faith-healing practices in the NPCCs). Du Plooy-Cilliers et al (2014: 234) explain the deductive approach in qualitative content analysis methodology as when "the researcher uses a conceptual framework derived from applicable theories (the general) that the researcher described in his or her study and are interpreted within the context of the specific study (the specific)." The conceptual

framework for this study is *imago Dei*, specifically the royal functional model of *imago Dei*.

3.2.2 Processes of the thematic approach

This approach involved three major processes, (Listening, transcribing, and identifying themes). In the 'listening' phase, I spent time listening to audio-visual recordings form the CRL Rights Commission involving both Pastor Mnguni and Prophet Daniels, which are accessible in the Commission's official website (https://www.crlcommission.org.za/index.html). Having listened to the audio-visual recordings, I then transcribed the data (see appendix). Lastly, from the transcript, I identified themes related to faith-healing practices as espoused by Pastor Mnguni and Prophet Daniel. These processes raise issues of 'voice' in this study.

The thematic approach assumes that I have presented an untainted interpretation of the collected data. Mezzei & Jackson argue that such presupposition is both naïve and oblivious of the power relations at play in the processes of the thematic approach, to the degree that "Qualitative researchers have for some time begun to question the ethics of representing the voices of others" (Mezzei & Jackson 2009: 2). Hence Mezzei & Jackson (2009: 3) "reject the notion that presenting data as if it speaks for itself is an answer to the problem of voice, and instead seek to practices that confront and twist voice meaning, and truth" (Mezzei & Jackson 2009: 3). To achieve this, they contend that each methodology dealing with voice of participants in the study has its limitations. Through problematising of methodologies in relation to voice, Mezzei & Jackson intend to "exhort researchers not to think lightly of their methodology" (Mezzei & Jackson 2009: 3); "We do not attempt in this book to solve the problem of voice, but to deconstruct the epistemological limits of voice" (Mezzei & Jackson 2009: 3).

3.2.3 Limitations and delimitations of the study
The methodology (nonempirical) and the approach of this study (thematic approach) limit both the process of data analysis and the finding of this study. The study would have benefited more with the empirical methodology. I would have had more insight had I had more time to consult with both Pastors and the congregation involved in this

phenomenon. However, time constrains and the small scale of this paper (i.e. short dissertation), were limitations that were obviated by the choice of a nonempirical methodology, albeit with overt pros and cons.

Also, using the thematic approach, I have investigated the phenomenon of faith-healing practices through a particular theoretical framework, namely the doctrine of *imago Dei*. According to Du Plooy-Cilliers et al (2014: 276) each and every choice the researcher makes during the process of the research serves as a delimitation of the research. "Your choice of a purpose for your research study, your research questions, the variables you choose to test, the theoretical perspective you adopt and the population you choose to investigate are all delimiting factors" (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al 2014: 276). The thematic approach chosen for this study is, therefore, a limitation in as far as it is a delimitation from the theoretical framework (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al (2014: 276).

The delimitation from theoretical framework in this study is the choice of the doctrine of *imago Dei* which I have chosen to investigate a phenomenon of faith healing practices in the NPCCs. If one considers *imago Dei* as a traditional epistemology *vis-a-vis* the phenomenon of faith healing practices in the NPCCs as a subculture, the delimitation may present a research study as influenced by a traditionalist motif – which intends to use traditional epistemologies to critique emerging subcultures – as opposed to the scientific quest, which seeks to use subcultures as tools of destabilising the superiority of the established cultures. In other words, the delimitation of the approach in this study raises concerns for the scientific clout of this research paper.

Nevertheless, by claiming a systematic three-step process (i.e. listening, transcribing, and identifying themes), this approach may present a resounding case for a scientific quest. However, there are some limitations to these steps that are worth considering.

The first step in the thematic approach involved listening to the audio-visual recordings of the CRL Rights Commission of inquiry into *the commercialisation of religion and abuse of belief systems* (2017). Considering that I am an ordained Anglican minister, it is a given that I investigated a phenomenon that was outside my tradition. In other words, in this study, I am an outsider. As an outsider, how I

listened, was shaped by my prejudices and preferences. Mazzei & Jackson (2009: 2) argue "Letting readers 'hear' participant voices and presenting their 'exact words' as if they are transparent is a move that fails to consider how as researchers we are always already shaping those 'exact words' through the unequal power relationships present and by our own exploitative research agendas and timelines" Therefore, my own prejudices and preferences were influential in the manner in which I listened to the audio-visual recordings.

Noting the 'outsider' limitation in the process of listening, I attempted to analyse data by going beyond what the immediate data presented. According to Maker (2009: 35) "An authentic listening to the cultural Other should produce more than a fascination with the exotic: it should provoke an awakening to the cultural 'self.'" Through engaging scholars who are vested in the theological character of NPCCs', I have listened to the presented data assisted by Scholarly work, and thus emancipated the data from my own prejudices and preferences.

The second process of transcribing also had its limitations. Mezzei & Jackson's (2009: 2) rhetorical questions highlight the limitations of this process:

> Who decides what 'exact words' should be used in the accounts? Who was listened to, and how were they listened to? How might voices be distorted and fictionalized in the process of reinscription? And indeed, how are those voices necessarily distorted and fictionalized in the process of reinscription? The task would then be to examine whose interests are served by particular reinscription and whose are further marginalized.

Transcribing processes, therefore, is inextricably engulfed in the interpretation of data. This is because "Transcribing inevitably involves an element of interpretation; spoken language needs punctuation to be added to it as it is written down and the position of full stops, dashes, and so on, reflects the transcriber's interpretation of what was said" (Harding 2013: 50).

The third process of identifying emerging themes involved interpretation. In this regard, "The truth, then, is constructed partly out of what the researchers are willing

to pay attention to and how they interpret what they are being told" (Marker 2009: 35-36) However, these identified themes emerged from the answers the two NPCCs' religious leaders gave to the panel of the Commission during the proceeding of the CRL Rights Commission's investigative study. These themes, emanating from these answerers, were focused on the question of faith-healing practices. As a researcher in this study, I had no control of both the questions and the answers provided. Thus, I could not have influenced data, and hence sullied the findings.

3.2.4 Ethical considerations of the study

This study has ethical considerations as far as this methodology and the approach of the study is concerned. Harding (2013: 24) rightfully argues that "a researcher has a moral responsibility, both to respondents and to those who may want to conduct social research in the future, to ensure that their study is conducted ethically."

I have not obtained consent from both Pastor Mnguni and Prophet Daniel regarding the data of this study. However, considering that "following a ruling by the High Court, the proceedings of the *[CRL Rights Commission of inquiry into the commercialisation of religion and abuse of belief systems]* were open to the media and everything recorded audio-visually" (CRL Rights Commission   report 2017: 7 *my emphases added*), the data was available to the public. The data, therefore, belongs not so much to the aforementioned NPCCs' religious leaders as opposed to the public domain.

Nevertheless, public domain notwithstanding, Pastor Mnguni's and Prophet Daniel's privacy is an ethical issue to be considered in this study – particularly given the absence of consent. Harding (2013: 26) warns that "In the current age of reality television, privacy is a concept that often seems to be of little importance. However, it is an important element of social research." Hence, whereas the commission might have interrogated Pastor Mnguni and Prophet Daniel about matters related to personal life, and thus bordering on their privacy, in this data analysis I have omitted any information emerging from the data which related to personal information. As Harding exhorts in situations where data collected is available in the public domain, "it is important that the researcher limits their data collection to information that is essential to the topic under study" (Harding 2013: 26). For this ethical consideration, I

have limited the collected data only to NPCCs' theologies concerning faith-healing practices, which is the phenomenon under the investigation in this study.

Also, the CRL Rights Commission is a chapter Nine Institution in terms of the 1996 South African institution which was "established to guard, promote democracy and the rights of the citizens of the country" (CRL Rights Commission report 2017: 7). Although chapter Nine Institutions are part of the government, "they operate outside government and partisan politics, and they are free from interference by other organs of state" (CRL Rights Commission report 2017: 7). With this constitutional autonomy, the CRL Rights Commission conducted an investigative study rather than the litigious pursuance. "As per the mandate of the Commission for the Promoting and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities (CRL Rights Commission), a unanimous decision was made to undertake an investigative study regarding the commercialisation of religion and abuse of people's belief systems in South Africa" (CRL Rights Commission   report 2017: 10). Therefore, the data content of audio-visual recordings cannot litigiously implicate any of the people who participated in this investigative study, including comments and views expressed by both Pastor Mnguni and Prophet Daniel.

3.3 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of this study is human dignity from the Christological anthropology, namely the royal functional model of *imago Dei*. In chapter two, I have discussed complexities of interpreting *imago Dei* in Genesis. I have shown that two approaches have been used, the 'classical' systematic approach, which tended to favour either the substantialistic or the relational model of *imago Dei*; and the biblical approach, which favoured the royal functional model.

The royal functional model of *imago Dei* takes into cognisance the ancient Near-East anthropological worldview – as evident in its cultural practices and religious texts – and considers it as influential to Israel's writings about *imago Dei* in Genesis (Middleton 2005: 93). Hence, *imago Dei* in Genesis 1 is seen as a royal functional construal that challenges Mesopotamian anthropology by affirming the human dignity of every human being. As Middleton (2005: 205) states, "the starting point for a reading of the primeval history as a critique of Mesopotamian ideology is the claim in

Genesis 1 that God granted a royal-priestly identity as *imago Dei* to all humanity at creation" (Middleton 2005: 205).

As already noted, faith-healing practices in the NPCCs raise concerns for human dignity. This study, therefore, seeks a theoretical framework, which has human dignity as its perspective. Hence, the study fervours the biblical approach, in the form of the royal functional model of *imago Dei*. I, therefore, consider the Christian anthropology, namely the royal functional model of *imago Dei,* as an apt framework for this study.

3.3.1 The bilingualism advantage of the royal functional model of imago Dei.
The modern world demands re-imagining of human dignity discourse. This process requires "a multi-disciplinary, multi-religious, and multi-cultural exercise" (Witte 2013: 12). This is because, "Many disciplines, religions, and cultures around the globe have unique sources and resources, texts and traditions that speak to human dignity and rights" (Witte 2013: 12). In chapter two, I have discussed how different approaches to *imago Dei*, the Systematic (i.e. substantialistic and relational models) and the Biblical approach (The royal functional model) both offer different ways of approaching human dignity through the doctrine of *imago Dei*. Witte (2013: 12) maintains that each of these communities should be offered the opportunity to speak with its voice and resources on human dignity.

However, Witte (2013: 12) warns that each community should seek to develop a conception of human dignity that is influenced by bilingualism. It should have "an ability to speak with insiders and outsiders alike about their unique understanding of the origin, nature and purpose of human dignity and human rights" (Witte 2013: 12). I have chosen the theoretical framework of the biblical approach of the royal functional model of *imago Dei* precisely because of its bilingual affinity. I argue that the royal functional model of *imago Dei* has the ability to speak to both the insiders (biblical scholars) and outsiders (systematic theologians). It remains faithful to the exegetical thrust of biblical scholars by locating the *imago Dei* in Genesis in its literary and historical context; and by identifying implication for the royal functional model of *imago Dei* in relation to human dignity, it remains faithful to the speculative thrust of systematic theologians who consider what it means to be created in the image of God.

The biblical approach of the royal functional model of *imago Dei*, therefore, speaks to both the biblical scholars and systematic theologians alike.

Thus, I have chosen this model because of its bilingualism; while remaining faithful to biblical exegesis, it furthermore discusses implications of its model for contemporary world – thus associating it with systematic quests of speculative quests. For instance, it combines both the active and the passive sense of *imago De*i. That is, the royal functional model of *imago Dei* speaks to how humans ought to conduct themselves as Kings (active sense), and how they ought to be treated by other human beings as Royalty (passive sense) without losing its exegetical quest.

Therefore, investigating faith-healing practices in the NPCCs, which degrade the dignity of the congregants, the royal functional model of *imago Dei* is a suitable theoretical framework for this objective. Much like its critique of Near-Eastern ideology, this model stands as a sharp critic of faith-healing practices conducted in the NPCCs – where the question of degradation of human dignity is a concern.

3.4 Sample of the study

According to CRL Rights Commission report document on *the hearings on the Commercialisation of religion and abuse of people's belief systems* (2017: 53), there was a total of 85 religious and traditional institutions summoned to the commission – from mainline churches to emerging churches. Out of these 85 traditions 20 were from the NPCCs (RCL Right commission report 2017: 53). I am cognisant of the fact that the CRL Rights Commission never used the acronym NPCCs in its investigative study. However, I presupposed the NPCCs categorisation for these churches because the CRL Rights Commission   report, though designating them 'Charismatic,' parenthesised this category with the phrase; "special gifts e.g. healing" (RCL Right commission report 2017: 53) – an indication that the report speaks about the NPCCs.

Out of 20 NPCCs, I have sampled 2 as they were represented by their leaders in the commission. These are Pastor Mnguni of the *End of Time ministry* and Prophet Daniel of the *Rahaboni International Ministry*. Firstly, the scale of this study dictates that I limit the research content to these two. Secondly, the methodology of the study (deductive approach), as discussed above, confines me to these specifics. This is

because, as opposed to qualitative studies, which "tend to involve large numbers of respondents… qualitative research involves collecting more detailed information from a smaller number of people" (Harding 2013: 8) In this regard, my choice of qualitative content analysis means that this research has analysed data from a small number of people. These are two of the NPCCs religious leaders who appeared before the RCL Right Commission of inquiry *into the commercialisation of religion and abuse of belief systems* (2017).

However, the methodology and technique employed are not the only reasons why these two have been chosen. In terms of faith-healing practices that went viral on social media networks, Pastor Mnguni and Prophet Daniel were the most dominant. Thus, any research on this phenomenon needs to take into consideration the theological epistemology of these two NPCCs' religious leaders.

<center>**CHAPTER FOUR**</center>

<center>The third-wave movement of Pentecostals, the Newer Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches (NPCCs), in South Africa.</center>

4.1 Introduction

In comparison with Africa's encounter with Western missionaries of the 19th century, Christianity in Africa is currently experiencing a drastic growth unmatched anywhere in the world (Kgatle 2018: 3). This growth is commonly placed squarely on the rise and the dominance of the NPCCs (Kgatle 2018: 3, Togarasei 2015: 57). Scholars acknowledge that NPCCs is a phenomenon to be reckoned with when discussing Christianity in Africa. As Anderson argues correctly that Pentecostal-charismatic "is fast becoming one of the most significant expressions of Christianity on the continent...*[that]* we can't understand African Christianity today without also understanding this latest movement of revival and renewal" (Anderson 2002: 167 *my emphasis added*). According to Kgatle (2018: 3), "a quarter of the two billion Christian is said to be part of the movement."

There are various reasons given for this growth within NPCCs; considering that, such growth is not shared by the oldest churches in Africa (Missionary churches) nor by early Pentecostal churches – Assemblies of God (AOG) and Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) (Tastard 2017: 70; Kgatle 2018: 3). However, there is a consensus among scholars that faith-healing is the apotheosis of this brand of Christianity which is fundamental to its growth (Mashau 2013: 6).

Therefore, in order to investigate the phenomenon of faith-healing practices in the NPCCs, this chapter discusses the origins of NPCCs in South Africa. It reveals some of its differences in form and content with the early Pentecostals.

4.2 Intricacies of African Christianity.

Newer Pentecostal-charismatic Churches are part of a complicated whole, which is African Christianity. African Christianity is embedded in anthropological, missiological, and theological complexities. This is because, "African Christianity is complexed in history, structure, doctrine and practice" (Mashau 2013: 1). To emphasise this complexity, Ukah (2007: 2), for instance, prefers the term "African

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Christianities" over against a general term; "African Christianity." Generally, it is accepted, albeit not without conceptual challenges, that African 'Christianity/ies' can be discussed as consisting of three strands; Mission Churches, Pentecostals (Older and Newer), and African "Independent" (or "Initiated") Churches (Mashau 2013: 1, Ukah 2007:2, Anderson 2002: 167).

In this approach, scholars categorise Christianity through identifying the differences in form and content among these three strands African Christianity. Two views, for instance, illustrate this approach; AICs are said to be distinct from Pentecostals on the bases that the former is "initiated" by an African leader, while the latter is associated with American Missionaries; and Pentecostal features are only limited to Pentecostal Churches while they are lacking in the AICs (Meyer 2004: 452).

However, this approach has recently been critiqued. For instance, Meyer (2004: 452) maintains that identifying AIC based on an African founder prescript can be misleading as many African Pentecostals "were founded by and organised around the personality of charismatic African leader…" (Meyer 2004: 452). Also, the distinction drawn on the basis of Pentecostal features is misleading as some AICs in Southern Africa, "developed typical Pentecostal features such as *glossolalia*" (Meyer 2004: 452).

Thus, Anderson (2002: 168) contends correctly, that "it is becoming increasingly difficult to define 'Pentecostal' precisely, and if we persist with narrow perceptions of the term, we will escape *[African]* reality" (Anderson 2002: 168 *my emphasis added*). This is because, a myopic, often Western, definition of Pentecostalism as "a movement concerned primarily with the experience of the workings of the Holy Spirit and the practice of the spiritual gift" is problematic in African Christian context (Anderson 2002: 168). Such a definition in Africa would include a majority of older and newer AICs; and not exclude some missionary churches (Anderson 2002: 168). NPCCs in South Africa is part of this complexity.

4.3 Conceptualising Newer Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches (NPCCs)

Considering the intricacies of African Christianity, when conceptualising NPCCs, prudence should be the rule as opposed to an exception. This is because "by their

nature, definitions are misleading, since they tend to box 'things' taking those in the box as 'the things' and those out of the box as not" (Togarasei 2015: 58). Faced with this complexity of definition, scholars tend to disagree about the precise definition (Watt: 2006: 383), which is attested by the contested scholarly terminologies for this brand of Christianity. For instance, scholars differ whether this brand of Christianity should be designated "Church" or "Movement". Watt *(2006)*, Tastard *(2017)*, Kgatle *(2018)*, and Resane *(2017)* seem to prefer the former; while Nel *(2016)*, Pretorius *(2009)*, and Senah *(2004)* are inclined towards the latter.

Also, there is a lack of scholarly consensus about which acronym applies to this brand of African Christianity. Chimuka *(2016)* speaks of Afro-Pentecostal Churches (APC); Engelke *(2010)* prefers Pentecostal Charismatic Churches (PCCs); Anderson *(2002)* designates them Newer Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches (NPCs); Resane's *(2017)* opts for Neo Charismatic Churches (NCC); still Togaresei *(2015)* resorts to Modern Pentecostalism (MP) terminology; while Kgatle *(2018)* favours the less common academic parlance, namely Prophetic Churches (PC). These variances in terminology are indicative of intricacies involved in discussing this brand of Christianity. Even the virtually common term, Charismatic, is problematic. As Tastard (2017: 67) observes, "to group them as charismatic is only a useful shorthand. These churches could also be called independent and evangelical." Hence, Senah (2004: 61) correctly warns, "given the variety of sub-units within the group, appropriate nomen-clature *(sic)* for the entire group is always problematic *(my emphasis added)*."

Notwithstanding these terminological and definition challenges, I have resorted to the term Newer Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches, and thus the acronym, NPCCs. The first two letters of the acronym, '*N*', and '*P*' (Newer Pentecostal), indicate that these churches are a continuation from the early Pentecostals (the first wave of Pentecostalism), albeit in a new approach; the third letter, '*C*' (Charismatic) indicates that this brand is Charismatic in nature – hence connecting them to the second wave of Pentecostalism ; and the last letter '*C*s' (Church) which is pluralised, gives this brand a status of a "Church" as opposed to a less honourable, 'Movement' – which in most cases is indicative of the scholars' prejudices. Lastly, the pluralisation of the last letter intends to emphasise the heterogeneity of the NPCCs.

Therefore, by NPCCs, I am talking about Churches that, while they originated from the early Pentecostal and Charismatic movements, are displaying Pentecostalism in newer approaches (as the phenomenon of faith-healing practices demonstrates); and do not have a set uniformity about them – nevertheless, they play a vital role in African Christianity.

4.4 Approaching the origins of the NPCCs in South Africa

Unlike the study of AICS (African 'initiated' Churches), academic focus on the NPCCs, particularly its faith-healing practices, is a recent and a reluctant exercise (Senah 2004: 62; Meyer 2004: 448). Meyer explains this skewed academic appetite; "This hesitance, of course, stems from the fact that anthropologists by the nature of their discipline, were usually attracted by cultural difference and authenticity, whereas religious scholars had a strong interest in Africanization or 'inculturation'" (Meyer 2004: 448). Also, included, was the view held by anthropologies that NPCCs' faith-healing practices were a "passing craze" (Senah 2004; 62). However, the growth and Africa's attraction to the NPCCs has shifted both the attitude and the academic focus in favour of this phenomenon.

Whereas there is a scholarly consensus that NPCCs have evolved from the early Pentecostals, there are disagreements among scholars about the nature of this 'evolution'. Mashau *(2013),* for instance, considers the NPCCs as the third wave movement of Pentecostals that emerged from the early Pentecostals (first wave). While Watt *(2006)*, on the other hand, seems to speak of five waves – considering that his four-wave discourse is cut short as it ends on the 'movement' that I regard as a precursor to NPCCs. Therefore, Whatt (2006) presents an overly dichotomized discourse of Pentecostalism, which omits the NPCCs. On the other hand, Mashau's discussion is a three-wave analysis, which includes the NPCCs, the study context of this research thesis. Consequently, I adopted Mashau's three-wave analysis, although Watt's (2006) analysis was not discarded; particularly his demonstration that social context in which each wave emerged was critical in shaping the theological character of each (Watt 2006: 385).

4.5 Three-wave approach to the origins of the NPCCs in South Africa

4.5.1 First-wave: The early Pentecostals

The origin of the NPCCs in South Africa is often associated with the first wave of Pentecostalism, the classical/early Pentecostals of the early1900s (Mashau 2013: 3, Watt: 2006: 381: Resane 2017: 3). It is commonly referred to as the Azusa Street 'Movement;' a name of the Street North of California believed to be the vicinity which saw instigation of Pentecostalism through individuals such as "Dennis Bennett, Kevin Ranaghan and Kathryn Kuhlman…" (Nel 2016: 5). According to Watt (2006: 381), in South Africa, classical Pentecostals are denominations which boast more than a century of existence. These are, Assemblies of God (AOG), Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM), and FGC (Watt 2006: 381). Hence, Meyer (2004: 452) cautions against the tendency of viewing Pentecostalism as a new phenomenon in South Africa, and the rest of Africa. She argues that Pentecostal churches, "such as the Assemblies of God or the Apostolic Church, played a role in the African Christianity scene since the 1920s" (Meyer 2004: 452).

The South Africa of the early 1900s was a country recovering from multipronged social ills. As Watt (2006: 384-385) vividly paints the picture;

> South Africa was still emerging from the devastation of the South African War of 1899-1902. The economy was slowly changing from an agrarian to an industrial one. Thousands of families of all the population groups were living in abject poverty, victims of a crushing situation brought about by war, natural disaster, and racial legislation such as the Land Acts of 1913.

Classical Pentecostal 'movement', therefore, "began among the poorest of people in South Africa" (Watt 2006: 385). As Nel (2016: 1-2) concurs, early Pentecostal 'movement' consisted of the "…poor and disenfranchised people, the peasants, artisans, and labourers…" Generally, these were illiterate members (in both educational and theological senses) whose theological formation was based on their experience of Pentecostal blessing (Nel 2016: 2). According to Nel (2016: 2) "Nobody received any training; the only qualification of competence to witness about the message of Pentecost was a personal experience of the baptism with the Spirit

accompanied by speaking in tongues which the believers receive in order to be effective witness."

Therefore, Spirit Baptism and speaking in tongues were the main focus of the first wave of Pentecostalism (Mashau 2013: 3, Nel 2016: 2). With their theology of imminence of the advent, classical Pentecostals, saw evangelism as the main task of the church – speaking in tongues was a gift viewed as important for this task as it allowed Classical Pentecostal evangelists to preach in foreign countries without learning the vernacular languages (Nel 2016: 3); "What was important was to be Spirit-filled rather than to be learned" (Nel 2006: 2). Hence, Mashau (2013: 3) contends that the first wave often refers to the period in history where the word Pentecostalism was used in a technical sense (Mashau 2013:3).

4.5.2 Second-wave: The Charismatic Movement

Classical-Pentecostalism gave birth to the second wave, commonly referred to as the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement, (Mashau 2013: 3). The 1960s and 70s are often the timelines allocated for this wave (Watt 2006: 385; Mashau 2013: 3). From a South African perspective, it was a period of contradictions. Whereas the world was celebrating (and recovering from) the end of two World Wars, and the rest of Africa was celebrating independence from political bondage of colonialism, South Africa, was experiencing the reverse in the form of the Apartheid regime, with its segregation ethos, which saw the minority white privileged at the expense of the majority Black (Watt 2006: 385). Thus, for Watt (2006: 385), the charismatic movement was "almost entirely a white middle-class phenomenon…"

This movement is aptly named Pentecostal-Charismatic, because of its emphasis on Spiritual gift; "the term charismatic is derived from the Greek word *charismata*, which refers to spiritual Gift." (Mashau 2013: 3). Unlike its predecessor, which tended to be denominational, the charismatic movement – *at least in its inception* – permeated the religious ambience by its non-denominationalism (Watt 2006: 381 *my emphases added*). Consequently, Mashau (2013: 3) distinguishes the feature of Charismatic movement from classical Pentecostals as, "the resurgence of a deep unity of spirit across traditional and denominational barriers," which witnessed a "spiritual ecumenism, not organizational or ecclesiastical ecumenism (Mashau 2013: 3). Watt

(2006: 381), confirms this movement as that which "swept the historical church, both Protestants and Catholic, in the 1960s and 1970s." This saw, missionary churches, which were previously suspicious of Pentecostal flavour in worship, being opened to Spiritual renewal in their liturgies (Watt 2006: 381).

However, this ecumenical and non-denominational thrust did not last long. Anderson (2002: 169) shows that, as early as the 1970s, Charismatic churches, perhaps reacting to obdurate bureaucracy in the missionary churches, began to form, particularly in West Africa. It is the growth of these churches, which undoubtedly changed the religious landscape of African Christianity; "At first they were nondenominational churches, but in recent years, as they have expanded, many of these churches have developed denominational structures, several prominent leaders have been "episcopized," and some are now international churches" (Anderson 2002: 170). Alas! the third wave of Newer Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches emerged.

4.5.3 Third-wave: The newer Pentecostal-Charismatics

The Socio-economic crisis experienced by sub-Saharan Africa towards the end of the 20th century was paramount to the emergence of NPCCs' and, in particular, its adoption of the health-and-wealth doctrine (Ukah 2007: 11).

In the late 20th century sub-Saharan Africa faced an economic crisis caused by the rise of a global economic ideology of free-market (Ukah 2007: 11). Multilateral economic institutions (i.e. World Bank and IMF), responding to economic crisis in the 1980s, "resulted in the retrenchment of workers, high graduate unemployment, social disorganisation and near economic meltdown" (Ukah 2007:11). Ukah (200: 11) states, for example, that in Nigeria "this was a period characterised by post-civil war deprecations and increased spiritual quest for salvation and solutions to social and personal problems."

This socio-economic crisis, in a religious continent such as Africa, demanded religious answers to social questions. As Ukah (2007: 11) states, "this situation emboldened the quest for a spiritual solution to people's many problems, but also the ready acceptance of religious answers to social and material questions." Against this backdrop, "a new class of religious elite with university education and a strong

appetite for foreign ideas and taste emerged bearing a new religious message" (Ukah 2007: 11). Kgatle (2018: 3) attests that one of the attractions of NPCCs "in Southern Africa is its ability to respond to the existential and pragmatic needs faced by the modern urban congregations, including domestic and socioeconomic problems." South Africa, unlike the rest of Africa, did not feel the heat of the third wave until the 1990s following the demise of the Apartheid regime (Resane 2017: 1; Tastard 217: 67). The third wave movement, therefore, is a post-apartheid religious explosion.

In 1994, South Africa held its first democratic election, which saw the ANC (the oldest liberation movement in Africa) assuming the governance of the country under the leadership of Nelson Mandela (Tastard 2017: 67). The country exuded a sense of hope and courage for the future. As Tastard (2017: 67) claims, "With Nelson Mandela as President of South Africa, the nation had a leader of dignity, courage, and integrity who worked for reconciliation." However, the new dispensation has been faced with insurmountable challenges; social inequality, poverty, and unemployment. Commenting about the economic heart-beat of South Africa, Johannesburg, Tastard (2017: 70) makes the following remark, "To the north of Johannesburg, you can move within minutes from the affluent, California-style living of Sandton to the *favela* of Alexandra"

Furthermore, corruption has squandered the heritage of a moral high ground (Tastard 2017: 67). For instance, Johnson (2015: 41) highlights this plight when he discusses the downfall of one of the oldest cities in the province of KwaZulu Natal, Pietermaritzburg;

> In 2010 the city was placed under administration and the mayor and city manager were stripped of their powers – this following an orgy of corruption and maladministration. The city's cash reserve had fallen from R120 million in 2007 to R1.7 million. The editor-general had repeatedly cited the city for 'irregular, fruitless and wasteful expenditure' but the city council has virtually refused to exercise proper oversight.

Jonson's descriptive scenario is not an exception. As corruption escalates, funds intended for the poor and the marginalized are incessantly syphoned into the hand of

the politically connected '*bureaucratic bourgeoisie*' (Johnson 2017). This includes, but is not limited to, funds intended for essential services such as healthcare, education, and water & sanitation (Tastard 2017). Public remonstrations in a form of public protests over lack of service delivery – *which at times are sullied by violence* – are almost a daily occurrence (2017: 68). "This vacuum means that South Africans live in a society scarred by corruption, precarious healthcare, and widespread violence" (Tastard 2017: 67). For Tastard (2017: 67-68) this is a Spiritual crisis that faced South Africa. And, thus, the social context in which NPCCs emerged into.

The third wave movement (NPCCs) provides religious answers through "performance of healing miracles and predicting the future" (Kgatle 2018: 3). Hence it is sometimes referred to as the "signs and wonders Movement" (Mashau 2013: 4). Although emphasising proclamation of the Gospel message, this "is explained and demonstrated by way of supernatural signs and wonders" with emphasis on the gift of healing and prophecy, and message of prosperity (Mashau 2013: 4). Mashau (2013: 6) correctly notes that although all waves administered divine healing "it is in the third wave of Pentecostalism where healing and prosperity is highly popularized."

4.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have traced the origins of NPPCs in South Africa. I have begun by conceptualising this complicated brand of Christianity in Africa. I have explained why in this study I opted for the acronym NPCCs. I have then used, Mashau's (2013) three-wave approach to show that NPCCs is a third wave of the first wave movement of Pentecostals, the classical/early Pentecostalism. Although I focussed on character and the contexts in which each of these three waves emerged, this chapter has insinuated that NPCCs are undergirded by a theological paradigm shift from their foundational movement, the first wave of Pentecostalism. This paradigm shift is mostly unveiled in the faith-healing practices of the NPCCs.

In the next chapter (chapter five), I have discussed this paradigm shift in more detail, as I analyse data concerning theologies underpinning faith-healing practices in the NPCCs.

CHAPTER FIVE

Data analysis of theologies underpinning faith-healing practices in the NPCCs

5.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses data pertaining to faith-healing practices. The data was collected from the audio-visual recordings of the proceedings of the CRL Rights Commission's investigative study in*to the Commercialisation of religion and abuse of people's belief systems* (2017). The data relates to two religious' leaders in the NPCCs, namely Pastor Mnguni of the *End of Time ministry* and Prophet Daniel of the *Rabboni Centre Ministries.* The commission of inquiry was established following the social media networks' dissemination of video-clips and pictures of faith-healing practices.

During the proceedings of the CRL Right Commission of inquiry, the NPCCs' religious leaders resorted to certain aspects of Christian theology to defend their faith-healing practices. These defensive responses demonstrated some of the theologies underpinning faith-healing practices in the NPCCs. Ukah (2007: 11), correctly states that NPCCs "espouse specific doctrines that mark them out among other groups of Christians." Through the qualitative content-analysis method this chapter unearths theological themes underpinning these faith-healing practices. These themes are analysed through a specific doctrine of *imago Dei*, namely the royal functional model of *imago Dei*.

5.2 Theological themes emerging from data analysis

5.2.1 NPCCs' theology of ill-health: The health-and-wealth gospel

In the defence of their faith-healing practices – which raised human dignity concerns – Pastor Mnguni and Prophet Daniel were quick to emphasise the benefits obtained by their congregants as a result of these practices. When Mnguni, for example, was questioned about his faith-healing practice of jumping on the congregants, he buoyantly stated;

People are waiting that we are jumping on them, yet they are seeing the spiritual things. A person we jump on him today tomorrow they get a job.

Prophet Daniel, on the other hand, maintained that his faith-healing practice of making congregants drink petrol yielded healing benefits for his congregants;

That's why we have testimonies of people who drank they now give testimonies; "I suffered for a long time with stomach I couldn't sleep on my stomach and this happened"...It was on TV they even showed a lady who testified after drinking petrol she was healed... her sickness didn't come back, she's still there today.

Both of their responses speak to a phenomenon known as Prosperity gospel; often referred to as Health-and-wealth gospel.

There is a scholarly tendency of viewing the health-and-wealth gospel of NPCCs as a mere copycat of the North American televangelists at best, or of acerbic writings about the NPCCs' adoption of this doctrine that treat it as some kind of a 'cult', at worst. Regarding the latter, for instance, while Resane (2017: 2) acknowledges the growth of NPCCs in South Africa since its emergence in the eighties, he, however, adds the following scathing comment: "As can be expected, heresy and cultic practices emerge in the midst of any religious euphoria." In the same vein Togaresei (2015), views health-and-wealth Gospel of the NPCCs as a deviation from Christianity through supplanting Christian traditional doctrines with secular values. Togarasei's (2015: 64) polemic writing as far as the NPCCs is concerned, is succinctly put;

> Whereas classical Pentecostalism and conservative evangelicals could be accused of being concerned with winning souls for heaven (to the extent of forgetting that believers are still living in this world), modern Pentecostals seem to have gone to the other extreme. Members of these churches are so involved with the needs of this secular world that Christianity serves only as a means to attain secular goods. Issues of Christian morality are not emphasised

According to Togarasei (2015: 63), NPCCs preachers hardly preach about advent, instead, their message to their congregant centres on here and now. As Resane (2017: 4) points out the dangers; "This is one of the visible gaps in the current gospel of

health-and-wealth. It has no catechesis or paradosis to carry itself into the future. All centres on 'now' or 'never.'"

However, I contend that polemical writings about health-and-wealth gospel regarding the NPCCs that, either reduces them to a cult or renders them a mere copycat of their North American counterparts, are oblivious of experiential needs that NPCCs are confronted with. As Anderson (2002: 181) warns against this premise; it fails to "appreciate the reconstructions and innovations made by these new African movements in adapting to a radically different context…" Thus, Anderson (2002: 167), while acknowledging connections between African health-and-wealth Gospel with the North Americans – as far as financial dependency on the part of the African preacher is concerned – he, however, notes the difference of African prosperity from the North Americas. Whereas the North American prosperity Gospel stands on the ground of the earlier Charismatic individuals, (i.e. Kenith Hagin and Kenneth Copeland), in Africa, the health-and-wealth gospel is fuelled by the lived experience of socio-economic context (Anderson 2002: 167-168).

Socio-economic conditions, particularly post-apartheid economic inequalities, have contributed to the growth of NPCCs. These socio-economic conditions impact, among others, access to health care. Kotze (2014: 2) correctly points out that, "in present day, democratic South Africa there are still severe inequalities. The ever-widening gap between the rich and the poor also contributes to increasing, disparities with regard to service delivery and access to health care and medical treatment, as well as the ability to afford it." NPCCs' faith-healing practices, underpinned by the health-and-wealth gospel, attract the emotionally and economically vulnerable adherers (Tastard 2019: 67).

The health-and-wealth gospel assures its adherers of healing through faith. It is based on the teaching that through Christ's atonement healing is available to all believers here and now (Pretorius 2006: 4). Therefore, "every Christian, without exception, should be physically healthy and materially prosperous" (Pretorius 2006: 4). On the surface, the health-and-wealth gospel of the NPCCs seems to function as a royal functional model of *imago Dei*. That is, while the health sector (i.e. private healthcare centres) benefits the middle and the upper-class only, the health-and-wealth gospel

'democratises' the assurance of healing to every believer. For many people who do not have access to financial support, free services in the form of NPCCs' faith-healing practices, "is an attractive option" (Senah 2004: 68). As Tastard (2017: 67) explains, "vulnerability naturally increases people's desire for divine intervention." This vulnerability is also enhanced by an African worldview of ill health.

According to Senah (2002: 64), "healing is a cultural process based on the philosophical reconstruction about diseases, their causation and modes of treatment." In other words, to understand matters of healing in general, and faith-healing in particular, one needs to be culturally attuned to the worldview about the ill-health of that society. Therefore, "the critical role of culture in matters of health cannot, therefore, be gainsaid" (Senah 2002: 64). To discuss faith-healing practices in the NPCCs, therefore, one should be cognisant of African-world view of ill health.

According to Mashau (2013: 4) "in African cultural worldview, religion and healing are inextricably linked" (Mashau 2013: 4). Therefore, the role of religion "is to bring restoration in the face of brokenness or damage to man's *[sic]* body, relationships and social and spiritual networks" (Ukah 2007: 14 *my emphasis added*). To an African world view such healing "is not restricted to diseases alone but to other situations of morbidity or disability – physical, material, mental, financial or spiritual" (Ukah 2007: 14). For instance, words of Pastor Mnguni, who considers his faith-healing practice of jumping on the prostrated torsos of his congregants as a spiritual exercise, illustrate this African world view of ill-health:

They are seeing the spiritual things. A person we jump on him today tomorrow they get a job.

This view is influenced by the African world view of ill health. In this regard, ill-health is associated with unemployment; and, thus, healing in the one result in healing in the other. As Anderson states, "NPCCs believe in prayer for healing, which includes healing from unemployment and poverty" (Anderson 2002: 171). I, therefore concur with Mashau (2014: 4) that faith-healing practices in the NPCCs have spread easily basking in the support of African cultural world-view. This is because in Africa "religion and healing are inextricably linked" (Mashau 2013: 4).

Thus, when socio-economical context and African world view about ill-health are taken into cognisance, the health-and-wealth gospel of the NPCCs is placed in its rightful cultural and contextual setting. Only then, can one begin to investigate faith-healing practices in the NPPCs. Therefore, a proper analysis of health-and-wealth gospel as promulgated by NPCCs in Africa needs to take this African cultural milieu into consideration – otherwise, such interpretation shall remain shallow.

However, despite its endeavour to respond to socio-economic challenges affecting the continent regarding illness; and its 'democratisation', by faith, of health-and-wealth to all believers, if viewed from the royal functional model of *imago Dei*, the health-and-wealth gospel of NPCCs has contributed negatively to the lives of Africans. According to Anderson (2002: 180), for instance, "this health-and-wealth gospel seems to reproduce some of the worst forms of capitalism in Christian guise" For instance, while Mashau (2013: 6) contends that NPCCs' attraction in Africa is based on its assurance to its adherers that through 'Name-it-and-Claim-it' all believers can receive healing, however, he argues that;

> it is unfortunate that in most cases the poor masses in Africa are naming it whilst evangelists, apostles, prophets and preachers, as they are commonly known, are claiming – with the poor masses getting poorer and the prophets getting richer and going about boasting about their wealth as a living testimony to the power of faith

While the message of the NPCCs ensures comprehensive solutions to all life's' challenges – including ill-health – this is professed on the proviso that the congregants are "born again and give generously to the religious leader in exchange for material and spiritual blessings in the form of healing, wealth, abundant life, success and earthly promotion" (Anderson 2007: 12).

The royal functional model of *imago Dei* emphasises the inherent dignity of all people. It is ironic that the theology of the health-and-wealth gospel, whose attraction is its assurance that all people are guaranteed abundant life – through faith – would end up with a system that, in actuality, only benefits religious leaders. Resane (2017: 4) refers to this system as a celebrity cult, where a 'success of the religious leader is interpreted by congregants as manifestations of spiritual anointing. As he states,

"success is based on properties such as auditorium, vehicles and personal adornment such as tailor-made outfits, jewellery, etc", while ordinary congregants are "subliminally expected to blindly promote and embrace this personality or charter" (Resane 2017: 4).

The theology of the health-and-wealth gospel, therefore, is a deviation from the royal functional model of *imago Dei*. The latter maintains the democratisation of the image to all people, and thus their dignity. The former, at least in practice, has resulted in a system that only benefits religious leaders. Thus, while the royal functional model of *imago Dei* maintains that all humanity is the image of God, and thus possesses intrinsic dignity, the health-and-wealth gospel of the NPCCs has created a system that guarantees dignity only to the upper echelons of the NPCCs' organisation.

5.2.2 Pneumatology of the NPCCs; a shift from early Pentecostal Pneumatology

Considering that the NPCCs is a third wave movement of the early Pentecostals (the first wave), is befitting that the Holy Spirit has an important role to play in their theological character. Pneumatological theologies emerging during the proceedings of the CRL Rights Commission attest to this view. During the proceedings of the Commission, Mnguni and Daniel considered their faith-healing practices as directed by the Holy Spirit. When the chairperson of the commission asked, Prophet Daniels, for instance;

So, you are saying it's the Holy Spirit that instructs you that you must ask people to eat grass and leaves, and drink petrol? So is that where you are coming from that it's the Holy Spirit that comes to you?

Prophet Daniel's response was simply put;

It's the Holy Spirit…

Faith-healing practices and Pneumatology are inseparable. This is because faith-healing "is used by the majority of Christians to refer to the belief that God heals people through the power of the Holy Spirit" (Pretorius 2009: 2). Considering that

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NPCCs are 'progenies' of early Pentecostals, it is imperative to consider how this brand of Christianity views its Pneumatology in relation to faith-healing practices.

In the classical Pentecostals, the Holy Spirit had a Missional thrust. As Nel (2016: 2) concurs, early Pentecostals "received baptism in the Spirit and became convinced of the necessity that each believer should take responsibility for spreading the news…" Pneumatology presupposed 'priesthood of all believers.' That is, "everyone, even the youths and children, became involved in witnessing, preaching, singing, worshiping, and praying for the needy and *[the]* sick" (Nel 2016: 2 *my emphasis added*). In other words, early Pentecostals strike a balance between two poles of Spirit baptism, namely personal and inter-personal experience of baptism (Watt 2006: 388).

The first pole, which is the personal experience of baptism, was important, not for personal Spiritual superiority, but rather as an impetus for mission (Watt 2006: 388). As a result, early Pentecostal leaders found a connection between their mission for evangelism and personal experience of Spirit Baptism (Watt 2006: 388). "all early Pentecostal leaders believed their experience of the Spirit was for mission." (Watt 2006: 388)

Inter-personal experience (second pole) connected individual Spirit baptism with *ecclesia* (Watt 2006: 388). The individual Spirit baptism was considered a benefit to the life of the church. According to Watt (2006: 388), "The baptism of the Spirit and the charismata made each member 'useful' and 'necessary' to the life of the church." This was evident in the spontaneity of liturgy as each member demonstrated Spiritual gifts (praying, singing, testimonies, etc) (Watt 2006: 388). Its form and content were such that "the 'lecture hall' becomes 'a playing field,' and the gathering of Christians changes from listening to a 'solo' to being part of a 'symphony'" (Watt 2006: 389).

From the perspective of the royal functional model of *imago Dei*, the Pneumatology of the early Pentecostals, not only accentuated 'Priesthood of all believers' it also affirmed the dignity of each member as the image of God. It 'democratised' Pneumatology to all believers. Each believer, having experienced Spirit Baptism, had a role to play in the life of the church (i.e. worship). Hence affirming each believer as the image of God – and thus affirming each believer's dignity.

However, with the advent of NPCCs, motives for Spirit baptism have undergone a paradigm shift. Motives for Spirit baptism have shifted from missional purpose ('other-centred' experience) to introspective ethos ('self-centred' one) (Watt 2006: 385). In other words, "the motive for seeking Spirit baptism seems more personally focused, not so much on missions, but on personal power to cope with growing challenges of an uncertain world" (Watt 2006: 386). For instance, Prophet Daniel's words, which cite baptism of the Holy Spirit for feeding congregants grass, are devoid of missional purpose:

...but when the Holy Spirit comes upon us, the signs are free, you will eat poisonous things and you will still live

It seems that both poles of Spirit baptism (personal and interpersonal) have disintegrated in the NPCCs Pneumatology. No longer is the personal experience intended for a mission. Also, 'Priesthood of all believers' previously affirmed by the second pole has diminished – with its spontaneity and the 'play-field' type of liturgy (Watt 2006: 390). Instead "the 'playing field' model of congregational life has been exchanged for something that approximates more closely a 'theatre model' – performers and an appreciative audience" This "loss of the inter-personal experience of Pentecostal worship means that Spirit baptism has been effectively 'privatised'" NPCCs' Pneumatology has, therefore, shifted from the early Pentecostal Pneumatology.

One of the manifestations of this 'Pneumatological' shift is the emphasis NPCCs' religious leaders placed on their unorthodox faith-healing practices as proof of their 'anointing' by the Holy Spirit. For instance, when questioned about feeding his congregants snakes, Mnguni referred to this practice as a demonstration of God's power (Holy Spirit):

There's what we call the demonstration of God's power, a proven that God has sent you.

According Anderson, "the pastors of these new churches believe that they have been endowed by God to bring physical healing to their followers as a proof of the validity of their preaching" (Anderson 2007: 14).

In the same vein, Prophet Daniel considered his practice of making his congregation eat flowers and drink petrol as a mark of approval:

…It shows and confirming us to be of Christ because Jesus said "If you find them doing what we are doing they are with us

The second Pole of the early Pentecostals – Holy Spirit baptism as important for corporate worship – is, therefore exchanged for individualistic approval, which is devoid of missional thrust. Prophet Daniel affirms this *Pneumatological* shift when he argues that, he is the only one in his congregation who has the power to command people to eat grass, because of his 'privatised' Spirit baptism:

One question was asked to me to say, "Would you eat grass if I command you to eat" I said to that person, if you have the Holy Spirit you can command me to eat grass, I can eat it because I'm under the control of the Holy Spirit. But you can't, I'm the one who is under the control of the Holy Spirit.

Whereas the Pneumatology of the early Pentecostal 'democratised' Spirit baptism to all believers, and thus affirms the image of God to every believer, NPCCs' 'privatises' Pneumatology to religious leaders. This paradigm shift underpins faith-healing practices in the NPCCs to the detriment of its adherers. This is attested by faith-healing practices which are said to be a directive from the Holy Spirit, even though such practices raise questions of human dignity.

5.2.3 Hermeneutic of the NPCCs; Anti-intellectualism and antinomianism

The Biblical hermeneutic of the NPCCs, which underpins faith-healing practices, was brought to the fore during the appearance of Mnguni and Prophet Daniel at the CRL Rights Commission of inquiry. For instance, when one of the panel members asked Daniel to explain himself about the practice of making people eat flowers, grass, and drink petrol, his response was:

And Genesis 1: 30 says you can eat anything that is green, every animal, everything.

Among different Christian traditions, the Bible is one of the major tools for doing theology. McGrath (2018: xxxi) defines the bible as "a collection of books which Christians regard as having authority in matters of thought and life." In this regard James Luther Mays (2006: 27) states the following about the bible;

> The Bible is about God and the human being. From Genesis to Revelation the subject is God and humankind. In all its books and literary genres, Scripture tells about God's way with human beings and their life in the world. It can be read as a vast theological anthropology. In its theocentricity it is anthropocentric. Any of its texts can serve as a source for reflection on the human identity and condition

McGrath (2018: xxxii) concurs, therefore, that "there is widespread agreement within Christianity that the Bible has a place of especial importance in theological debate and personal devotion." However, the Bible needs to be interpreted. As Marmion & Nieuwenhove (2011: 29-30) argue, considering the importance of the bible on theological matters, Christians "are tasked with an ongoing process of understanding and growth into truth. Scripture cannot be the final arbiter of all disputed questions. It remains an 'open' book (not closed following the resurrection and accession) to be interpreted by the community."

In the NPCCs faith-healing is associated with substitute atonement of Christ. According to Pretorius, different biblical references are cited for this teaching (Pretorius 2009: 4). To illustrate, Pretorius identifies a "trilogy of passages from Scriptures" used to support NPCCs' teachings about faith-healing such as; Isaiah 53: 5 ('*By his scourge we are healed*') which is taught to indicate that Christ is the substitute of all illness; Mathew 8: 16-17 ('*He healed all who were sick*') is seen as affirmation of Isaiah's prophecy in the healing ministry of Jesus; and 1 Peter 2: 24 ('*By his wounds you have been healed*') is an indication that Jesus continues to heal even today (Pretorius 2009: 4). Hence, Mashau (2013: 2) states, "at the heart of Pentecostal conviction lies the fact that the New Testament record is a blueprint of what should happen in every generation of the Christian's life until the end of times." Thus, Prophet Daniel's insistence in relation to his faith-healing practices that;

It's what happened in the bible and Jesus did that. He also said you will even do greater things

While many other biblical references are used to support faith-healing practices – as in the case of Prophet Daniel above – these are used without employing proper hermeneutical principle. Resane (2017: 1), argues that in the NPPCs' case "the biblical statements, principles, passages or ideas are at disposal for this procedural scrutiny, without engaging historical context or hermeneutical principle" Prophet Daniel's citation of the scripture reference is, therefore, influenced by a lack of hermeneutical principle;

…It's according to our belief, we believe in Jesus Christ. Jesus turned water into wine.

Here, the bible is referenced without considering the historical context. According to Nel (2016), this method of using scripture is historical to the early Pentecostals, albeit with a variance. Considering that the early Pentecostals emerged within the poor and the disenfranchised people, their main focus was "to be Spirit-filled rather than to be learned" (Nel 2016: 2). This ethos replicated itself in their approach to Scripture, where the bible was used without academic labour. As Nel suggests, in regards to the use of the Bible "Pentecostals affirmed their strong anti-intellectual, anti-academic prejudices…" (Nel 2006: 2). That is, "it avoided any critical systematic thinking that is associated with theological or academic expertise because such knowledge was regarded by Pentecostals as angering the individual's faith and corrupting the church" (Nel 2006: 2). "One of the hallmarks of early Pentecostals was their slogan, 'chapter and verse', for everything they believed to be true" (Watt 2006: 391). In other words, early Pentecostals saw spirituality and academic labour as mutually exclusive (Nel 2006: 2).

Thus, NPCCs have this negative attitude towards academic labour in their biblical hermeneutic as their heritage. As a consequence of this heritage, religious leaders in the NPCCs have abandoned established theological education institutions in favour of Charismatic colleges, whose accreditation and curriculum are questionable (2017: 10). "When perusing some *[of these Charismatic colleges]* training syllabi, one is struck by the shallowness and lack of theological depth, including those syllabi offered

online" (Resane 2017: 10 *my emphases added*). To an extent that "the study matter apportioned a degree is sometimes even lower than that of a group Bible study in the local church" (Resane 2017: 10). Often these are accompanied by honorary doctorates offered by *fly-by-night* academic institutions to religious leaders (Resane 2017: 11). For instance, according to the official Facebook page of Rabboni Centre Ministries on the 29th of December 2017, Prophet Daniel graduated with an honorary degree in Doctor of Ministry, Church administration and Christian therapy from an unidentified tertiary institution (https://www.facebook.com/rabboniministries/).

Although NPCCs share the similar principle of hermeneutic with the early Pentecostals, however, there is a variance of this principle in the NPCCs. Whereas in the early Pentecostals anti-intellectualism was used for reading scripture at face value – for missional purposes – in the NPCCs anti-intellectualism is used for Antinomianism purposes (Resane 2017: 11). Antinomianism suggests that "by faith and grace a Christian is freed from all laws, including the moral standards of the culture" (Resane 2017: 11). In this regard, Prophet Daniel used Gen 1:30 to justify antinomianism;

you can eat anything that is green, every animal, everything.

Notwithstanding their hermeneutical challenge, religious leaders in the NPCCs display an unmatched passion of faith in Christ and his message. Hence, Watt warns that even though criticism of the method of approaching scripture stands, the motive must, however, be commended (Watt 2006: 392). "Pentecostals sought to anchor experience in the Bible." (Watt 2006: 392). Even Resane (2017: 11) is compelled to acknowledge that NPCCs' "passion for Christ and His message in all their endeavours is beyond question or doubt."

However, a passion that is not underpinned by adequate theological training results in a subjective reading of the Bible, which in turn breeds unconventional practices (Resane 2017: 11). For instance, Prophet Daniel maintained that faith-healing practice of making his congregants drinking petrol;

it's biblical that's why I quoted Genesis 1: 30 before the fall of men. I have to quote even the book of Daniel when the king was disobedience God caused him to stay with animals and eat grass to humble him. There was a reason. Everything that we do there's a reason.

Prophet Daniel's biblical hermeneutic is, therefore antinomianism. He has taken a biblical passage and used it uncritically. Also, he used an extra-textual application (making his congregation drink petrol). Pretorius (2009: 5) makes the following comments about the application of biblical texts in the NPCCs, "although Biblical texts are quoted to substantiate the authority of their teachings, very little or no attention is paid to literary and historical context, semantic nuances or grammatical indicators." Anti-intellectualism and antinomianism in the NPCCs' biblical hermeneutic, therefore, fuels faith-healing practices that degrade the dignity of its congregants. For Watt, this hermeneutic (*or lack thereof*) is a deviation from the principle of early Pentecostals' biblical hermeneutic (Watt 2006: 391).

Although early Pentecostals' biblical hermeneutic was influenced by anti-intellectualism, it made a "strong link between experience and scripture" (Watt 2006: 391). Spiritual experiences were thus connected with the Word; as Watt (2006: 391) observes, for instance, that praying for the sick was always preceded by preaching of the word. In other words, scripture preceded spiritual experience; the former was the basis for the latter. However, Watt (2006: 391) correctly points out that the NPCCs have reversed this hermeneutical method; "instead of explaining and evaluating 'spiritual experiences' on the basis of scripture, the reverse is happening, which represents an entirely new hermeneutical method and a shift from the authority of the Bible in matters of the truth and practice." According to Pretorius (2009: 5) "this is clear from the phrase: 'God cannot turn against His word.'

The above approach does not only undermine the sovereignty of God but indicates an exchange of roles – namely God becomes the servant of man, who demands action." The problem with this hermeneutical approach is that "Scripture is controlled by the established position" (Pretorius 2009: 5). For instance, when the chair of the commission asked Prophet Daniel whether religious leaders such as Bishop Tutu would condone his faith-healing practices, his answer was embedded with the reversed principle of early Pentecostal hermeneutic;

...Deuteronomy 8: 16 God says I'm giving the manna which your forefathers know nothing about. It's not our fault if people don't know what is happening now with this generation. Because he says "I'm giving you what your forefathers know nothing about," so it goes back to blaming God for doing a new thing, which other people have never experienced before. If Jesus said "You will do greater things" greater things were not done before.

Thus, the 'spiritual experience' (faith-healing through consumption of petrol) precedes Scripture. As a result, 'spiritual experiences' are uncritically accepted as they don't have to pass through the test of biblical scrutiny. Instead, the bible is an aftermath text that follows 'spiritual' experiences. As Watt (2006: 392) observes, "loosening the connection between experience and the Bible is a weakening of the hermeneutical process and opens the door to unbridled subjectivism." "The revelations, prophecies, dreams and visions of the teachers that underlie and support their teachings indicate an inspiration beyond the text" (Pretorius 2009: 5).

I argue, therefore, that faith-healing practices in the NPCCs are underpinned by a Biblical hermeneutic which is influenced by anti-intellectualism resulting in antinomianism – which is fuelled by a subjective reading of the bible. This process emerges from the hermeneutical paradigm shift from the early Pentecostal principle of "Word to experience." In light of the royal functional model of *imago Dei*, such hermeneutic has disintegrated the second pole of the early Pentecostals to an extent that its Pentecostalism is questionable. As Watt (2006: 392) boldly declares; "hermeneutical process – Word to experience – is Pentecostal. The opposite is not."

A shift from 'word-to-experience' to 'experience-to-word' has resulted in a top-down approach of hermeneutics. Resane (2017: 13) states correctly that in the NPCCs "a leader receives the revelation which in many cases is extra-textual; and is regarded as authentic and authoritative. The canonical revelation as embodied in the Writ receives very shallow perusal." The shift means that hermeneutic is not done for the purposes of cooperate worship, nor for a mission. No longer is the preacher using scripture to interpret a spiritual experience which includes him/her. This explains why the 'spiritual' experiences (i.e. snake-eating, petrol-drinking, and grass-eating of these faith-healing practices) exclusively involve congregants, not religious leaders. In other words, this hermeneutic is done 'for' congregants, as opposed to 'with' the

congregants, denying believers their worth in the Spiritual experience. From the perspective of the royal functional model of *imago Dei*, such hermeneutic denies the congregant their image, thus their dignity.

5.2.4 Exclusive "Name-and-claim-it" theology; anti-sacramentalism

Name-and-claim theology is at the centre of faith-healings in the NPCCs. In his faith-healing practice of making his congregation eat grass and drink petrol, for instance, Prophet Daniel defended himself by arguing;

So, we declare upon the flower, I declare upon this and some people got healed.

Name-and-claim-it theology is said to achieve healing through two processes. Firstly, the sick are encouraged to speak to the diseases (Pretorius 2006: 4). They are "exhorted to persist in their confession and build up their faith to the level necessary to obtain the promised healing" (Pretorius 2006: 4). Here the reality of health is created by confessing faith in the healing – *even if such healing is not attained* (Pretorius 2006: 4). To receive healing NPCCs' "Members are taught that once they know who they are in Christ, they can then speak the same words about themselves that God has spoken about them in the Bible" (Harrison 2005: 10).

Secondly, name-and-claim-it theology uses denialism to achieve healing (Pretorius 2006: 4). In this regard, adherers are encouraged to deny symptoms of sickness in their bodies and trust in certain scripture readings about healing (Pretorius 2006: 4). As Harrison comments about how a sick person is taught to respond to felicitations; "Never is one to reply "Sick" or "Struggling," lest acknowledgement of one's present condition signals acceptance of negative circumstances, which in turn signals lack of faith that is thought to have brought one to that position in the first place" (Harrison 2005: 10). Denialism underpins faith-healing in the NPCCs to an extent that Nel (2016: 4) argues that NPCCs' "spirituality is dominated by imagination rather than reason." For instance, Pastor Mnguni maintains that though his congregants were eating snake, through faith it ceased to be a snake;

So what is happening, if now I see snake, it takes a faith to understand what do you see that's why no one died after eating the sake.

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Name-and-claim-it theology, as the name suggests, is based on the theology that defines faith as "as speaking or confessing with authority in the full expectation that what is spoken will happen" (Pretorius 2009: 4). Harrison (2005: 10) explains this theology; "In the biblical account of creation, God spoke and there was light. The faith movement teaches believers that the same world-creating power is theirs as born-again Christians and that it is a spiritual law that the spoken word sets creative (or destructive forces) in motions." Hence "Popular phrases in these circles are, 'Name it and claim it' and 'Believe it and receive it'" (Pretorius 2009: 4). Healing, therefore, is realised through the exercise of this faith (Pretorius 2009: 4). That is, by faith whatever is claimed (or declared) comes into existence.

It seems to me, though, in keeping with the pattern of our analysis thus far, that faith-healing practices in the NPCCs have shifted from the Name-and-claim-it theology of the early Pentecostals. No longer is the "world-creating power" possessed by all born again Christians (Harrison 2005: 10). Instead, in light of the faith-healing practices in NPCCs, such power is reserved to the religious leaders. Prophet Daniel's words are replete with this 'exclusive' name-and-claim-it theology.

So if Jesus declares what you see, you look at this [brandishing one of the water bottles] *this is water for everybody, if I declare this is Holy water you are no longer drinking ordinary water you are drinking Holy water… It's according to our belief, we believe in Jesus Christ. Jesus turned water into wine.*

Thus, while Name-and-claim-it theology was taught that all born-again believers have the power to create with their words, faith-healing practices in the NPCCs are depicting a paradigm shift in this doctrine. In this paradigm shift, only religious leaders are adorned with this reality-creating power. Name-and-claim-it theology is no longer part of corporate worship; rather it is a privatized spiritual experience. In other words, in the faith-healing practices of the NPCCs we are not dealing so much with name-and-claim-it theology as to 'exclusive' name-and-claim-it theology. This shift has resulted in religious leaders, perhaps aiming to prove their exclusive name-and-claim-it power, emphasizing miracles at the expense of sacrament.

The sacramental theology of NPCCs is concerned with an everyday revelation of truth which responds to the here-and-now needs of its members (Nel 20016: 4). As such, "it operates on the level of oral rather than written discourse" (Nel 2016: 4). In other words, by abandoning sacrament, NPCCs has made itself susceptible to anti-*scramentalistic* practices achieved through the name-and-claim-it model. The move from a sacramental church to a miracle-working church has meant that "sacraments are replaced with 'divine' directives to eat snakes, and rats, drink petrol, nakedness displays, walking on devotees' bodies, driving cars over devotees' bodies etc" (Resane 2017: 13). As far as the perspective of the royal functional model of *imago Dei* is concerned, this paradigm threatens the dignity of NPCCs congregations.

From the perspective of the royal functional model of *imago Dei*, the paradigm shift to exclusive Name-and-claim-it theology denies congregants their worth as the image of God. Much like the Mesopotamian anthropology which the royal functional model of *imago Dei* opposes, 'exclusive' name-and-claim-it theology affirms the image, thus dignity of the few elites (i.e. religious leaders). This is because; ordinary members of the congregation are denied their world-creating power – which affirms them as 'true' image of God, as they resemble God who also created through words. The congregation is at the mercy of these empowered elites. No wonder that the elite in the NPCCs has "imbibed the new and strange practices that leave many observers with some bafflement" (Resane 2017: 13).

5.3 Inadequacy of 'no-death' and 'no-physical harm' claims

Notwithstanding hazardous faith-healing practices in the NPCCs, I discovered, during the course of this study, that both of these religious leaders have no intention of causing harm. Two issues indicate this view, namely their emphasis on the lack of physical harm during faith-healing practices and their insistence that no death occurred during these practices. Pastor Mnguni and Prophet Daniel indicated this view, respectively;

When a person falls, his in a trance, he doesn't feel pain and the sickness goes.

I cannot send somebody in the stadium to go and kill. I believe the bible do not kill, do not murder. So here nobody died, I did not kill anybody.

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The crux of the matter in the above utterances is that they are engulfed with preliminaries of human dignity. Lurking behind these utterances is an important theological stance, which maintains that faith-healing practices should not cause harm or death. This stance is confirmed by both of their insistence that lack of physical harm or death is an indication that their faith-healing practices are endorsed by God. As Prophet Daniel stated;

So just to satisfy your question, only one person, from many came and said it shows that you are from God. But here is the secret, we know, we know that we are from God for no one can do the things that we are doing. We all know that's why nobody died. Don't we all know?

That these religious leaders interpreted their faith-healing practices this way is promising for the promotion of human dignity. Through speaking about retaining the value of human life in his faith-healing practices, Prophet Daniels portrays an understanding that is consistent with traditional Christian anthropology of the church fathers. For instance, one of the early fathers, Lactantius, argued that *imago Dei* has ethical imperative for human dignity to an extent that "God had prohibited that humans be killed, not only in those instances also recognised by public law, such as wanton murder but in any case, whatsoever, including warfare and exposure of infants" (Soulen & Woodhead 2006: 3-4). Ruston agrees that the implications of *imago Dei* are such that "where the person appears, God also appears. Hence the strong condemnation of murder in Genesis 9: in destroying a human life we destroy something sacred, namely God's appointed representative on earth – it as serious as killing the king's messenger (cf Mark 12: 8)

Hence, by claiming no-death and no-harm occurred during their faith-healing practices, the NPCCs' religious leaders retained traditionally held implications of *imago Dei* concerning human dignity. That is since human beings are created in the image of God, therefore human life is inviolable (Tutu 2010: 2). "We must, therefore, have a deep reverence for the sanctity of human life" (Tutu 2010:2). Tutu (2010: 2) demonstrates the link between *Imago Dei* and human dignity in the aspect of human life by arguing that "homicide is universally condemned." Citing the 6th commandment, "Thou shall not kill", he contends that this "would be an undisputed

part of a global ethic accepted by the adherence of all faiths and of none" (Tutu 2010: 2).

However, these preliminaries notwithstanding, they are too shallow a criterion to be used to designate a practice as retaining human dignity. Just because an action does not lead do death, or does not induce physical harm does not mean that such an action respects human dignity. Otherwise, we would have difficulty condemning the use of racial-derogatory words as a violation of human dignity, since neither physical harm nor death occurs as a result.

Thus, while I acknowledge the preliminaries of human dignity in faith-healing practices of NPCCs, these are insufficient. A myopic understanding of harm causes acceptance of these questionable faith-healing practices as God-ordained, oblivious of the fact that such practices desecrate the dignity of participants. This is the limitation of the 'no-harm' and 'no-death' claim of the NPCCs.

5.4 Conclusion

This data analyse has unearthed some of the theological themes underpinning faith-healing practices in the NPCCs. These theologies have been analysed through the perspective of the royal functional model of *imago Dei*. This analysis has answered two of the key research questions; *(1)* what are theologies underpinning the phenomenon of faith-healing practices in the NPCCs? And, *(2)* why do faith-healing practices in the NPCCs raise concerns for human dignity of its members?

Firstly, through qualitative content analysis, in this chapter, I have identified theologies underpinning faith-healing practices in the NPCCs. These are health-and-wealth theology, NPCCs' Pneumatology and hermeneutics, and 'exclusive' name-and-claim-it gospel.

Secondly, the analysis has demonstrated why these faith-healing practices, embellished by the above theologies, raise concerns for human dignity. Analysed through the royal functional model of *imago Dei*, these theologies demonstrated a paradigm shift from the early Pentecostalism, which affirms the image, and thus the dignity of all spiritually baptised members. This paradigm shift means that theologies

that affirm the image of each member of the church are disposed of. This results in theologies that, in practice, affirm only the image of the echelons of the NPCCs (i.e. religious leaders), while ordinary members are denied the image, and thus their dignity. Faith-healing practices in the NPCCs are engulfed in this theological milieu.

Therefore, this chapter has met two of the objectives of this study. That is, to unearth theologies underpinning faith-healing practices in the NPCCs; and to demonstrate why do faith healing practices in the NPCCs raise concerns for human dignity.

Furthermore, the hazardous faith-healing practices in the NPCCs notwithstanding, this chapter has illustrated that faith healing practices of the NPCCs' religious leaders are devoid of intentions to cause harm or death. However, this chapter has shown that a myopic understanding of harm perpetuates faith-healing practices which degrade the dignity of ordinary members. Therefore, there is a need for theological scrutiny that would permeate through this myopic understanding of harm.

CHAPTER SIX
Scrutinising faith-healing practices in the NPPCs

6.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the third key research question of this study (and its objective); how to critique the phenomenon of faith-healing practices in the NPCCs through the doctrine of i*mago Dei*? Resane (2017) uses a narrative in Daniel 4 to indicate how recent healing practices in the NPCCs marred the image of God and thus violate human dignity. Comparing Nebuchadnezzar's insanity, which led him to eat grass, he makes this bold statement about recent healing practices in the NPCCs;

> When a pastor commands people to eat grass, he or she lowers the followers to the level of wild animals. Sanity is withdrawn from them, invading or abusing the reverential *imago Dei* they carry as human beings. God's image is marred and people falling into that state lose their intellect, and become institutionally (ecclesia) disconnected, meaning they are antisacramental (Resane 2017: 5).

Through considering ethical implications of the royal functional model of *imago Dei* and the findings of this study this chapter demonstrates that faith-healing practices in the NPCCs desecrate the dignity of its members. The royal functional model of *imago Dei* is an ethical theoretical framework which critiques how human beings, as the image of God, ought to be treated. Faith-healing practices, as depicted in the NPCCs are a deviation from this ethical implication.

6.2 The royal functional model of *imago Dei*; a human dignity framework

Christian anthropology, as defined in the concept of *imago Dei,* particularly the royal functional model of *imago Dei,* is aptly used for the contextualization of human dignity. Instead of interrogating faith-healing practices in the NPCCs with abstract irreligious human dignity, I place this interrogation within a Christian anthropological context, namely, the royal functional model of *imago Dei*.

From a royal functional model of *imago Dei*, the image in Genesis 1 is better understood as a critique of the Mesopotamian ideology of hierarchical society where power and *imago Dei* are reserved for few elite. From this point of view, *imago Dei*

"serves to elevate and dignify the human race with a noble status in the world, analogous to that of royalty in the ancient Near East" (Middleton 2005: 205). Such interpretation is not so much an esoteric concept as it is exoteric Christian anthropology. That is, it renders *Imago Dei* "a theoretical concept with ethical implications" (Sands 2010: 39). In regards to faith-healing practices in the NPCCs, the royal functional model of *imago Dei* raises critical and ethical questions; Considering the royal status that *imago Dei* in Genesis 1 accords to every human being, are religious leaders' practices of feeding congregants snakes, grass, and making them eat petrol, and jump on their prostrated torso, treatments worthy of the royalty?

6.3 Ethical implications of the royal functional model of *imago Dei*.
According to Sands (2010) the royal functional model of *imago Dei* has four ethical implications; (i) "*Human beings possess an inalienable dignity that must be respected*", (ii) "*human beings must value and protect human life*"; (iii) "*Human beings must resist ideologies of power*", and (iv) "*human beings must care for the earth and non-human life*" (Sands 2010: 39-40). I argue that these implications can be categorised according to Ruston's (2004: 269) two senses of *imago Dei* ; namely, the active sense (how human beings as image of God ought to behave) and passive sense (how human beings as the image of God ought to be treated). Accordingly, Sands' first two implications relate to passive sense while the last two relate to active sense.

Passive sense, therefore, is the focus of this chapter because of its direct implications for faith-healing practices in the NPCCs; although the active sense also relates to the topic of faith-healing practices in the NPCCs – for instance, the use power in the NPCCs during faith-healing practice is a worthwhile investigation; and also, how non-human life (i.e. snakes, grass, water, etc) are treated during these practices. However, the second part of the passive sense – "human beings must value and protect human life" – has already been discussed. Hence, this discussion rests on the 'inalienable dignity" that human beings possess and which must be respected.

The ethical implication, therefore, for the royal functional model of *imago Dei* is that human beings possess a dignity that must be respected (Sands 2010: 39). This implies that "dignity consists not so much in self-possession as in dispossession, not so much

in entering into oneself but in reaching out in love and care to the other (Soulen & Woodhead 2006: 6)." According to May (2006: 6 *my emphasis added*), "the fact that humans are made in the image of God is said to be the reason why the life of each person requires ultimate respect from other men *[sic]*. The attribute "image of God" belongs to an individual of the species as well as to the species as a whole. It is what gives each person worth." As Schuele (2011: 6-7) explains:

> On the other hand, the *imago Dei* is also a regulative for interpersonal relations between human beings. It applies not only to the human being as a species but also to each individual human being, who not only possesses the dignity of the divine image but must then also respect it in the encounter with every human being"

In other words, *imago Dei* is mostly manifested in the manner in which human beings treat each other. As a "God carrier", such treatment should go beyond mere respect (Tutu 2010: 2). It should demonstrate "a deep reverence for that person" (Tutu 2010: 2). In his rather idiosyncratic utterances, Tutu (2010: 2) demonstrates how this should be done; "We should not just greet one another. We should strictly genuflect before such an august and precious creature."

The royal functional model of *imago Dei* has ethical implication, and thus a useful tool to critique faith-healing practices. The royal functional framework of human dignity asks a theological question; considering the dignity accorded by God at the creation of human beings, are unorthodox faith-healing practices in the NPCCs are theological deviations from an ethical implication of *imago Dei*?

Tutu (2010; 3), argues that *imago Dei* implies that each person is imbued with "profound dignity and worth, such that trampling on people's dignity is not just evil, but rather "it is positively blasphemous, for it is tantamount to spitting in the face of God" (Tutu 2010: 3). Considering its ethical implications for human dignity it raises a theological question; are faith-healing practices in the NPCCs not "tantamount to spitting in the face of God?" As Ruston (2004: 169) correctly notes the practical implication of *imago Dei,* from this point of view "…the image says something about how a person bearing the image should (or should not) be treated by others."

Therefore, the royal functional interpretation of *imago Dei* serves as theological scrutiny of faith-healing practices in the NPCCs.

6.4 Findings of the study

This study has found that NPCCs adhere to theologies that cause this brand of Christianity to be susceptible to practices that degrade human dignity. These are health-and-wealth gospel, NPCCs' Pneumatology, hermeneutic and 'exclusive' name-and-claim-it theology. The research has found that these theologies are somewhat a deviation from the theological principle of the early Pentecostal movement (first wave). Whereas the latter tended to 'democratise' spiritual experiences, the former 'privatise' this experience to the echelons of the movement. This paradigm shift, much like the Mesopotamian anthropology of the early near East, means that dignity is allocated to the few. The royal functional model of *imago Dei* was found to be a useful theological tool to scrutinize faith-healing practices in the NPCCs. That is, the model of *imago Dei* was found not only to go beyond theoretical claim but to have ethical implications for faith-healing practices in the NPCCs. It contextualised human dignity within its theological context of the image, and thus became a theological canon that can be used to weigh practices in the church.

Notwithstanding claims by NPCCs religious leaders that no physical harm or death occurred during their questionable faith-healing practices, the royal functional model of *imago Dei* has critiqued these practices and designated them as violations of human dignity. Considering the aspect of passive sense – how humanity ought to be treated as the image of God – the royal functional model of *imago Dei* has shown that these practices demonstrate un-commendable ways of how the image of God ought to be treated. And thus, are not ethical practices.

Therefore, unlike the contemporary notion of human dignity, the royal functional model of *imago Dei* provides useful theological scrutiny to interrogate faith-healing practices in the NPCCs. Hence, as Soulen & Woodhead (2006: 7) argue, "Christ's own followers no less than others must be constantly reoriented away from suspect conceptions of human worth *[contemporary irreligious human dignity]* and toward that made manifest in Christ [*royal functional view of imago Dei]*" (Soulen & Woodhead 2006: 7 *my emphases added*).

6.5 Summary

This study has raised a theological question in light of unorthodox faith-healing practices in the NPCCs; noting that these practices raise the issue of human dignity, what theological tool can be employed to scrutinise these practices? This research has demonstrated that Christian anthropology in the form of the royal functional model of *imago Dei* is better equipped to scrutinize these practices.

6.6 Recommendation of the study

This study was focussed on the doctrine of *imago Dei* in relation to recent phenomenon of faith-healing practices in NPCCs through the human dignity framework. The study, omitted, therefore, other important aspects of involved in these practices.

Firstly, this study avoided investigation of power dynamics evident between the religious leaders and their congregations. Investigating the use of power in relation to human dignity in the phenomenon of faith-healing practices in the NPCCs would deepen the insight of the findings of this study.

Secondly, and also related to power relation, the use of non-human life during faith-healing practices would be a worthwhile investigation for this study. In light of the *imago Dei* discussion in this research and God's commission to human race to subdue the world – and theological nuances pertaining to the innuendos of the meaning of this commission – it would be a worthwhile study to investigate how NPCCs' religious leaders 'subdue' the world in the course of using non-human life in their faith-healing practices.

Thirdly, noting the limitation of voice in the nonempirical methodology of this study, a further empirical study of this topic would strength findings of this study. Perhaps interviews, together with questionnaires, of both the religious leaders concern and their congregations, would provide more insight – particularly from the insiders' point of view – of the phenomenon of faith-healing practices in the NPCCs

6.7 Conclusion

NPCCs are a growing movement in Africa, to an extent that it is forever becoming a near impossibility to discuss Christianity in Africa and not talk about this brand of Christianity. As a third wave movement of the early Pentecostals (first wave), it manifests some of the theologies that emerged with the advent of Pentecostalism, albeit with striking variances. These variances were caused by different context from which the third wave movement emerged (socio-economic and African worldview of ill health). Faith-healing is one of the elements within the NPCCs that demonstrate the context in which NPCCs emerged.

However, recent faith-healing practices in the NPCCs have raised questions of human dignity in South Africa. In this study, I have argued that the royal functional model of *imago Dei* has ethical implications for this phenomenon. Using Ruston's two categories of *imago Dei*, namely active and passive sense, I have argued that the royal functional model of *imago Dei* has ethical implication for passive sense – how human beings as the image of God ought to be treated

The study has shown that through the royal functional model of *imago Dei*, faith-healing practices in the NPCCs raise serious questions about the dignity of its adherers. How congregants are treated during faith-healing practices is not the manner in which human beings, as the image of God, ought to be treated.

Furthermore, the royal functional model of *imago Dei* raises imperative questions about practices in the church in general. Considering that "from the patristic to the modern period Christian theology has connected the dignity of human nature with the theme of the image God" (Mays 2006: 35), the time has come for all Christian traditions, including my tradition, to consider the royal functional model of *imago Dei* as a theoretical scrutiny of each and every faith practice, with ethical implication.

Thus, the church at large is also subjected to this theological scrutiny. This is because Tutu (2010:3) maintains that *Imago Dei* compels Christians to stand up against any form of oppression, and violation of human dignity; "In the face of injustice and oppression it is to disobey God not to stand up in opposition to that injustice and that oppression" (Tutu 2010: 3). This is imperative for the church, as Soulen & Woodhead

(2006: 7) state that human dignity has an indispensable context, which "is the church, the gathering of the faithful. Thus, human dignity has an ecclesial rather than an individual horizon. Human beings are not whole, but part of a larger whole – the body of Christ and the communion of saints."

This study has investigated how issues of human dignity, as underpinned by the doctrine of *Imago Dei,* particularly the royal functional model of *imago Dei, can* be used to impact ways in which religion is practised in the Newer Pentecostal-Charismatic Churches, and thus the church at large. It has demonstrated that the theological agenda (*imago Dei*) is ethically associated with human dignity agenda.

Appendix

Transcript from collected Data

A) Prophet Mnguni's appearance before the CRL Rights Commission.

Chairperson: [Asked about his faith-healing *modus operandi*, the chairperson of the CRL Commission argued] *that he is bringing Christianity in to disrepute.*

Prophet Mnguni: *there's what we call the demonstration of God's power, a proven that God has sent you. So, what is happening, if now I see snake, it take a faith to understand what do you see that's why no one died after eating the sake.*

Panel Member: *But they ate it?*
Prophet Mnguni: *They ate it but it test like chocolate.*
Chairperson: *The constitution deemed that the CRL Commission will promote and protect religious right in this country. As we sit here no one has said to me what we saw on that day on television is not undignified.*

Prophet Mnguni: *When a person falls his in a trance, he doesn't feel pain and the sickness goes. People are waiting that we are jumping on them, yet they are seeing the spiritual things. A person we jump on him today tomorrow they get a job.*

B) Prophet Lesego Daniel's appearance before the CRL Rights Commission

Panel member: *There was lot of media attention about certain things happen at the church. I did not read everything but I know there was something about grass and so on would you tell us something about that… I want to hear your side of the story.*

Prophet Daniel: *It was seen on media and everything. It's all about faith and as Jesus   turned water into wine you know it's the same. He even declared you will do greater things. It's like Green Street central Joburg, when I pass there, there are snakes skins, there, and people buy and go they eat…believing that if they eat there're going to be healed, they are going to be delivered from that. The same to Jesus Christ when he spat on the grass and he mixed with the soil and applied so that man's eyes. So many people were healed from eating those flowers and eating that grass. Of which I believe we are from different denominations, we all have Holy Communion in our churches. Flower, Petrol, Holy Communion. We are lying to people if we say it's the blood of Christ, it's grape juice or it's wine but we*

declare with our mouths that this is the blood of Christ. So, we declare upon the flower, I declare upon this and some people got healed. That's why people did not die…It shows and confirming us to be of Christ because Jesus said "If you find them doing what we are doing they are with us" So that's why I'm saying if we approve Holy Communion and disapprove others then Holy Communion it's grape juice it's not the blood but because we declare it becomes the blood of Christ because we declare it becomes the body of Christ. So it's not only flowers, we eat flesh, we eat somebody else's body. So, it happened there I believe Jesus said we can do greater things so that's how it happened.

Chairperson: *May I follow up on that question because it a matter of religious beliefs. I am sure people in your church would say it's okay to eat grass flash it down with petrol… You are saying to us today that what we saw on TV is that people were eating leaves and grass is part of the biblical experience in your understanding*

Prophet Daniel *It's what happened in the bible and Jesus did that. He also said you will even do greater things. And Genesis 1: 30 says you can eat anything that is green, every animal, everything. But because of the fall of men, men is limited you will die if you eat poison, but when the Holy Spirit comes upon us, the signs are free, you will eat poisonous things and you will still live*

Chairperson: *Do you think, looking back now whether you have brought the whole Christianity concepts into disrepute by what people saw on TV? Looking back knowing what you know now, do you feel Christianity has or has not been brought into disrepute because of the unorthodox ways, so to speak, of your actions? The unorthodox way… looking at the issues of the body of Christ and Holy Communion as you said, Petrol stands for the wine in other places, and grass for the body of Christ?*

Prophet Daniel: *No it was not, it was not brought into disrepute. Many beliefs, we have a lot of people out there. We have a lot of people coming in our country. Many believners. And…we have seen on the media it's depends on what the media reports. That's why first time I invited the media to come, we do have our reports we do have our stories, but they did not see in the media that's why I avoid the media so much. So that's why last time I said evidence is not based on media, its not supposed to be that way. Media just reports. It will be a fight of words, it's not what people say. I'll be happy if you just come and do a little beat of demonstration. So, it's important to rely on the actual event than media. Because media will just report what they want to report…*

Chairperson:	*I you saying that there was no eating of grass or leaves, or drinking of petrol? That it was all misinterpreted by media?*
Prophet Daniel:	*Let me explain it this way. As you see it it's grass, as you see it it's Holy Communion, I mean it's wine or it's a red grape juice as you see it. So, they drank the blood. So, if I declare that this flower is tree of life, tree of life is not found is not found anywhere in the world, there tree of life only in the kingdom and the spirit. So, they begin to eat...So if the bible says now there was pasture the ground covered the grass. So, if Jesus declares what you see, you look at this [brandishing one of the water bottles] this is water for everybody, if I declare this is Holy water you are no longer drinking ordinary water you are drinking Holy water. So, people did not drink water here you drank holy water. That's how it's happens. So, our beliefs...that's why I'm saying this is all about faith. The moment you declare it, it would come just as you say it...it's no longer a leaf, that's why people got healed we saw testimonies. People where sick, people ate and they got delivered...It's according to our belief, we believe in Jesus Christ. Jesus turned water into wine. So scientifically...we must not call it cocacola, it's water and cola and everything. Cocacola is lying to us. We must stop cocacola they must make cocacola without water...*
Chairperson:	*There is an allegation as well that people seemed hypnotized...that people seemed like they were not in touch with what was happening around them. That as they were running towards the trees...the way there were running, the way they were eating the trees, the way there were feeding one another the lilies and the whatever, it looked like there were under a spell of one kind or another...what are your comments to that?*
Prophet Daniel:	*When you talk of the Holy Spirit, you look Acts chapter 2, when the Holy Spirit came the bible says these people were like drunk. That's why a question was asked, people said ehh these people are drunk. Then Peter said these people are not drunk, this is what the prophet Joel said in the last days I'll pour out my Spirit on all flesh. You can't eat the tree it you are not under the Sprit...One question was asked to me to say, "would you eat grass if I command you to eat" I said to the if you have the Holy Spirit you can command me to eat grass I can eat it because I'm under the control of the Holy Spirit. But you can't I'm the one who is under the control of the Holy Spirit. Those people were not drunk it was 9am in the morning. So, people don't know the Holy Spirit. You cannot mistaken the Holy Spirit with Hypnosis. The things that we do even hypnosis cannot do... I've never done hypnosis I'm not from the school of hypnosis I'm from the school of Holy Spirit.*

Panel member:	[asked about evocation of the Holy Spirit and human right issues i.e. Would the Prophet instruct people, for instance to bomb people, and claimed we was instructed by the Holy Spirit to do so?]. *You can tell somebody to do something that in the natural sphere people won't do. I cannot drink petrol, I would not, no matter what people tell me. The point I'm trying to make is this. In my understanding there's a small step in doing something irrational and doing something worse…The point I'm making is I can take control someone and make him to do something I am convinced I'm under the authority of the Holy Spirit.*
Prophet Daniel:	*It depends whether you control somebody or not. Here it the Holy Spirit who takes over. That's why I'm saying it depends. I cannot send somebody in the stadium to go and kill. I believe the bible do not kill, do not murder. So here nobody died, I did not kill anybody.*
Panel member:	*It's easy for one person to make a wrong decision... Do you have some kind of authority over you that can help you that can help you…a voice behind you telling you listen, careful now?... Are standing under some kind of authority? …Or it's only you and the Holy Spirit?*
Prophet Daniel:	*No! I'm under the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ. Remember he said you will do greater things, you will even do new things. When you pray God says I will answer you and show you mighty works…I will show things that you don't even know.*
Chairperson:	*Do you think you control people's mind when they are under what you call Holy Spirit?*
Prophet Daniel:	*No, what is happening is that I don't control people's minds. Now this is now coming to me, it's not me. The main man who's questioned here is Jesus Christ. Because I'm under his authority. So now when he instructs his disciples go into every house, this is what you do anoint with all, do this. It's the same as what is happening now. Go! We follow instructions. When he sends them out he sends them with instructions. So now as I follow instruction, I follow what my master says I must do. So, don't worry…find my master and bring him here. Let him come and account and tell us why he instructed me to do this? So, we allowed Christianity in this country. We got constitution which says we got freedom of religion and everything of which I believe a right thing was done by this country, because everybody has to be free and do whatever they want to do based on the religious beliefs. So now that's why I'm saying I don't control the minds of the people. When I do things it's no*

longer I, it's my master. So, I believe let's look for my master and bring him here… let him be the one because he instructed "You will do the things that I did and even greater things"

Chairperson:
you

So, you are saying it's the Holy Spirit that instructs you that must ask people to eat grass and leaves, and drink petrol? So is that where you are coming from that it's the Holy Spirit that comes to you

Prophet Daniel:

It's the Holy Spirit, it's biblical that's why I quoted Genesis 1: 30 before the fall of men. I have to quote even the book of Daniel when the king was disobedience God caused him to stay with animals and eat grass to humble him. There was a reason. Everything that we do there's a reason. There was no wine Jesus had to make wine from water…

Chairperson:

Fortunately, there was no water

Prophet Daniel:

You know what's happening the water was dirty that's where Jews used to wash ceremoniously. And that's how he made wine. Out of dirty water. So, there was health risk, but people lived and there were happy.

Chairperson:

Are you saying you made wine out of petrol

Prophet Daniel:

it was pineapple juice… And it was a healing medicine. That's why we have testimonies of people drank they now give testimonies; "I suffered for a long time with stomach I couldn't sleep on my stomach and this happened" …It was on TV they even showed a lady who testified after drinking petrol she was healed… her sickness didn't come back she's still there today.

Chairperson:

Why do you think, from your perspective, that the greater majority of Christians in this country and even other countries find your actions unacceptable?

Prophet Daniel:

No, I believe it's the media. That's why I explained that we have a lot of people who come in and out of the country they appreciate. Did you see how they beg on TV. If you watch us, they come. That's why I saying we don't rely on the reports of the media. That's why I saying you guys are welcome to come and visit and see what is happening.

Chairperson:

I'm talking about the leadership in the church. If for instance I were to go to…people like Bishop Tutu who has been a leader in many other ways. And who understands the bible…Do you think If we can ask him to advise us, he would say what you are doing is the norm in the church?

Prophet Daniel: *Ehh…m, let me say it this way Deuteronomy 8: 16 God says I'm giving the manna which your forefathers know nothing about. It's not our fault if people don't know what is happening now with this generation. Because he says "I'm giving you what your forefathers know nothing about," so it goes back to blaming God for doing a new thing, which other people have never experienced before. If Jesus said "You will do greater things" greater things were not done before. So those who were there before greater things happened they wouldn't understand greater things. So that's why I'm saying ehh…m, okay the fathers may disagree, we call them fathers because they have been there, we do honour them. That's why I'm saying we cannot blame them for not understanding what is happening. Apostle Paul came, Peter was there, Mark, James, Andrew, were there with Jesus Christ. But he came later than them but he's the one who said though I'm less than the least of all of them but the secret things of the kingdom were given unto me... If God gives you a secret, those who were not there would not understand the secret. But some of the fathers do understand, do know because from the biblical knowledge…they know that God said you will do greater things. Necodemus went to Jesus Christ and says it shows that you are from God for no one can do the things that you are doing. It means no one would do them before Jesus would come. So only one person out of the lot of them came to Jesus and understood…So just to satisfy your question, only one person, from many came and said it shows that you are from God. But here is the secret, we know, we know that we are from God for no one can do the things that we are doing. We all know w that no body died. Don't we all know?*

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SABC REPORT; Snake Pastor appears before the CRL commission
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rcgr9e4oPyc

Prof Lesego Daniel and CRL Commission - 4 of 5
On Monday (16 November 2015), Rabboni Centre Ministries appeared for the second time before the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities (CRL Commission).
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-RyNeE6vZG8

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