

ASPECTS OF MIGRANTS' THEOLOGY OF GOD AND OF HUMAN BEINGS: A
MISSIOLOGICAL EXPLORATION OF SOME RESPONSES TO THE XENOPHOBIC
VIOLENCE IN AND AROUND TSHWANE, MAY 2008.

by

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DECLARATION

“I, the undersigned, hereby declare that “Aspects of Migrants’ theology of God and of Human Beings: A Missiological Exploration of Some Responses to the Xenophobic Violence in and around Tshwane, May 2008” is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references”

SIGNATURE

DATE

SUSAN NG’ANG’A

SUMMARY

When violence towards fellow humans deteriorates to the extent of setting fire on others, it becomes a matter of grievous concern and a subject of empirical research. This study therefore inquires into xenophobic violence in South Africa of 2008 and tries to understand the victims' plight in the light of their conception of the image of God. To achieve this, a questionnaire survey among migrant victims from other African countries was conducted, analysed and critiqued. The findings established a deep feeling of animosity from a section of a South Africans with consequent loss of property, physical harm and death, as well as emotional trauma. The study deduces that such hostile treatment by hosts results from a loss of African humanity, *Ubuntu*. Going forward a theology of the *image of God* is critical for human relations in South Africa and essential for reconciliation between migrants and locals.

Key words

Migrants, Intolerance, Discrimination, Xenophobia, Anthropology, *Ubuntu*, Theology of God, Mission of reconciliation

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My prayer to all of you is that the Almighty God will richly bless your lives and that you will continue to be a blessing and also contributing to the work of the Lord here on earth.

DECLARATION AS TO TERMINOLOGY

In the context of this study

- (i) Migrant is used interchangeably with immigrant implies to the black African people residing in South Africa as asylum seekers or having obtained refugee status
- (ii) Local people used interchangeably with host implies the South African born citizen
- (iii) Ubuntu used in the African context implies the aspect of see the other as a member of the larger African family
- (iv) Respondent used for the migrants who participated in the interview

Abbreviations

PEN – Pretoria Evangelism and Nurture Ministries

S.A – South Africa

HSRC – Human Sciences Research Council

CRAI – Citizenship Rights in Africa Initiative

Unisa – University of South Africa

Unisa M Th tutorial – University of South Africa Master of Theology Tutorial letter

CSVR – Centre for Study of Violence and Reconciliation

UN – United Nations

SAHRC – South African Human Rights Commission

TNS- Transparent Network Substrate

IOM – International Organization for Migration

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

I come from Kenya. During the last part of 2007 and the first part of 2008 tribal clashes occurred there as a result of disputed polls. It all started with the competition of aspiring political leaders for parliamentary seats. When these leaders addressed political rallies, they (especially those from the opposition parties) took advantage of the rallies to make promises to the people who they hoped would then vote for them so that the promises could be fulfilled. These people at the grassroots are the poor, the majority in Kenya, who were not well informed of the politics of the day and for them, the politician's promises could be believed. The opposition parties were promising them two major things. One was the issue of land ownership whereby they were being promised that they could repossess ancestral land from those who had bought since colonial days. The second promise was related to local governance, commonly known as "majimbo".

The resulting ethnic conflicts can be seen as evidence of the extent to which politicians mobilized support for their own immediate political advantage – a well known phenomenon (Larry, Marcand and Plattner 1994: xxi) This is the case since the politicians knew all too well that the Kenyan constitution does not have clauses for their demands for repossession of land and a change in local governance. In any case, the results of introducing a system of local governance would have been more poverty, since in Kenya few provinces have sufficient resources to sustain the entire province, so again the poor could have been on the losing end since it would have benefited the few, leaving the majority in worse condition since taxes would have risen to cater for the new posts in local governance.

The truth of the matter was known by politicians and those who were not voting for the opposition. The minority believed the lies and voted for the opposition, which lost. The result was that the minority who were waiting for the fulfillment of the promises, decided to take the

law into their own hands. This resulted in people being killed, neighbour killing neighbour because they don't belong to their tribe but have bought a piece of land in a different tribal area. There was great destruction of life and property, and people had to flee for their lives. It was difficult to believe that all this was happening in Kenya. It seemed like life had come to a stop, no one was saying anything; people could even be burnt alive in churches where they fled for safety. This made me think about the reason for the killing and how people could do this. I wondered whether their understanding of God had anything to do with it, as many of them were Christians.

1.2 Insertion:

I arrived in South Africa for my studies on May 4th 2008 and the xenophobic attacks in SA started on 11th May. It reminded me very much of what had happened in Kenya, although the causes were different. It left me wondering what has become of human beings that they could go to such an extent of attacking each other, wanting to chase away all others (fellow Africans), so that just you and your family would remain, together with your fellow tribespeople or national citizens and no one else.

As pointed out by Aida Besancon Spencer (1994:467) when one is a newcomer in any community, one is potentially vulnerable, Epictetus, the first century stoic philosopher, explained that a person who travels is considered to be a helpless person and exposed to those who wish to harm him/her. I experienced this helplessness because I arrived in the midst of xenophobia and was not familiar with places and the languages of the local people. The atmosphere was so tense that even at Unisa, which I considered to be an institute of Higher learning, I could not escape the xenophobia, as some of the workers noticed that I was black but that I could not communicate in the local language, I did not go free but was challenged to identify myself, as was the order at the time. The Taxi drivers took advantage of my foreignness in that when I boarded a taxi and explained that I was not familiar with my destination, they would either drop me far past my destination, or before it. They even overcharged me, and talked about me with their countryman/woman, which would cause some who would sympathize asking me where I was from and what I was here for.

The most striking episode was when an old woman was walking behind me and a fellow Unisa student from Burundi. As we come from the East Africa, we happen to share a language which is Swahili, so I and my colleague were walking down Van der Walt Street when this woman started shouting that we should go home. We didn't realize she was talking to us until she drew near to us, still shouting, and then we just realized that we were using a foreign language and that was why she was actually shouting at us. It was so frightening because she was following us, shouting, and since we were never sure what the others could have done, we stopped speaking and crossed the road to walk on the other side. The behavior of the old woman surprised me more than all the others, since as Africans there is the aspect of mutual respect: you give respect and receive it. As she was old, I expected that she should set a good example to be emulated by the young.

1.3 Stating the problem:

The two experiences from Kenya and from South Africa, both concerning people who are my fellow Africans and some my brothers and sisters in Christ, portray a shortcoming in both Christian teaching, love and concern. In Matthew 7:12 we read that we should do to others as we want them to do to us. In the African concept of being, we as human beings exist because we belong together. John Mbiti (1969:108) wrote that just as God made the first man (sic), so now man himself makes individuals who become the corporate or social man. It is a deeply religious transaction. Only in terms of other people does the individual become conscious of his/her own being, her/his own duties, privileges and responsibilities towards themselves and towards other people. According to our Christian understanding, when one person suffers, his fellow Christians, kinsmen, and neighbours, suffer with. So strong is the African sense of community that one can say that whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual. Yet here we find in two African countries with many Christians, people showing none of this concern for others but rather stealing from them and even killing them. This calls into question both their understanding of God and their understanding of other human beings.

The issue of conflict anywhere in the world results in disastrous damage to material things as well as loss of life. For those who survive these conflicts, fear and lack of trust in the people

around them cause that they sometimes flee and seek refuge elsewhere. In our African continent most of our countries have experienced internal conflicts and victims from these countries are refugees in the neighboring countries. South Africa happens to be one of the African countries hosting many of the victims. South Africa became a new nation only in 1994 and is therefore still a young nation. Born out of democratic elections and inaugurated as a 'Rainbow Nation' by Bishop Tutu and Pres Nelson Mandela, this 'new South Africa' represents a fundamental shift in the social, political and geographical landscapes of the past.

Opportunities of investment opened up with the achievement of Independence, and as observed by a Research Unit for a Task Team of Members of Parliament (2009/09/05) these post apartheid immigrants include street vendors and traders, informal-sector entrepreneurs who employ and train locals, and generally invigorate the informal sector and capitalize on the relative prosperity of the country. The reason behind their coming, as Francis Nyamnjoh (2006:5) points out, is that South Africa is the continent's leading economy, the most industrialized, but with a very skewed distribution of wealth. It has opted for the liberal economic and political model which implies a constitution that guarantees individual rights of private ownership and control even of what was obtained through dispossessing collectives of those designated racial inferiors during apartheid. These unfortunate South Africans and all those discriminated against by race found themselves excluded from the growing economy, which has actually changed to their disadvantage. This is observed by Saayman(2008:22): the underlying foundations of the political economy, the wealth of the country and social-political structures that govern the production, gathering and distribution of that wealth, have not changed in any fundamental way. So the migrants come to a country with a large number of its citizens already feeling excluded from the wealth being generated.

The original reason for seeking refuge in South Africa remains the search for a safe place for victims of conflict, but the fact that they can do business and find other jobs is another reason for coming here. It is a misunderstanding and misinterpretation to regard the migrants as stealing jobs from the South Africans or competing for scarce resources, as research done by Crush (1997:45), Hussein (1994:45), MacDonald, Masike and Celia (1999:10), MacDonald(2000:76), Maluleke (2003:1) and Tracey(2003:45) point out. Yet this perception persisted and resulted in negative attitudes toward the migrants and refugees and has been

pointed out as a major reason for the growth of xenophobia. The reason for the local people having this attitude is evident; having the majority of their own people living below the poverty line; an additional migrant or refugee to them seems to add further to their poverty and misery. On the other hand the migrants come to the country with hope of continuing with a normal and peaceful life, their immediate need being a safe place for their family and the basic needs. As confirmed by Peter Baehr and Geza(1991:83), most of them, when arriving in the host countries, will have expectations of safety, rest and hospitality. To them any offer of a job will be welcome as long as they secure a meal on their family table despite the underpayment or other injustice suffered while earning the wage. On the other hand the local people do not see the migrants' point of view, to them they only represent competition on the job market and room for employees to manipulate wages of South African workers to their (the South Africans') disadvantage, as observed by Hussein (in Masugulo 2000:120).

The commonality between the migrants and the local population is poverty, both parties are striving for a living, but the party which suffers most is the migrants whose presence is not welcome in the first place. It follows that when the tension heats up the attention focuses on the poor migrants. Andrew Jacques (1985:59) points out that when immigrants become settled, organized and established, start procreating , when their presence becomes felt and it is obvious that it would be difficult to send them home, xenophobia, a mixture of fear and contempt sets in. Why would this blame be directed to the poor migrants who are already vulnerable and innocent of the real cause of the problem? As Jacques (ibid) continues, such sentiments are closely allied to the world economic imbalance which has created such a huge gap between the rich and poor countries.

Such sentiments are also expressed by Spencer(1994:21): the root causes of the phenomenon of refugees and migration are the grand evils of the world: civil and international war, communal violence, famine and drought, the repression exercised by military and other dictatorial governments, natural disasters and the frightening gap between the rich and the poor world. Going by the two observations the cause of poverty seems to be explained as the first world dictating access and control of world market. So we seem to have poor continents with poor countries, with poor migrants seeking refuge in the midst of host who is equally poor and who turns on them every time they feel the depressing need.

The research will concentrate on problems of the migrants who seem to be creating more problems by their presence in South Africa. The questions will not be drawn from the wider world which causes the imbalance among the poor countries. Instead the question will be based on the relationship between the local people who are the hosts and the migrants who are seeking refuge. As noted earlier I will revisit the two dimensions of the Christian duty towards each other from Matthew 7:12 and also the African concept of being from John Mbiti (1969:16). Then the question of the understanding of the image of God will be added. In the light of these two dimensions I will then ask: why would one attack one's neighbor or blame him/her as the cause of one's suffering? How is the image of God portrayed in all the attacks and violence? Does it have any influence on one's self image and self respect? What role does one's faith in God play in this situation? What are the cross-cultural missionary implications? Karl Peters (vol.9:2) argues that the image of God, which is clearly seen in his nature of being a creator, is reflected in his creation of man and woman to continue to participate in the creative process.

I am of the opinion that it should be possible, therefore, for the local residents and the migrants to see and consider each other as human beings, a reflection of the same God who is our creator. When the opposite happens, which is fear and hatred which define xenophobia, then it has an influence on the way the image of God is understood. The question to probe is: where does it go wrong? Is it that people focus blame on one another and not on the issues or the real causes of the issues? Why would it happen, is it that people are no longer considering one another as created in the image of God? If so, what went wrong, is it the teaching? If so, what can be done about it? All these questions prove that there is a major problem between people who are otherwise supposed to dwell in peace and harmony. The problem I state thus: There is something wrong in their understanding of themselves and other people as created in the image of God. For this reason the evil (xenophobia) keeps on coming back and affect negatively their understanding of human beings as created in the image of God.

1.4 Research hypothesis:

Migrants who are victims of xenophobic attacks explain these attacks as a lack or deficit in people's understanding of God, and of the fact that he created people in his image, as brothers and sisters to each other. They still maintain their faith in God, however. This can be utilized in a mission of reconciliation.

I will try to prove my hypothesis by using the following main research question: what happened to the human responsibility to care and protect fellow humans as created in the image of God? Where the opposite happens and people are attacked, what influence does it have on their understanding of themselves as created in the image of God? What are the implications for a missionary existence in such a situation?

The sub-questions that are asked by the researcher include the following:

1. Do migrants feel that they can live and feel secure in South Africa at present?
2. How do migrants view God in the light of their sufferings, is he present with them?
3. How do migrants explain the fact that it was their fellow Africans and sometimes fellow Christians who attacked them?
4. Is there something the church can do to propagate the reality that human beings are created in the image of God and as brothers and sisters in Christ, and so promote reconciliation?

My research objectives will be:

To identify the extent to which migrants are vulnerable in the society and find out how these migrants are affected.

To identify the main factors that causes migrants to be vulnerable and find out their concept of God in the midst of these difficulties.

To find out whether one can propose a solution for the problem from a Christian point of view.

1.5 Methodology:

The research being a missiological study will adopt the contextual approach to theology as defined in Unisa M Th Tutorial Letter 101/2009. This theory emphasizes the importance of text and context. It means that both are relevant in the act of reflecting on the timeless truth and implementing it in the quest for a radical change. The study focuses on interacting with

the victims to find out how their situation is and has been; by so doing it aims at analyzing the context. Biblical texts will be used to reflect on the context in order to plan for action.

The research will be conducted in two stages. The first stage will be a literature review, which will be useful for background of xenophobia in this context. Library resources will be used, as well as sources from websites, especially reports about the 2008 attacks. The second stage will be the field work. The study will be carried out with a Christian organization by the name PEN Ministries. This abbreviation stands for Pretoria Evangelism and Nurture, and their offices are situated in central Pretoria in Bosman and Vermeulen Streets. The particular branch that I will be dealing with is called Adult Care and the minister in charge is Pastor Enos. He is involved with the project of assisting the victims of 2008 xenophobia, with giving them food twice a week, attending to those who are sick by taking them to the clinic and also offering some assistance like soap and toiletries as resources allow.

I have done the preliminary study and verbal communication between me and the pastor has taken place, whereby he has promised assistance where he can. I have also put my request in writing, undertaking to respect confidentiality and the vulnerability of the migrants, and to conduct my research in an ethical way. Having obtained a go ahead, I am now involved with the team who serves these people as an observer.

1.6 Research instruments: interview schedule:

I will begin with an interview with Pastor Enos to establish the background and history of the project.

The main group to interview will be the migrants themselves. I will make use of open-ended oral interviews. I will start the discussion with questions such as:

1. When did you come to South Africa?
2. Why did you come to South Africa?
3. Do you have relatives here or are you in any way related to a South African family?
4. How do you relate to the South African people in general?
5. How do you think God is involved in your situation?

6. What can you say of Gods' people and their attitude and assistance in your situation?
7. Where do you see yourself in two years' time?

The research is geographically limited to migrants in Pretoria (part of the Tshwane metropole). The central focus is the issue of xenophobia and the image of God and of fellow human beings. The contribution of the Christian community will also be noted. The research aims at adult migrants both men and women. It will be qualitative and not quantitative, based on open-ended questions and interpretation by the researcher.

1.7 Research Ethics.

The study will observe research ethics by making use of informed consent at the initial stage. Babbie (2008:69) defines informed consent as meaning that subjects must base their voluntary participation in the research project on a full understanding of the possible risks involved. This will be ensured by explaining the purpose of the study which is to explore what role the image of God plays in acts of xenophobia. The assurance of confidentiality will also be emphasized by not using names on any research form; also by interviewing individuals in privacy; and through pledging that information obtained will be kept between the interviewer and respondent. Finally, in the recording of the results no information will be supplied that could lead to anyone's identity being revealed. The respondent will be made to understand that participation is voluntary: it is one's own choice to participate or not.

1.8 Literature Review

A study of existing literature shows that studies on xenophobia have been carried out in various fields. Ingrid Palmay (2006) analyses xenophobia in relation to the deliverance of social services in the public domain. She reflects on migrant communities and focuses on the barriers to a refugee's access to local government services. He points, for example, at the policy governing the processing of document for asylum seekers; it takes up to six months to grant asylum. During this waiting period no subsistence or welfare support is provided for the waiting applicant. She also points to the silence of the law on public service such as housing or health care during this time. The long period renders the applicant vulnerable to be labeled

as an illegal in the country. The silence on public services also creates room for the migrant to be seen as grabbing or competing with residents for the same. She also analyses media coverage. Media articles seem to have followed two main themes. The one theme is characterised by hostility towards foreigners. The second theme is the need for sympathy toward refugees because of the trauma they experienced.

An example of this can be found in the use of unsubstantiated figures for migrants by key figures like the Minister for Home Affairs, and the effect this is alleged to have on the economy of South Africa.” If South Africans are going to compete for scarce resources with the millions of 'aliens' that pour into South Africa, then we can bid goodbye to our Reconstruction and Development Programme” (Minister of Home Affairs, 1994). The viewpoint of a Minister who reveals such bias, based on an unsubstantiated figure, not referring to their status and their contribution to the local economy will obviously have negative effects.

Whichever angle the media use will be strongly influenced by the sensational headlines and coverage, as well as loaded wording. This view is also shared by MacDonald (1999:30) Tracey (2003) and Dr Renu Modi(2008:8).

Bronwyn Harris (2002) argues that foreigners stand at a site where identity, racism and violent practice intersect. She analyzes xenophobia as implicit in the techniques of nation-building and as part of South Africa's culture of violence. She categorises three hypotheses on xenophobia: scapegoating, isolation, and bio-cultural. In terms of scapegoating foreigners are used as scapegoats in terms of broad social and economic stress factors and are scapegoated for taking “our” jobs, “our” houses and stealing “our” women. The country's inability to meet her people's basic needs plus the added burden of hosting refugees will always be interpreted negatively by the locals who will always be seeing the refugees as reason why they are not getting jobs and other provisions. As long as the underlying factor of poor delivery from the government is there, the symbol of foreigners will always be as scapegoats.

The isolation hypothesis understands xenophobia as a consequence of seclusion from the international community. According to the isolation hypothesis the interface between previously isolated South Africans and unknown foreigners creates a space for hostility to develop. This isolation is fortified by the internal seclusion and isolation of South Africans from South Africans, as a result of apartheid with its enormous emphasis on ethnic and cultural

boundaries. This has impacted on people's ability to be tolerant to difference..

The bio-cultural hypothesis of xenophobia is operative at the level of visible differences, or otherness, in terms of physical and biological factors and cultural differences exhibited by African foreigners in the country. As signifier these features play a common role in promoting xenophobic actions. Harris points out that the social institutions such as some parts of the media are key players in transmitting the above xenophobia hypothesis to the general public.

Wesley D.Chaplin (1999) explains immigration as a global concern. He points at the increasing demand by people for access to limited opportunities, which creates room for indigenous population to look upon immigration with some concern which he terms as unfounded fears. These manifest themselves in violence directed at immigrants. This may be as a result of media which he claims has been attuned to and capable of, reporting immigration crises due to the sensational coverage on immigrants. He continues that immigrants' problems from an increases in socioeconomic problems. What appears to occur is that some indigenous people react with a mixture of xenophobia and simple fear, and these feelings are strongest during economic downturns, particularly when unemployment levels are high or increasing. Other socioeconomic problems, such as rising crime rates or increasing expenditure on welfare, are also often accompanied by anti-foreigner sentiment. Another researcher who has contributed in this area is Sarah Spencer (1994:316), who argues that the source of the problem is not public attitudes but the conflict which gives rise to these attitudes.

Willem Saayman (2008) provides a brief sketch to help understand the post-apartheid context better in political and economic terms. It is this context which contributes to xenophobic attacks, as many poor South Africans feel as excluded from the wealth of South Africa as before 1994. They are angry and saddened by this, and it is therefore easy to blame an influx of migrants for contributing to their misery.

I have not come across anybody who has studied the problem from the angle of the influence of the image of God and its relationship to interhuman relations in xenophobic conflicts from a missiological perspective.

1.9 Chapter outline:

Chapter one

This chapter serves as the general introduction of the research it includes information regarding the motivation of doing this study and defines the problem of the study whereby it is clear that xenophobia is live in the South African communities and migrants are vulnerable, therefore a call to curb the real source of this evil from the society. The chapter also introduces the design and methodology used for the study and an overview of all the other chapters.

Chapter two

This chapter introduces the literature review of the 2008 xenophobic violence. It highlighted the view from the locals on the same and the migrant's background and their way of living here in South Africa. The possible causative factors of the attacks were also pointed out in this chapter.

Chapter three

This chapter is a presentation of the findings from the empirical research. It brings together findings from the different migrants as an important step to make an assessment on the aspect of their view of Theology of God in hardship. Various responses such as why the migrants left their countries and their choice of this country, responses of hospitality and their future possibility in this country are reflected in this chapter.

Chapter four

This chapter deals with the reflection and analysis in line of the cycle of mission praxis. This is drawn from both the literature and empirical findings. The analysis is general as well as specifically in theological terms.

Chapter five

This chapter is the final chapter of the research. It sums up the main argument of the research and provides some recommendations for the outreach of the churches in Tshwane.

1.9 Outcomes

The presence and persistence of xenophobia in South Africa calls for a prophetic theology as explained by Saayman (2008:25). Such a prophetic theology must offer a message of hope, but Christian hope is not an expression of senseless and baseless optimism; it must address the realities of the situation. Through the research I hope to establish whether a better understanding of God and the fact that he created people in his image may provide elements of such a realistic hope which can be incorporated into our missionary commitment.

Chapter 2

Background to the xenophobic violence of May 2008

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to look at the way in which the migrants have been received in South Africa. South Africa is a democratic country and also claims to open her arms to all those who live within her boundaries as part of the rainbow nation. It was especially the government under President Nelson Mandela who tried to promote this attitude. Later events have however contradicted this claim, especially by an apparent general hostility towards some migrants. This is confirmed by a quote from a focus group respondent to HSRC researchers in their June 2008 study of xenophobia (2008:2):

We were against these people from the onset - that's when terms like "makwerekwere" (a derogatory term for foreigners) came about; we were against them in a light manner but now people are getting angry that is why they beat them up, their numbers are growing and some have babies this side, it's as if this is their hometown; this violence happened because people are getting angry, this thing has always been there but it wasn't as strong as it is now. We never said we are happy to live with them but it was a light thing so people resorted to violence because of the realisation that the situation is getting serious.

From this quote we can make the following deduction:

The deep seated and antagonistic attitude has been present for a long time in the mind of the local people towards foreigners who are being referred to as "these people" (in other words, not part of "us"), with also a derogatory name coined for them. This is a clear indication that though the government had opened its doors for migrants, this was not the attitude of the people on the ground; these local people are the ones directly

involved with the migrants as they live side by side on their premises, work together in their working places and interact with them on a daily basis.

The direct expression of open rejection indicated by the words “we were against these people from the onset that's when terms like "makwerekwere" came about,” and also the reference to “them having babies” shows that this is a real concern with the locals that the migrants are continuing with their lives in a normal fashion against the locals' wishes

The attitude expressed above is obviously against the constitution, which provides to everyone living in the country the right to live and work and also be protected and receive medical care. We therefore look at how things started to go wrong.

2.2 Background to the xenophobic attacks of May 2008

It is not my intention to give a full analysis of the violence and its causes and effects. That is not necessary for the purposes of my dissertation, so I only mention some facts that I consider important in order to understand the role of religion. Research by the Human Sciences Research Council pointed out that attacks began in Alexandra (Johannesburg) and then spread to other areas in and around Johannesburg, including Cleveland, Diepsloot, Hillbrow, Tembisa, Primrose, Ivory Park and Thokoza. Violence in Tshwane, Kwazulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and Cape Town soon followed (HSRC 2008:14). The speed with which the violence was spreading was indicating it was well organized. Why would that be so?

In order to arrive at a proper evaluation of the May 2008 violence, it is worthy to remind oneself of the wider picture of the violent historical background of the country. The 2008 violence included shacks being burnt down and people being injured. This indicates that the violence was accompanied by both destruction of material things and loss of human lives. Added to this is the fact that it seemed as if this outbreak appears to have been racially targeted and discriminatory in nature targeting primarily black foreign nationals residing in poor neighbourhoods. Those targeted tended to live in poor areas in and around South Africa's urban centers where the level of skills of the indigenous citizens tends to be low. It is also clear that South Africans and foreigners lived in mixed communities. The settlement of

the poor areas by foreign migrants is also pointed out by Commey2008:12; poor migrants came to settle among those already living in depressed economic environments, mostly informal settlements, that have expanded rapidly around the country since 1994.

As noted earlier, xenophobia is not new in South Africa: it has been experienced by different migrants at different times even in the apartheid days. This was confirmed in a study conducted by the International Organization for Migration in which a Mozambican respondent in Atteridgeville recounts his experiences in apartheid days: “This thing is something we inherited from the Boers because when we came to South Africa [before 1994] we arrived into their hands. They encouraged the hatred of outsiders and people would point out to them that at such and such a place there is a Shangaan person [mainly resident in Mozambique] and they would come and deport you”. So even the children in those days (adults of today) grew up in that culture of discrimination where they could distinguish that this person is from this area and they belong a certain “foreign” tribe.

Such sentiments, declares Commey, were a result of the early divisions between races instituted by the white as they were dividing South Africa for their own financial and economic gains. The divisions persisted, and were further aggravated when Bantustans were set up by the apartheid regime according to ethnicity. Zulus were allocated Kwazulu, while Tswanas were given their own domain in the form of Bophuthatswana. Xhosas were confined to areas in the Transkei and Ciskei. (Commey2008:14) The above portrays the divisions formed, sometimes forcefully, from the early days within the South African communities which grew up within these communities taking different dimensions when it came to people from other countries seeking to occupy “their” territories.

2.3 The Migrants' background

Different migrants from different countries in the continent and outside Africa came and still come to South Africa to seek refuge. They all come with different reasons. Research done by different observers comes up with two main categories of migrants: those who flee their country as a result of political unrest, and those who flee to seek a better life for economic reasons. Migrants in South Africa are not confined to refugee camps as the country's Refugees Act allow them to live and work among SA citizens while their applications for

permanent refugee status are considered. During this time, however, the government does not offer them any assistance with either food or accommodation. A reason of them living in overcrowded flats is so as to be able to raise the rent which is very high for someone struggling for survival. (Commey 2008:12). The going rate for rent of a 3- meter square tin shack is R50 (US\$7), or it can be bought for R1, 500 (\$230). This is a sizable amount of money for an unemployed person to pay. For this reason they tend to squash a large number of people into one room.

Refugees and asylum seekers are not accorded any material assistance during this initial period, and are required to meet their own subsistence needs (SAHRC 2009:27). Having no aid or government social grants, the migrants find themselves doing any work that comes their way for survival. To them the issue of being underpaid or overworked does not cause any serious problem as long as they get paid for whatever they do. This has caused many of the migrants to be abused by their employers who take advantage of their desperate situation. Commey observes that they scratch a living either as small entrepreneurs (selling fruit, vegetables and sweets) or hunt for work in adjoining traditionally white suburbs, now multiracial (2008:12). He continues that they form a small percentage of the workforce. They have set up their own small shops in the squatter camps, they cut and braid hair, and they fix cars, and provide value (:16). Indeed, they sometimes become so successful, as a result of their skills and hard work for any salary that they seem to be more affluent than the South Africans among whom they live. In this way they become targets of envy.

2.4 Possible causative factors and reasons

A report conducted by the IOM found that there are broad structural and historical factors that led to the May 2008 violence including the legacy of institutional discrimination and generalised mistrust among citizens, police, and the elected leaders, inherited from the apartheid days this became a factor that contributed to the attacks on migrants. This finding already illustrates that there is no easy answer to the question: what caused the violence? There are several factors, some of them quite seemingly indirect. To them I now turn my attention.

2.4.1 *The role of the media*

One important factor was the way in which some of the newspapers and other media reported events in which migrants were involved, and the negative attitudes betrayed in this way. While the media is supposed to give the public valuable information, it has been pointed out that some of them were actually in the forefront to tarnish the image of migrants in South Africa. In a report by Citizenship Rights In African Initiative (CRAI 2008), it is noted that the economic impact and increase in crime associated with migrants, has being alarmist and ill-informed. This has been as a result of political exploitation for party-political purposes, and fanned by a partisan press. The report attributes this to the heavy wording portraying negative image of migrants and also associating them with the ills and crime in their coverage, this portraying to the locals a bad picture of the cause of alarm which is not always the case. The report quotes, for example, a 2000 report on xenophobia and migrations by the South African Migration Project (SAMP 2000), a project of the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA). This report refers to a report in *The Times* which argues that anti-immigration sentiments in South Africa are the product of misinformation from a secondary source, including the media. They continue by giving a survey report showing that in 950 media reports on immigration since 2000, 17% of the events reported used “negative metaphors”, 22% linked migrants with crime, and 20% referred to migrants as “illegal”. Of the articles that used the term “job stealers”, the SA Press Association was by far the worst offender, making up 38% of the incidences of the term.

The report notes that there has been marked changes in reporting since, despite some few media outlets remaining partisan and having furthered such stereotypes, thus pointing out that some media outlets have yet to respect the need of responsible reporting that comes with the freedom of expression as stipulated in the South African Constitution. The findings of the report were that while some foreign nationals have undoubtedly been involved in criminal activities, no evidence was presented that they have contributed to an overall increase in crime rates. At the same time, nearly all the respondents to the CRAI mission in August argued that stereotyping of African foreign nationals by partisan media may have demonised groups of foreigners.(CRAI JULY 2009:22-23).

Commey (2008:14) points to the fact that media previously conveyed the picture to the local people that they were better off under white rule, whereas the rest of Africa was portrayed as hopeless, a breeding ground of poverty, disease and starvation – psychologically creating disrespect for other Africans. In their confusion, many black South Africans looked up to African Americans as “more sophisticated”, and began imitating their culture. So the situation portrayed in some media was one of South Africa versus the “inferior Africa” north of the Limpopo River. (:14). Kagwete (2008:4) also points out that for a very long time now the South African media has been engaged in a campaign to degrade African immigrants and Africans in general. In particular, Nigerians, Zimbabweans and Mozambicans have been (and continue to be) the biggest targets. He continues that it is unfortunate that black newspaper editors are contributing to what Dr. Edward Rhymes called “the continuing miseducation of the Negro”. Dr Rhymes decries “our disturbing tendency to demonise ourselves” and our willingness as a race to accept derogatory titles; yet today, in 2008, we were still promoting negative perceptions about Africans and their products and, in the process, fueling xenophobia/Afro-phobia.

2.4.2 The lack of political leadership at local level

With the new President in power the expectation of many South Africans was that the government of the day will be able to deliver at a better and also a quicker pace the social services that had been lagging behind for long. However to their disappointment things seem to be moving at even a slower pace than expected. This is evident through the strikes of workers from different branches involved in service delivery which seem to be following each other in sequence. This seems to be putting pressure not only on the President himself, but also on other people who are all looking up to the government for service deliveries. This seems to be building up tension in especially poor communities which is explained by a report of TNS Research reported by the *Pretoria News* on Wednesday 26 May 2010, p.5.

The report stated that more than half of citizens in local municipalities are fed up with the lack of services. They went on to state that this could lead to more violent protests and xenophobic attacks. “With levels of unhappiness over service delivery exceeding half the population, the

likelihood of such protest action then becoming violent becomes highly probable”, the research company noted. The research goes on to give the percentage and even the location in different parts of the country. Of the 2000 people polled in the survey, which targeted people living in urban areas of Gauteng, Durban, Cape Town, the Eastern Cape and Bloemfontien, 52 percent said they were not happy about the services. TNS said even among wealthy people, 49% were unhappy, citing the ongoing power outages, water and billing problems. The survey warned that dissatisfaction was high “everywhere” and that more service “flash-points” were likely to occur in Gauteng and East London. “It is clear that there is extreme dissatisfaction with service delivery from local authorities in metro areas...Protests can be expected almost anywhere, feelings are so strong. That this will spill over into violence in many instances should not be a surprise”. The survey continues to classify the finding among the unemployed as 59 percent as unhappy about service delivery and also among those in squatter camps and informal settlements – where most foreigners live. TNS Research also warned that frustration over lack of services could lead to a repeat of the 2008 xenophobic attacks that left 61 people dead, including South Africans. The fact that research identifies this dissatisfaction about service delivery at local level, which can be attributed also to a lack of political leadership at local level, implies that this was a strong causative factor in the 2008 xenophobic violence.

The company argued that xenophobia was not “driven” by the hatred South Africans had for foreigners, but by poor services and scarce resources such as houses, water, jobs, “and even women”.

“Given that people are sensitive to the influx of illegal immigrants, and that their perceptions of the handling of the xenophobia problem in 2008 are not very positive, makes it highly likely to become a backlash against foreigners living here,” the poll noted. “The government needs a plan to address both service delivery and the concomitant violence, especially against foreigners, as we are, indeed, sitting on a power keg,” It said 70 percent of people polled wanted illegal immigrants to be returned to their country of origin. Here we have a clear indication of a causative factor that is still playing a major role today.

The report also pointed to the response of the government on this issue. This view is also shared by research done by SAHRC and the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee in Foreign

Affairs who reported “The perception that xenophobia was becoming institutionalised and expressed by immigration and other government officials was seen as particularly serious by participants in the hearings. One respondent said, 'little action seems to be taken against such type of behaviour. What message is it sending if the senior officials do not react? It creates the impression both for the immigrant and the official that this is supported by my seniors and I think this needs to be debunked. Open hearings on Xenophobia and problems related to it. Hosted by the sahrcc (2009:31) Going by this then it is likely that the locals who perpetrated the violence can easily do so if their grievances continues unattended since they can confidently do so knowing that even in the last outbreak the perpetrators were not sentenced and this can create a strong basis of them doing it again.

2.4.3 Culture of violence.

As observed earlier, violence is part of post-apartheid South Africa. This is a fact stated by the CSVr in their presentation made to the Parliamentary seminar in which they affirmed the “culture of violence” by stating:

We need to acknowledge and address the fact that we as South Africans use violence to deal with both personal and societal challenges. This is linked to the fact that we came from a history whereby violence was used systematically. Yet we have not done enough to address this history and the subsequent unresolved trauma. This culture of violence is evidence in the high levels of crime and violence in South Africa. *Csvr seminar: understanding current xenophobia attacks and how South Africa can move forward* June 2008

The end of apartheid and the influx of migrants, many refugees, into the country, brings with it the many misconceptions of the locals which resulted in xenophobia. Another dimension that goes with this phenomenon is that of seclusion and isolation. Because of the wide prevalence of random violence, people are suspicious of all strangers. This is another causative factor of xenophobia among black South Africans who are inclined to look upon their black African brothers and sisters as inferior, blaming them for the scarcity and any ill that may arise. Research conducted by CRAI (2009:6) also notes this, stating that:

South Africa’s legacy of apartheid and isolation has created fertile ground for

violence in several ways. First, it created racialised notions of identity and worth which encouraged black South Africans to see themselves not only as inferior to whites, but also as separate from the rest of the continent. Second, it encouraged separation and compartmentalisation of various population groups as a means of governance and discouraged integration or contact between groups. Finally, it institutionalised violence as a means of communicating grievances and achieving political ends.

The above portrays the strong effects of post apartheid still in the minds of South Africa and which if not addressed in the right way will continue to open the wounds suffered during the apartheid time, which will continue haunting South Africans, and they in turn will continue hurting innocent victims. It also portrays how accepted the culture is despite its angry face characterised by the former days as observed by different researchers like J.M Gathogo and IA Phiri (2009) who point out that under apartheid, violence was deemed legitimate as long as it had “political” overtones, even though much of this violence was black-on-black in the townships. It is that violence that during the 1980s glorified the grisly “Soweto necklace,” where a tyre drenched in petrol would be lit and put around the neck of some unfortunate perceived collaborator. They quote Mangcu (in Warigi 2008:11):

There is something about [May2008] violence reminiscent of that period. This is the impi- like organisation, the open brandishing of weapons, the dancing around burning people.

The above as observed portrays the way the local South Africans has turned the tables on their fellow Africans as demonstrated in the xenophobic violence by the setting ablaze of a Mozambican man. As Commey (2008:12) points out, the immigrant, whose name was Mugza, was rounded up by locals in the Rhamaphosa informal settlement, near Johannesburg. They wrapped him in his only possessions, Commey continues, and set him alight. While he burned the locals danced, laughed, and jeered. Burned beyond recognition, he was transported to his Mozambican village for burial. This is only one manifestation of an inherited culture which is heavily domineering in the mind of the local people and seems to be also socially accepted by the preceding actions, whereby no one seemed to help the burning man but all seemed to be celebrating their deed. This is an unfortunate step to discriminate

against their fellow black Africans, since in so doing they mistakenly attacked even some of their fellow South Africans who were mistaken for migrants by either their skin colour or their language. Some South Africans share a language with their neighbouring countries like the Shaghani from Mozambique. So some fellow South Africans were attacked simply because they spoke Shangaan – another factor reminiscent of the culture of violence which reigned during apartheid.

2.4.4 Discrimination or rejection of the other

By this I refer to the way South Africans depict their fellow African from other countries, for example by the way they look, or their accent, as proven by research done by the SAHRC and the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Foreign Affairs. Bemma Donkoh of the UNHCR said, “xenophobia-related sentiment has, increasingly, taken on more sinister and menacing, but subtle forms, with public servants selectively victimising refugees, asylum seekers and even those South Africans whom they mistake for foreigners [on account of their appearance or accent]” Open hearings on Xenophobia and problems related to it. Hosted by the **SAHRC and the Parliamentary. Portfolio Comittee in Foreign Affairs**. Report ... *historymatters.co.za/wp-content/uploads/.../sahrc-xenophobia-report* (2008:22). The report continues that foreigners seen as most “different” in this context are often people who are darker, speak another language, dress differently, are taller, shorter, etc., would be the likely victims in this scenario.(:25). This is also observed by research by Brownyn Harris (2002:6), who states:

In trying to establish whether a suspect is an illegal or not, members of the internal tracing units focus on a number of aspects. One of these is language: their accent in the pronunciation of certain words (such as Zulu for ‘elbow’, or ‘buttonhole’ or the name of a meerkat). Some are asked what nationality they are: if they reply ‘Sud’ African, this is a dead give-away for a Mozambican, while Malawians tend to pronounce the letter ‘r’ as ‘errow’. Appearance is another factor in trying to establish whether a suspect is illegal – hairstyle, type of clothing worn as well as actual physical appearance. In the case of Mozambicans a dead give-away is the vaccination mark on the lower left arm [while] those from Lesotho tend to wear gumboots, carry walking sticks or wear blankets (in the traditional manner), and also

Speak slightly different Sesotho.

The above shows how discrimination against immigrants hurt not only the migrants but also some of the local people who were often mistaken for similar appearances to those of the migrants. From these we gather not only the hostility and harm toward migrants but also the same extended to the mistaken local people. We also gather the aspect of viewing the others as inferior, that is going by their accent which is seen as them being incapable of pronouncing words as fluently as the local people. This portrays also the ignorance of the local people who refuses to accept all people as different and therefore having different personalities which includes the accent and also the way of dressing influenced by one's culture.

2.5 Conclusion

Having discussed some dimensions of the 2008 violence, and also some of the causative factors established in the research, I can now turn to the research findings which were established in my oral interviews.

Chapter 3

Presentation of oral research findings

3.1 Introduction

The first members of the focus group studied for this dissertation was started in April 2008 by the PEN ministries and existed quite informally way, as the minister in charge explained. The ministry had not yet come up with very definite plans for the future of this project. I was however able to join the group in July 2009 and through the PEN services of providing food to the group twice a week I have managed to do some observation and also conduct some interviews. In February 2010 the PEN ministry could (for various reasons) not continue, and I interviewed more migrants through the help of the International Church of Pretoria, who had contact especially with migrants from the Democratic Republic of Congo and other Francophone countries in Central Africa. I conducted my interviews with the help of one of the women who is a leader in the women's ministries. She happens to be well informed with the issues of migrants having come from the Democratic Republic of Congo herself and also working in close relationship with the migrants as their spokesperson in U.N meetings. We started with the migrants who were still in the open on the streets outside the U. N offices. The focus group therefore consisted of some migrants from Zimbabwe and some from Francophone countries.

The aim of carrying out the field research was to find out how the migrants understood God and the role of God in their sufferings, especially their vulnerability as migrants in South Africa (one could describe this as a theological perspective). At the same time I wanted to understand their attitude towards their attackers, and how they viewed their attackers' attitude towards them (one could describe this as an anthropological perspective). I hoped that this knowledge would enable me to propose guidelines for Christian communities on educating people about dysfunctional relationships and integration of migrants. This section presents

the most important results from the twelve stories related to interviews conducted with these migrants¹.

3.2 Interviews

3.2.1 Zimbabwean migrants

The first story is that of a 26 year old man from Zimbabwe (A). He is an orphan who had to come to South Africa seeking for a job to cater for his siblings back home. During my interview with A, this is what he had to say about his work and stay in South Africa.

I first came on 25th November 2006. I came to look for a job so that I could send money home and look after my sisters so that they could further their education. Since my parents have passed away, I had been looking after them through working in South Africa. I had no relatives here and am not related to any South African family.

Relating this experience to the context of living here, I asked him how he related to South Africans generally. This is what he had to say:

When I came in 2006 it used to be good because I was staying with them and I started working in Limpopo. They used to help, and I got a job and went to see my family in 2007. When I came back I went to Soshanguve [Tshwane] where I got a job. I asked for permission to go and see my family and when I went I took longer and I got back only in July 2008 to work, but my boss told me he had already employed somebody else. When I got another job I could not continue because the South Africans were swearing at us and our boss told us if we fear something is going to happen to us then we should stop coming to work. We continued and one day after we had left [our home] they [South Africans] came and burned our shack and looted the grocery we had bought to take to our families. My mates only managed to rescue our blankets. We had

¹ PEN ministries could, for various reasons, not continue with their ministry in 2010. I could therefore only conduct a limited number of interviews. As there was great similarities between the stories I was told, my supervisor agreed that I base my study on a limited number of interviews. This is in line with the findings of Lincoln and Guba (1985), who describes this phenomenon of repetition in interviews as “saturated data” (:2), referring to a situation where the same themes continue to appear during interviews.

to call a friend and come to Schubart [a black of run-down flats in Central Pretoria] to live with him. We forgive them because they don't know that they are treating us like this and maybe sometime they will be like us. But some are very good, those who know God.

Relating to the spiritual life of respondent A, I asked him how he thought God was involved in his situation. This is what he had to say:

God is our hope, he knows we are suffering and he will help our situation in our country [Zimbabwe] to be better. He is the one who keeps us and protects us; if it were not for him, these people could have killed us. He also made his people to help us, especially me, I received a lot of things from the churches around South Africa.

When I asked him to comment on God's people and their attitude and assistance in his situation, this is what he said:

These people are good and they are doing a good thing to give us food. I just pray that God will continue to bless them. They really have a positive attitude towards people who need assistance like me. They have assisted me very well in clothing, food and even their prayers have meant a lot to me because it strengthens me and help me know that God really cares for me even when I am poor or when you don't have parents, he is there for me.

I also asked him about the possibility of future stay in South Africa and this is what he said:

I see myself finding a good job, staying with my sisters in Zimbabwe because I really think things will be okay back home. We hope that God will help our country and the situation will be better then we will go home and find jobs there. We hope in God for everything and he has a good future for us so it is only now that we are struggling.

The second respondent (B) was 39 years old, also from Zimbabwe. He had to flee his country

for his life since he was in opposition to the government, having left the army. He feared for his life and therefore fled to SA. This is what he had to say:

I came to South Africa in 2006. I came to South Africa as a refugee because in my country I was in the opposition party and the government was persecuting us. I also came looking for a job since the situation at home was economically unstable. I had no relatives here.

When asked how he related to South Africans, this was his answer:

I would not condemn them for what has happened because when I came they welcomed me and before xenophobia there were some who were very good and supportive. However there were others who were seeing us like outcasts, but even the Israelite were regarded like that by Egyptians. These people were God's people and they lacked understanding that what was happening to the Israelites today could also happen to them. God wants us to forgive; because I have a Christian background I know if we forgive them, they may be able to see their sins and repent them.

I asked him how he experienced God in this situation and he answered:

God loves me, he is my saviour. He knows I am suffering now and will bring the situation in my country to an end and we will have a good future. Just as he delivered the Israelites, he will also deliver us, and he has already done it since we didn't die in the xenophobia.

When I asked him to comment on God's people and their attitude and assistance in his situation, he said:

These people, they have some understanding and are fearful of God, that is why they are helping us. They know that we should love our neighbours.

About future possibilities in this country, he had this to say:

I hope in God, for he has good plans for me and in two years to come he will have blessed me with a job. Also he will bless my country so that we can go home to work and be with our families. He has given us education so he will come and deliver us as he did to the Israelites.

The third respondent, C, was 29 years old an ex-soldier from Zimbabwe. This is what he had to say about himself:

I came to South Africa in 2004. I ran away from my country since I was in the army and I turned to opposition so I was wanted for defecting from the government, so I was having conflict with the Zimbabwe government. Therefore I ran for my life and also for survival in terms of a job.

When I asked him how he went about his stay and work here he said:

I had no family and I was not in anyway related to any S. A. family. When I came I used to sleep in the street for two months, I then got a job in an Indian restaurant where I worked for two years. In 2006 the owner went back to India but gave us recommendation letter and advised us to go to Durban since there Indians are in large numbers and we would find jobs. So I went and I got a job since I was a chef.

When asked about his relationship with South Africans this is what he said:

The South Africans have an attitude of not welcoming foreigners, especially us from Zimbabwe. While I was working in Durban I used to stay in a mukuku [a small temporary hut], but when this xenophobia broke out they burned our mukuku. We had to run to police stations for help, but even the police were not helping us so we came to Pretoria since we heard that here it was not very bad.

I asked him about his experience of God in his situation and he said:

To tell the truth, I felt that God was not there; if he was, why did he allow these people to treat us like this. How could he allow this to happen to us? I was thinking there was no God because why did he leave me alone?

When asked to comment on God's people and their attitude and assistance in his situation, he said:

They are friendly, these people who are helping us. God shows his love to us by these people. These people, it is God who uses them to show us that he cares about us.

When asked about future stay here, he said:

South Africa is not safe, they can kill you here, but I pray God for money to go home.

The fourth respondent, D, was a young man in his mid- twenties who came from Zimbabwe for greener pastures as he put it since S.A is full of opportunities. This is what he had to say about his stay here.

I came to S.A in 2007. I came as a result of economic hardship in my country of origin Zimbabwe. So I was seeking for a better living here in S.A. Greener pastures to be precise. I had no member of my family and I was not related to any S.A family.

I asked him how he related with the South Africans, and he said:

They are friendly but they are also aggressive. When working together they start calling you names if you cannot speak in their language. But if you go to their church and say you have a problem they will give you everything you need; those who are good are very good and those who are bad are very bad. When xenophobia broke out I was I Cape Town and they were coming to the rooms of foreigners, they knew every room that belonged to foreigners and they came and looted our belongings. I had bought even groceries to send home and they looted all, but we were compensated from the relief camps.

The question of God's involvement in his situation was put across and he said.

Well when I wanted to come here I did not have money and I cried to God everyday. He heard me and there I was in S.A. When I arrived I experienced some of the worst years of my life. First the xenophobic attacks and later on staying in the streets, sleeping on the floor with no blankets at all, it was the worst experience of my life. I walked with dirty clothes and unbrushed hair. But in the middle of my pain God told me that he was pruning me, that he was the one that allowed it for his own glory and purpose and that when I would tell people about hardships of life, I would have gone through the hardships myself hence someone would understand because I had been there. God was amazingly helpful. He used people to supply our needs in a special way. They were there in the camp from early morning to see that we have breakfast, at lunch they were there to give us food and even at supper.

To the question of God's people and their attitude and assistance he said this:

God works with people on his earth, and especially those who know him. The church assisted us in many ways. They gave us accommodation, groceries, clothes and at some occasion they gave us money. They encouraged us, and told us that the South Africans who had beaten us were not God-fearing. They met our needs, and even if some seemed to be impossible they did their best so that our needs might be attended. God's people here in S.A really demonstrated the love that God wants, they were like fire fighters to us.

When asked about the future possibility here he had this to say:

In two years I see myself here since here there are opportunities, but there is no security. If security deteriorates, I will have to go out of this country

The fifth respondent, E, was forty two years old from Zimbabwe; this is what he said about his stay in South Africa.

I came in 2006. I was running away from my country because of the political war. I did not have any family and I was not related to any S.A family. I was sleeping in the street until I got a job then I rented a room.

When the question of how he related with the South Africans was put across, this is what he said:

Some of them are very good but there are those who are very evil. That time of xenophobia they started swearing at us. When I was going home from work to Soshanguve, I was attacked. They hurt me on the head and I lost consciousness. I regained consciousness in hospital where I stayed for two months. When I came from the hospital, I went where I had been staying, to find that there was nothing and the landlord told me that they had burned my clothes and looted my belongings. I was staying in a mukuku, so I lost everything and since the locations are not safe I came back to the streets.

I asked him how he thought God was involved in his situation, and he said:

God is my refuge. Every time I call upon him, he saves me. Because of the injuries I got from the attacks, I have many problems. When the sun is very hot the head scar can even start bleeding and my eyes become very painful but I pray God and he saves me.

I also asked him to comment on the attitude of God's people and their assistance in his situation. He said:

These people are good. They are not like those with evil spirit who attack and kill people for nothing. These are good people who help - may God bless them. I also forgave those who hurt me.

Asked if he had any plans for the future here, he said:

Since these people burned my work permit I am praying God that I may get another document and find a job.

3.2.2 Francophone migrants

When we arrived for the first interviews with the member of the International Church, we met the police there who were called by the U.N officials to drive away these migrants from the

premises of their offices.² As an observer I could not ask any questions then but I observed the desperation of the women with children trying to secure their belongings. They were saying that they didn't have a place to go and that if the police removed them from their site and they hid their belongings at the back of the U.N offices then they could be stolen. I could see how devastated they were and even the men were talking with the police, asking them where they were supposed to go since they were already out in the street and even then the police now came to chase them away. After conversing a while with these migrants the police left but made it clear to these migrants that they had to vacate the place. It was a bad experience for the poor migrants who started talking to the church woman who happened to be well known to them. They told her that they had deliberated with the police and that there was no other place they could go to. I have to point out that these migrants were those from the camps who had been released from the camps with a sum of money equivalent to three months' rent. When they could not find accommodation within three months, and they had not yet found some source of income, they now found themselves again outside the U.N offices since they could not afford to continue staying in the rented houses due to their lack of finances and also since they lost their business through the xenophobia. They were now outside waiting and hoping that the U.N would consider them for resettlement abroad. The people I was able to interview came from this group. The group responded well for the interviews and this is what they had to say.

² I wish to point that the interviews done with the PEN Ministries were from focus group which came from a similar background, all the respondents were from Zimbabwe therefore been political economic refugee had similar experience. It was therefore necessary for the study to carry out interview with a different group from different background to establish the experience of undergoing hostility and running for life as it was with this later group which had respondents coming from war torn countries. The other point with this group is the interview procedure which was also different. This is because the respondent from this group were to be found at their place of residents apart from two respondents who I managed to interview outside the U.N offices where they were residing. All the others were contacted through telephone contact for appointment at their own convenient time and place. The contact person was Mrs Stephany who knew these people and was introducing mw to them. The last point is that the language to be used in the interview with this group from the Francophone countries was a problem, since migrants from these counties use other languages which I do not know. I therefore used Swahili which was not necessarily the first language of the migrants

The first respondent, F, is a woman from the Democratic Republic of Congo. She ran away from her country due to political violence which rendered the country unsafe due to killings which saw her lose all her family members and left her running away for safety. She had come to S.A. in 2005. Her country uses French and she also knew Lingala and due to interaction with people from the Eastern countries she knows a bit of Swahili, therefore I used Swahili for the interview. This is her story.

I asked her about family relationships either from her country or in S.A, and she said:

I do not have any family nor was I related to any SA family. When I arrived I slept outside the home affairs offices where I met the man who married me and we have three children.

In answer to the question of how she related to S.A in general, she answered:

The people hate foreigners and I could not understand their language. I noted their hatred for us who are from outside and since my husband was doing business when the xenophobia started they burned our business and we found ourselves running again for our lives. So I can say that they are not hospitable people.

When asked how she thought God was involved in her situation she said:

God loves me. He saved me from death in my own country and now here if it was not for his care these people could have killed us. Not only that God is watching over us even now, he gave me a husband and my three children and he is always watching over us while we are sleeping outside. The problems I am facing will pass away and he will continue blessing me.

When asked what she could say about God's people and their attitude and their assistance in her situation, she said:

These people have been a blessing, when we went to the camps they were always there giving us food, clothes, blankets and many things, they had been encouraging us with the word of God and helping our children to overcome fear. When the camps were closed and we couldn't continue to be in the rental houses even here on the street we see the good Samaritans passing by and giving us food and clothing.

When asked about her wishes for two years to come she said

In two years to come I pray God to take me and my family from this country because people are not friendly.

The second respondent, G, is a refugee from Uganda who came to South Africa in 1998 from Kenya, where he had sought refuge before. This is his story

When I asked him why he chose to come to South Africa, he had this to say:

I ran away from my country to save my life. When I went to Kenya the people I made friends with were not happy about my relationship with a girl I had met there and wanted to kill me, so I had to run again. I wanted to go to Canada and boarded a ship from Kenya coast but when we arrived in South Africa I got to make friends with the South Africans and so I settled here.

When asked how he related with the South Africans, he said:

South Africans are good people. They host so many people from all over the world. The only thing that is happening is that some of these migrants are very selfish and only want to come here to do business, take the best places to stay and do not want to show their friends, the South Africans, how to do business. When the South Africans see and also realise that these people are only using them and their things to enrich themselves they turn to be xenophobic.

When I asked him how he thought God was involved in his situation, he said:

I do not believe in God, I do not believe in any faith, either Christian, Muslim, or whichever else. How could God allow all these things to follow me up everywhere, I left home to save my life. When I went to Kenya there again I found myself running away and here I am sleeping outside and still I am running away. If God cared he could have given me peace like other people.

I asked him what he thought of God's people and their attitude in his situation, and he said:

They are kind, they pass you there and give you some food.

When I asked him where he saw himself in two years to come, he said:

I would wish to be out of this country.

The eighth, respondent, H, came from Burundi in 2003. She had to flee after her life became unbearable back in her motherland due to continued hostility between her country people due to her tribe, which is Tutsi. This is her story:

I came to seek refuge. I ran away from my country because of civil war which had destroyed almost all the members of my family, and the conflict which was between government and soldiers and rebels.

I asked her if she had any family or was in any way related to a South African family and she said:

No. I have no family members and I am not related to any South African family.

Questioned about how she related to South Africans in general, she said:

South Africans are hard to live with because once you are not talking the same language; you are something else to them. When I arrived some migrants who we met on the way helped me to find some people from my country and these people helped me to get asylum seeker status. I was hoping to continue with my studies since I had just finished my secondary school in my country, but I found out that I could not get any assistance from the UN or the South African government. I had no choice so when the man who is now my husband proposed after three months we got married. This thing of discriminating against foreigners is not new, when I arrived in 2003 I experienced it when I could not communicate in the local language that they even called me makwerekwere [a derogatory name for foreigners and migrants]. When I became pregnant I went to the clinic and there they made me suffer so much saying that I do not qualify to get treatment, asking me for proof of residence, they said that the green card showed I was a foreigner. They made me feel that I do not deserve to be treated just because I am a foreigner. On another occasion a cockroach entered my ear at night and it was so painful that I had to go early to the clinic just to be treated in a rude way when the doctor asked me where I was from. I told him that I am from Burundi and he just pointed at a map on the wall telling me that my country does not appear among the countries to be helped. Since I was in pain I tried to beg him to treat me since the cockroach was so disturbing in my ear but he made it clear that I was fighting a losing

battle. I had to go and get some money and come back for them to remove the cockroach. During the xenophobia when it was not yet known we were staying with a South African young man to whom we had rented our house. When the xenophobia started this man ran away without paying rent. Another time we had a foreigner renting our house, he refused to pay and was threatening us carrying a knife always in the house, when we called the police they came and found him with the knife in his pocket and when they asked him why he carried a knife in the house he said he uses it for eating. They took him to the station and told us to open a case. When we went back to the station we found they had released him; upon inquiry they told us that he is one of us foreigners so we can search amongst ourselves. This proved that we as makwerekwere are at risk with no one to help us. Even after our house got burned and we lost everything the government and the UN who had promised to us to relocate to Acacia camp and for compensation, turned against us. They left thousands of us all alone in the camps without food, without electricity and in the winter we had to rely on firewood for light and as a source of fuel and also to keep ourselves warm in winter. It was so bad that they even went to an extent of leaving us without water. It proved that foreigners in this country are at the mercies of God. When they closed the camps they sent police to come and force us to leave. Not to mention the same police had once opened fire in the camp shooting and creating havoc to the poor who had no one to trust. The same police were supposed to safeguard us, but were now turning to traumatise us. This was the worst experience, not to mention the inhuman conditions in the camp especially for our children. Under the South Africans I have suffered more than I suffered back home.

When I asked her how she thought God was involved in her situation she said:

I always believe in the Word of God, and I know that he will never leave me alone. He saved my life back home and even here me and my family could have perished in the fire if they had burned our flat at night, but God delivered us. At home or in a foreign country I survive by his promises.

I asked her what she could say about Gods people and their attitude and assistance her situation and she said:

I can say that the people of God are always different at all the time, because, they are the ones who were with us in those bad situations of xenophobia. Everything we received during the bitter times of Akasia camp [one of the municipal refugee camps], the Word of God, food, clothes; we got them through the hands of Gods people.

I asked her where she would see herself in two years from now and she said:

I wish to be somewhere else, I have been applying for resettlement with the UN but am still trusting Gods will. I want to see myself on another level of life by the grace of God.

The ninth respondent, I, is a woman from Burundi. She had to run away from her country after years of living in fear of being assassinated by her country people. Having lost her family members in the tribal massacre which left her orphaned and young, her only option was to get married since she could not continue with her studies and she feared for her life. With a husband by her side she felt secure. She and her husband left their country for security purposes and came to South Africa, where to her disappointment life was even worse than in her home country. This is her story.

When I asked her when she came to South Africa, she said:

I came to South Africa in December 2007 to seek refuge after many years of tormented life in our country.

I asked her why she came and she said:

After a prolonged struggle of insecurity in our country for fear of being assassinated we had to leave and seek a place where we could continue with life and seek normal life for our children.

I asked her whether she had any family members here or whether she was related to any South Africa family, and she said:

I do not have any family member and am not related to any South Africa family.

When I asked her how she related with the South Africans she said,

When we arrived I was very sick with pregnancy and I gave birth while very weak and

when I went to the hospital for my child's injection, the doctors could not inject her since I could not speak English and when I tried to explain I was a refugee, they said that they could not attend to my case since I did not have her birth documents. I remember I cried before the doctors to no avail. Another time I went since my child was having a swelling and when I tried to stand up to show the doctor where the swelling was, he shouted to me and told me that he had not told me to stand up. The doctor asked me angrily why we are coming from our countries because we don't want to die and they might kill us here. I asked God to give me courage and I answered him that we will not die here because of the will of people, since our lives are in God's hands and not in any one else's hands. We settled at Mamelodi since life in the city was very expensive and there in April they started to swear at us, telling us that they were going to kill us if we don't go home. They even killed a ten year old boy and burned him. We had to run away and relocated to Atteridgeville where our mukuku was burned when xenophobia became widespread. We lost everything that we had worked for and we had to run for our lives. We had nowhere else to go since there was no safe place so we went to the streets and were outside the U.N offices for two weeks after which the UN took us to the Arcadia camp [a municipal refugee camp].

When I asked her how she thought God was involved in her situations, she said:

God is faithful and powerful. He had been with us since our country started the struggle and in my life I say it is a miracle of God for me to be alive since I could have died with my pregnancy and at birth, but he saved me. So he is always providing his providence and protection.

When I asked her what she can say about the people of God who were helping them during the hardships, she said:

We thank God for having left some people who are kind and like foreigners, and my prayer is that God will continue blessing them.

I asked her where she should like to be in two years time, she said:

In South Africa there is no security, in our home country there is no security, I would not want to be here and I cannot go back to my country. So my prayer is that God will open

a way for my family to find a safe country to go to.

The tenth respondent, H, is a woman from Burundi. Her family was wiped out by the Burundi massacre, leaving her an orphan at a very tender age. She got married to her husband since that was the only option for her. They left their country in 1996 and went to Tanzania seeking refuge. In Tanzania, life was not easy due to the economical hardship of the country. They had to look for an alternative for their family, so in 2001 they came to South Africa. This is her story.

I asked her why she came here, and she said:

I was seeking for refuge since my country was unsafe after the massacre that left me without any older relative to see me through my school and continue with a safe and a normal life.

I asked her whether she had any relative here or was related to a South African family, and she said:

I did not have any family here and no member of a South African family was related to me. I came with my husband and our two children. When we arrived we were welcomed by our country people and since my husband is a tailor, he wanted to start a business in Marabastat [a very poor part of Central Pretoria], but could not. In every place he could find and wanted to start his business, the South Africans prevented him, telling him he is a foreigner and is not entitled to put up a business. When we found that it was impossible to start a business in town we went to the location to try our luck there. In Atteridgeville where we relocated there was no big problem with our opening a business. My husband applied for a license with the municipality and obtained it. At this location his business did well since there were no competition and he was making jerseys for winter and also summer clothes. So there we managed to have a mukuku for our house and business and furniture and also to take our children to school.

When I asked her how they related with South Africans, she said:

South Africans have the attitude of foreigners not belonging here. When we came they refused my husband business premises, saying foreigners are not entitled to do business. When we went to Atteridgeville they used to beat our children at school and

abuse them for being foreigners. In the beginning of 2008 they started swearing at us that we must go back to our country. In February they started writing threatening notes that all foreigners must leave or they are going to kill us. We thought that we can report to the police, only to find that the police were all the more willing to send us home and were not surprised about the threats. We thought that it will cool down and life could continue as normal so we ignored it. They sent two other notes in March and April and started fighting and burning mukukus and we could not wait. We therefore left and ran to Pretoria because we knew from experience that the police were siding with the locals and we could not be safe even with them. We came to Pretoria and stayed outside the U.N offices until they relocated us to Akasia camp where we stayed for ten months. Then we were relocated to a deserted shelter in Johannesburg where we were left on our own. We suffered, our children not having food, sleeping outside for three months after they deserted the shelters. We have really suffered in this country.

Then I asked her how she thought God was involve in their situations and she said,
God is with us and we believe he knows our situation and is making a way for us to come out of these difficulties. My husband is a pastor so we love God even in our difficulties.

When I asked her what she thought of God's people and their attitude in assisting in their situation, she said:

God's people have good hearts, they have understanding that we are all created in the image of God and therefore we are all one in God. It is good to continue praying for this country and for these people that God can use them to change those with a bad spirit.

I asked her where she saw herself in two year's time, and she said:

We leave that to God himself to intercede between the migrants and the locals to stay together in peace, otherwise there is no hope for migrants staying peacefully in this country with the people of the country hating them so much. We are praying for God's will to be done in our lives, especially for my young children, that they will not go through the experience I went through of hatred and killings.

3.3 Summary of the findings

This section offers the highlights of the personal analysis of the findings based on personal contact with the migrants as victims of violence. The main highlights include discovering the extent to which migrants were vulnerable and affected and factors contributing to their vulnerability, migrants' view of God in their time of distress and suffering, and their feelings about staying on in SA.

3.3.1 How were the migrants affected?

The first objective of the study has helped identify the extent to which migrants are vulnerable in the society of South Africa and to find out how these migrants are affected. The study has revealed that the extent of migrants' vulnerability is complex and rapidly increasing, as shown in the statistics recorded in chapter two of this work, and in the migrants' story.

- Out of the ten respondents, nine of them (90%) had suffered violence already in their home countries before seeking refuge in South African. During the xenophobia all the respondents suffered violence again and also loss of property, thus suffering a double tragedy since the first one was suffered in their countries of origin. Three of the respondents (30%) were orphaned by violence in their home country therefore suffered trauma of loss and while seeking refuge here underwent an almost similar experience of trauma.

- Among the respondents, one (10%) suffered physical injuries from attacks which left him with scars that are always hurting when the weather is either too hot or very cold leaving him with headaches and also eye problems which affect his eyesight.

- All of the respondents (100%) had at one time of their stay here slept outside in the open due to lack of funds to hire a *mkuku* or rent a room. The same percentage at the time of attacks had been involved in some sort of income generating activity, some in their own business, and others in employment with South Africans. This shows determination and also hard work on the side of the migrants who started from nowhere and after hard work established themselves for at least survival. This also portrays the fact that the migrants are not a group solely dependent on the government, but instead it's a group that is contributing to the growth of the economy with their input in self-employment or being employed by others.

- One of the respondents (10%) has the documents to prove refugee status. Despite

having been here for eight years and having obtained the status, she still suffered like an asylum seeker. This indicates that the document, issued in collaboration with the United Nations in international agreement of refugee and human rights, is not recognized in South Africa or else were not effective at that time of xenophobia. This fact contributes to the migrants feeling of uncertainty about their safety in this country.

- Two of the respondents (20%) have suffered rejection by South African medical practitioners owing to their refugee status. This shows discrimination in service delivery, which is basic to all despite their status. It is troubling that medical practitioners could deny help in such a situation.

- Nine of the respondents (90%) were living in townships or informal settlements at the time of the xenophobia. These shows the migrants' level of income, which meant they could only afford to live in these areas. It also draws to our attention the fact that it is mainly the local poor fighting the poor migrants for scarce resources, or, if not so, competing for resources. The fact that to the locals the migrants seemed to be doing well in "their" country raises the issue of hatred and envy among the locals towards the migrants. The attack on migrants and looting of their property is an anti-human practice that is not only intended to destroy the lives of the survivors but also the community as a whole which will be infected by the anti-migrant attitude into the future.

The above analysis leads to the conclusion that the implications of vulnerability of migrants are multi-dimensional. Migrants who are vulnerable in the South African society are affected by a combination of emotional, physical, psychological and spiritual problems, as well as physical and economic ones.

3.3.2 Reasons why the migrants came to South Africa

I have already touched on this topic above, and wish only to provide a clear summary here. The study has established two main reasons as to why the migrants choose this country. The first one is that these migrants have suffered wars and killings in their home countries. These migrants are therefore running away from their home countries due to negligence and violations of human rights. To them South Africa seems a better country to seek refuge for it offers a better chance due to its democratic rights which safeguard the human rights laws. Thus it provides a better choice for the majority of African migrants to seek refuge here in the

hope of peace and security.

The second reason is the economic factor. All the migrants left their home countries without much since they already lost whatever little they had as a result to the violence back home. The fact that South Africa is the leading African country economically and also democratically renders it a choice by the majority of the continent's refugees to seek apart from peace and security also material wealth.

3.3.3 The reception of migrants in South Africa

Migrants had a mixed reception in South Africa; this may be due to the time and space. This is to say that those migrants who arrived in the country in the late 1990s may have not experienced as much of the xenophobic sentiments as those arriving in the late 1990s and since 2000. The reason why they are coming here is also a contributing factor to their reception. This is clearly shown by two respondents who seem to be the youngest in the group. Judging on their age maybe, the perception of the South Africans is that they are not economic refugees but seeking further studies. Therefore they had a better welcome, although even then they had opposition at a later stage.

There is also another factor which contributes to the reception as one respondent put it that the migrants seem to have a better knowledge of self-employment skills which they seem not willing to share with the local people. They therefore create in the eyes of the local people the picture of those only wanting to have their own ends met, thus seemingly wanting to take advantage of "our" opportunities in the eyes of the locals; in this case they will not be received nicely. If this is the case, the reception of migrants by South Africans has two sides: that of the migrants themselves, the way they market themselves, and that of their hosts, namely the way they perceive them. If the migrants seem to be under the impression that they are here to have it all, then the reception will be hostile, since the locals will see them as cause of themselves losing out. One can therefore not draw any definite conclusions about South Africans' attitudes towards migrants – there are at least two sides to the coin.

3.3.4 Migrants' feelings about South Africa

This is also a mixture of feelings, again dependent on the fact that different migrants came at different times to different places and received different treatment. To start with the positive,

there are those who feel that South Africans are friendly and hospitable due to the fact that when they arrived they were received hospitably and also assisted with material support. However, there are those who feel that the South Africans are not friendly and are inhospitable as a result of the reception they received. Those with positive feelings go on to categorise not all the South Africans as hostile. So it is difficult to know to which extent South Africans may be termed hostile and unfriendly. The same applies to the negative side, to those who say the South Africans are unfriendly and hostile; one cannot tell to which extent they are attributing these attitudes to South Africans unjustifiably. There is therefore no definite conclusion on the migrants' response on this although we can note that even when they regarded South Africans as hospitable at one time, there were these changes of feeling into hostility especially during the violence which seemed to be perpetrated by a majority of the locals. We can also base our argument the official point of view of the government that South Africa is a state that safeguards the welfare of all within its borders and respect the rule of law and human rights. One can then conclude that the country should be hospitable generally, if not for moments like that of xenophobia. Also in this regard, then, one must come to an ambivalent conclusion.

3.3.5 Attitude of South Africans towards migrants as an influencing factor of their experience of God's presence in their troubles

The migrants seem to respond with mixed reactions. The fact that the xenophobia was not the first violence they ever experienced was also a factor in contributing to their experience of God in their suffering. There are those who felt that God has always been there for them and he saved their lives from the violence in their home country; so he would also save their lives again from the hands of South Africans who could have easily killed them in the attacks. Thus their experience helped them to experience Gods' love and care for their lives.

There are those who have a different opinion on the presence of God in their situation of suffering. They are those who could not see how God could allow these people, the South Africans, to attack them and thus leave them in a worse condition than they were in their home country. This group feels that God has abandoned them and that is why he is allowing the locals to do them harm. There are also others who feel that the South Africans are used by God for their own good. They relate their experience to that of the Israelites in Egypt when

the Egyptians were using them in hard work and also in killing them for fear of their number. They feel that as God used the Israelites' situation to also show his power of deliverance, so also he is with them and will deliver them from this situation and also give them rest in their own land. The attitude of the South Africans towards migrants has therefore greatly affected their experience of the presence of God in their suffering.

3.3.6 Their feelings about their future in South Africa

Here also I found mixed reactions due to the different perspectives of the migrants. There are those who felt that South Africa is not a safe place since the people are hostile and dislike foreigners, thus feeling that any future here is impossible. There are those who felt that security was no more a guarantee since the government failed to protect them and thus feel that a future here is impossible. Then there are those few who feel that South Africa is a land with many opportunities and so given the assurance that security will be tightened, consider the possibility of a brighter future here.

A clear majority of the respondents feared for their future here and most of them were hoping that their situation back in their countries will be okay so that they can return to their countries. Those from Zimbabwe, of whom a majority seems to be economic refugees, were of the opinion that this country is not safe and no future here is possible, but they had high hopes that their own country would recover out of her economic hardship, thus allowing them to return.

3.4 Conclusion

It is clear from the background to the violence I describe in Chapter 2, as well as the brief analysis of the causative factors, that the xenophobic violence which broke out in 2008 represented a very complex reality. There are not only a few very clear causes: the context is too complex for such an easy analysis. For the same reason one should perhaps not be surprised that the migrants' reactions are also quite complex and ambivalent. This should be kept in mind very clearly if I now move on to present my conclusions in the form of theological reflection and some missionary and missiological recommendations for the churches in Tshwane.

Chapter 4

Reflection and analysis

4.1 Introduction

Having sketched the background to the 2008 violence, and listened to the voices of some migrants who were the victims of that violence, I now turn to reflection and analysis of this problem in line with the process of the cycle of missionary praxis. This reflection and analysis will be both contextual and theological, in other words, I will reflect and analyse the problem in general, as well as specifically in theological terms. In terms of the topic of my research, I am going to concentrate especially of views regarding God (theology) and views regarding other human beings (anthropology). I do this, as I stated in my Introduction, from a basically missiological point of view, in order to come to preliminary missiological recommendations in my final chapter. This analysis will be informed by viewpoints from outsiders (in the form of literature analysis) and participants in the process (the interviewees). In this way the study will be probing the question of what happens to human responsibility to care and protect fellow human beings as created in the image of God in such instances of violent interaction?

4.2 General views on the xenophobic violence of 2008.

4.2.1

I will start with the then Pres Mbeki's response to the violence. When everyone was waiting for a positive word of reintegrating people who had just been divided by xenophobia, President Mbeki, who while blaming apartheid as a source of the violence, did at the same time restate the necessity of *ubuntu* as foundation for human interaction:

In spite of the erosion of human instinct towards solidarity due to colonialism and apartheid, South Africans still believe in the spirit of Ubuntu. However, South Africans have their heads bowed in shame, because some in our communities acted in ways that communicated the message that the values of ubuntu are dead, and that they lie entombed in the graves of the cadavers of people who died ostensibly solely because they came among us as travelers in search of refuge. (Pretoria News, 4 July 2008 p.2.)

From this statement we gather three important points. In the first place, the exclusive mentality created by the old ethnic divisions still lingers in the minds of some of the South Africans who find it difficult to accommodate “others”, maybe due to their strangeness, thus viewing the migrants as the different “others”. This has been pointed out earlier in reports by CRAI (2009), J.M Gathogo and IA Phiri (2009:223), Commey (2008:12) and SAHRC (2008). The second point is that there is a high likelihood that the apartheid roots still sprout in the minds of black South Africans, meaning that they have not forgiven the (white) perpetrators for the oppressive past, and these wounds are opened again in the presence of migrants. This also finds support in a report by CSVr (20 June 2008). Whenever black South Africans see migrants working, especially in the informal sectors, then they tend to associate them with the era of colonialism.

The third important point is that of the role of Ubuntu. Despite the hurt caused by apartheid, the memory of Ubuntu still remains, as the former President remarked, but it seems to be as he stated, dead in practice of everyday life. It is a virtue which should be emulated by Africans, so that they can be able to accommodate fellow Africans, especially when it is in time of need as in this case of migrants. So we gather from the former President’s words the fact that there is a gap in the locals’ concept of the relationship of their own people and the migrants, which causes a negative view towards the black migrants. We now turn to look at this concept as it is drawn from the views of migrants and some scholars.

4.2.2 Migrants as outsiders

A respondent F stated: *The people hate foreigners and I could not understand their language [but] I noted their hatred for us who are from outside.* Another respondent H affirms this when she narrates her audience with a medical practitioner *they made me feel that I do not deserve to be treated just because I am a foreigner. On another occasion a cockroach entered my ear at night and it was so painful that I had to go early to the clinic just to be treated in a rude way when the doctor asked me where I was from. I told him that I am from Burundi and he just pointed at a map on the wall telling me that my country does not appear among the countries to be helped.* This is a clear indication of excluding migrants by the locals. The most common denominator of outsiders and insiders by South Africans is their local language: the way you

speak, walk, dress and the colour of your skin which is supposed to be light black. If then you cannot communicate in one of the local language or you are too dark, then you are qualified as an outsider. This finds bearing in a comment by Malawian scholar, Paul Zeleza, who noted, “This racialised devaluation of black lives is what we are witnessing in South Africa today in the xenophobic violence against African immigrants perpetrated by fellow Africans whose own lives were devalued during the long horrific days of apartheid. Racialised superiority and inferiority complexes continue to stalk us...”, and explain why “shades of blackness have become a shameful basis for distinguishing African immigrants” (open hearing sahrc 2009:25). In trying to define what outsiders entail we look at how Honeyford (1988:5) defines ethnicity. He starts at the wider aspect of ethnicity whereby social scientists categorise ethnicity in terms of a group sharing a common culture defined largely by descent, while he defines race to refer more specifically to common descent and perhaps physical similarity. Ethnicity, therefore partakes, as it were, of elements of both race and culture. (1988:5) Racism, he continues, is the subsequent process by which an individual or group is disadvantaged due to solely to skin colour (:21)

We also consider Paul Maylam’s definition of racism whereby he uses distinction between racial consciousness and racial theory, informal racial practice and formalised racial policy. He observes that racial practice, like racial consciousness, is not prescribed or formally laid down but is implicit in the way that people interact, or limit their interaction, with those who are presumed to be racial others. It may be expressed through avoidance or maintaining social distance from those perceived to be physically different or culturally alien (Maylam 2001:8)

Magubane (2007: 206) finds its roots at the time when Indians labourers were imported to work in the sugarcane fields of Natal and thus the tradition of racial work and racial pay- the work untouchable to a white man, the pay below what the white man needed to live on. Thus the practice was established of the dispensable “other”. This happened throughout Africa when the colonizers viewed Africans as inferior just because of their skin colour. This inferiority devalued the Africans in that even in the eyes of a white child a Negro, because he was not a white, could not be accepted as a man. The blacks were considered as lesser humans and compared as equal to apes and considered never to be equal to the white. He continues to show how the Africans were mistreated in labour: they were just doing the jobs

that the white man cannot do though it was their labour that brought about the wealth of the whites. This work is an important background for racism especially based on the Africans' skin colour. So we gather that black migrants are discriminated against due to their language, skin colour and also their acceptability to do menial work. This discrimination points to the migrants as outsiders not fitting in the South African context due to their inability to fit in the system and be included in labour unions that protect the workers from manipulation by their employers. What it offers for this study is the fact that Africans have in history been discriminated against on the basis of their skin colour, but by people who were different from them, namely whites. During the violence of 2008 the generally darker skin colour of the migrants became a basis for racist discrimination by fellow black South Africans in a perversion of historical racism practised by whites.

4.2.3 Intolerance and exclusion

Once migrants were categorized as outsiders, it gave rise to intolerance and exclusion of those considered as not belonging. As one respondent C, stated *The South Africans have an attitude of not welcoming foreigners, especially us from Zimbabwe*. The Hon. NN Mapisa-Nqakula, Minister of Home Affairs, evaluated the process thus: "This development found a society that was not ready for or familiar with this level of coexistence, a society which itself was polarised and whose experience had been that of deep-seated animosity and intolerance. To many in our country, the opening of our country to people of other nations was viewed as competition for resources and the newly founded fruits of freedom" (HSRC 2008:25). Her words clearly portray how animosity and intolerance is a fact in the country. The fact that she analyses the violence in terms of competition for scarce resources seems to justify the South Africans' actions. One would have expected rather a well balanced use of words to gather and to bridge this intolerance and animosity as she refers to them. Such comments whether they were a view or opinion, carry heavy weight when they get to people especially those who are only too frustrated by the presence of foreigners and waits for such justification from high government officials to use as their defense for violence.

Intolerance and exclusion found an unexpected basis in racism, in that it was being practised by blacks against their fellow blacks. In a study by Nyamnjoh (2006:3) on insiders and outsiders, he shows how race was used to discriminate against African immigrants from

outside South Africa's. Starting with female domestic workers, he observes that there were those who were considered to belong in South Africa simply because they have ancestral links with a local tribe. Although strictly speaking they are migrants, they were not discriminated against. He points, for example, to domestic workers who were migrants from Botswana, but related to the Tswana people living in SA. They received equal payment and benefits with South Africans working on the same level. Shona domestic workers from Zimbabwe were underpaid and overworked, as a result of the fact that they could easily be identified as foreigners. This point shows how in South Africa the issue of ethnicity is vibrant and used against those who do not qualify to belong. The identification with those sharing common ancestry is also indicated by Tara Polzer. She found that former Mozambican refugees and labour migrants in the area (which shared a common Shangaan ancestry) are largely socially integrated and now have permanent residence. Thus there was not a perception of strangeness or 'otherness'. Despite the poverty of the area where they reside, and the scarcity of resources, it did not lead to xenophobia³. This clearly shows how the discrimination against the other can be based on simplistic racist presuppositions. Those superficially sharing an identity, even if they happened to be among the poor, were identified as one of their own by poor fellow-residents.

This process of exclusion and intolerance was also strengthened by media reports. Nyamnjoh points out that "the mainly white-controlled media in South Africa have thus been instrumental in the creation, reproduction and circulation of the frozen imagery of black immigrants as a threat to an equally frozen or homogenous South Africa". This suggests that South Africans are still living under the shadow of white supremacy. This is why the whites dominate the media. Despite feelings of superiority or inferiority the media is otherwise supposed to be fair and to deal with all groups fairly despite their ethnicity. This is not the case since stereotyping of immigrants by the media is creating a negative image among South Africans against their African brothers and sisters. The fact that race and ethnicity still play such a dominant role indicates that Africans in general and South Africans in particular still have a long way to go.

Our analysis in the above sections clearly indicate that any attempt to rebuild relations broken

during the violence of 2008, as well as any missiological strategy to try and counter such occurrences in future, will have to deal very seriously with the issues of race and ethnicity, intolerance and exclusion, and the resulting creation of groups of people who are considered “outsiders” and therefore not liable to be treated in a human way along the lines of the general understandings of Ubuntu.

4.3 Theological reflection

4.3.1 Negative views of God

The migrant’s experience of xenophobic violence was a shocking one. It was so traumatising to majority of them, especially for those who had already suffered violence in their home countries. It was a double tragedy which influenced their faith in God in times of trouble in two ways. There is a minority who viewed God’ help or presence negatively, that is, as if God does not care about them and is not involved in their suffering as indicated by one respondent: G

I do not believe in God, I do not believe in any faith, either Christian, Muslim, or whichever else. How could God allow all these things to follow me up everywhere, I left home to save my life. When I went to Kenya there again I found myself running away and here I am sleeping outside and still I am running away. If God cared he could have given me peace like other people.

This is an indication of lost faith after continued suffering under fellow human beings who, according to biblical teaching, should be treating them as beings made in the image of (cf. 1 John 4:20). This is also pointed out by another respondent C who said:

To tell the truth, I felt that God was not there; if he was, why did he allow these people to treat us like this? How could he allow this to happen to us? I was thinking there was no God because why did he leave me alone?

The above shows the consequences which contributes to anger at God because of one’s suffering at the hands of those who are supposed to be showing or portraying love and kindness to their neighbours or even to strangers.

These remarks have to be interpreted in the light of the general belief found in all African

Traditional Religions, held in common with the Christian belief, that there is only One Supreme Being, who is God, and who created us all. He is referred to as creator for creating human beings and all that was on earth, giving human beings the responsibility to take care of the creation for him. It is for this reason that a leading African Theologian such as Mbiti can say, “Africans are notoriously religious, and each people has its own religious system with a set of beliefs and practices. Religion permeates into all the department of life so fully that it is not easy or possible always to isolate it” (Mbiti 1967:1). To hear even a small minority of Africans saying that they can no longer believe in God, is therefore a startling reality.

This “inborn” belief in God was strengthened by the precepts of Christian belief, a belief held nowadays by probably a majority of Africans. The teachings laid down in the Holy Scriptures and the interpretation made possible by the help of the Holy Spirit teaches that there is only one Supreme God who is the creator of all. He also created man/woman in his own image and gave them the mandate to rule and govern the creation as stewards. A first important conclusion is therefore that the experience of xenophobic violence had a negative effect on a minority of the migrants. This is a fact that should receive attention in my last chapter.

4.3.2 Positive views of God

There were also respondents (the large majority) whose views of God’s help in times of trouble is a positive one. These respondents showed their deepening of faith in God in that despite the traumas and dangers of almost losing their lives, God had rescued them and still hold their future in His arms. This can never be altered by the situation, even the continued breaking of violence into their lives.

This is a positive view of one of the respondents H who escaped death in her own country just to have a similar experience here in South Africa.

I always believe in the Word of God, and I know that he will never leave me alone. He saved my life back home and even here me and my family could have perished in the fire if they had burned our flat at night, but God delivered us. At home or in a foreign country I survive by his promises.

Similar observations were expressed by another respondent B

God loves me, he is my saviour. He knows I am suffering now and will bring the situation in my country to an end and we will have a good future. Just as he delivered the Israelites, he will also deliver us, and he has already done it since we didn't die in the xenophobia.

Another respondent F points to the faithfulness of God even in providing his blessing which, even if they are received in an odd atmosphere, are a way of strengthening her faith and confidence in God's power to deliver and bless.

God loves me. He saved me from death in my own country and now here if it was not for his care these people could have killed us. Not only that God is watching over us even now, he gave me a husband and my three children and he is always watching over us while we are sleeping outside. The problems I am facing will pass away and he will continue blessing me.

Similar comments of Gods' deliverance are observed from a respondent I who said:

God is faithful and powerful. He had been with us since our country started the struggle and in my life I say it is a miracle of God for me to be alive since I could have died with my pregnancy and at birth, but he saved me. So he is always providing his providence and protection.

As observed from the respondents' view of God in times of trouble it is very common for humanity to fall short of their faith or doubt his power and presence in such times. This is made even worse when the factors of violence are manmade like violence since the victims are always asking the question: but how could my brother/sister treat me like that? Such occurrences are also useful for others to affirm their faith in Gods' faithfulness when they just figure from whose hands that he has delivered them like Psalms 23 and they testify of the deliverance of God from the hand of their enemies. We can therefore gather the two sides of the interpretations and work with the one that would help people to dwell together in care and protection of each other as a way of their love for God as was expressed by Jesus in his summary of the first commandment: Love the Lord your God and love your neighbor as yourself. In this we would want to do to others as they would do to us Matt. 7:12.

4.3.3 Views about relationships between human beings

We start by looking at the general African understanding of human beings and how they are expected to relate with each other as observed by different African scholars. While considering the African understanding of humanity we again consider Mbiti's writing; "Because traditional religion permeated all the department of life, there is no formal distinction between the sacred and the secular, between the religious and non-religious, between the spiritual and the material areas of life. Wherever the African is, there his (sic) religion" (1967:2). Bishop Tutu defines African humanity as "Africans believe in something that is difficult to render in English. We call it Ubuntu, botho. It means the essence of being human. You know when it is there and when it is absent. It speaks about humaneness, gentleness, hospitality, putting yourself out on behalf of others, being vulnerable. It embraces compassion and toughness. It recognizes that humanity is bound up in your, for we can only be human together" (Tutu 1987:71). In trying to simplify it further, he continues that "in our African language we say 'a person is a person through other persons.' I would not know how to be a human being at all expect I learned this from other human beings. We are made for a delicate network of relationships, of interdependence. We are meant to complement each other. All kinds of things go wrong when we break that fundamental law of our being" (:73).

The African understanding of Ubuntu, as Setiloane explains, is that a true man is valued by the way he is able to care for others and has knowledge of human nature, while a woman is one who gathers all members, not only of her own family, in care and love (Setiloane 1975:40). This signifies the importance of corporate being in that if one is not able to care for others then one is considered inhuman. This view finds bearing with Mbiti who notes the aspect of African communal being, a being with others and for others (Mbiti 1969:108). This understanding accorded the society harmony in human cohabitation in that they were conscious of the duties and responsibilities toward each other. These were not only limited to one's family but was extended to the larger communities and environment as well. It also extends to the sojourners who may be dwelling in the society from other parts or are on their way and needs to dwell in a certain society for a time. These were considered as visitors who were seen as a source of blessing, special treatment was offered. In my tribe (Kikuyu from Kenya) we have a saying that a visitor is a river, meaning they will soon depart and be on their way, therefore a high level of hospitality was expected while dealing with them. This portrayed how

human beings were regarded as special beings without boundaries of one's background, but simply by being a person.

Dick Louw in his African assessment of the religious other draws from different authors the concept of Ubuntu and Religion. He points at the inclusion of others. He quotes the well-known African proverb, "Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu", i.e. "A person is a person through other persons". This, he explains, articulates a basic respect and compassion for others. It can be interpreted as both a factual description and a rule of conduct or social ethic. It both describes human beings as "being with others" and prescribes "what being with the others should be all about". He further explains the Ubuntu respect for the particularities of the others applying it for post-apartheid South African of all colours, creeds and cultures; Ubuntu dictates that, if we were to be human, we need to acknowledge the diversity of languages, histories, values and customs of all which constitute South African society. He seems to be making an appeal to the entire African society to reconsider the spirit of Ubuntu and go beyond their boundaries to embracing humankind.

Similar observations are made by Dr. Corne Becker in an article titled, "Finding the other in South African business leadership" (2006: 18-19). He draws his emphases from the aspect of Ubuntu pointing at the relationship in value based leadership. A correct way of thinking about Ubuntu is to consider it as a basic approach to South African spirituality that is manifested in mutuality, solidarity with all, and communal enterprise. It is part of the very fabric of indigenous Southern African spiritual and intellectual identity. He emphasizes that power in the same effect a revitalized commitment in South Africans reconstruction. He continues that the value and practice of mutuality in Ubuntu is defined paradoxically by the differences found in the other. In order to make this point, he uses a South African Venda saying, "Muthu ubwekwa mumwe" - "A person is born for others", capturing the spirit of the interdependence between self and community. This is more than mere interdependence as the identity of the self is defined in finding the other in community. He shares with the other the aspect of being by agreeing that, Ubuntu is a S A spirituality manifested in mutuality. Solidarity with compassion adds up to humanity and it should be seen as a social philosophy and a spirituality that is deeply embedded in African culture as a primary foundation of a South African religious world view.

The above African views of the relationships between human beings portray how humanity was created to relate with each other; it also portrays the strong bond of the African relationship which was for the welfare of individual and corporate beings. In this African understanding a major aspect to be emulated and upheld is that of taking the other as part of you or of the whole community, thus caring for all. The African view of humanity is holistic in that it includes humanness, gentleness, hospitality, putting yourself out on behalf of others and interdependence. This is inclusive of all: no discrimination on the basis of colour or race or culture. To sum up: the value and practice of mutuality in ubuntu is the difference found in the other person. The importance of cohabiting is drawn from the fact that we all are created in a special way, which means that we are all human beings despite our difference in colour, or language, to mention a few of the differences. The fact that human beings are different from other created beings lies in the fact that we have the image of God. This image therefore necessitates that we care for each other, respect each other, and relate in a manner that portrays humanity, in the values that we accord to each other.

4.4 How these views were influenced by the experiences of the violence

4.4.1 How the violence influenced the migrants' perception of South Africans as fellow human beings and fellow Christians.

Despite the fact that there were some South Africans who were against migrants even before the violence broke out, there were at the same time those who were against this anti-human act and came out loudly protesting the act by showing kindness and assisting the victims. This group of people helped so much in a positive way to form and restore the migrants' view of God in their suffering as it has come out in the respondents' answers in the interviews. Here is one respondent's view A:

These people are good and they are doing a good thing to give us food. I just pray that God will continue to bless them. They really have a positive attitude towards people who need assistance like me. They have assisted me very well in clothing, food and even their prayers have meant a lot to me because it strengthens me and help me know that God really cares for me even when I am poor or when you don't have parents, he is

there for me.

The above words show the positive side of the response to the violence, while the violence would be viewed as the worst thing that could even have occurred. The respondent has been able to associate himself with it as a blessing and an experience that helped him to see the love of God for him as an orphan through other people's care and concern.

The attitude of Gods' people also helps the victims to see God's provision through their support both material and spiritual. This is observed through another respondent's H answer:

I can say that the people of God are always different at all the time, because, they are the ones who were with us in those bad situations of xenophobia. Everything we received during the bitter times of Akasia camp [one of the municipal refugee camps], the Word of God, food, clothes; we got them through the hands of Gods people.

The attitude of Gods' people and their assistance was also interpreted by another respondent H as an understanding of him creating all human being in his image and so the need to cohabit.

God's people have good hearts, they have understanding that we are all created in the image of God and therefore we are all one in God. It is good to continue praying for this country and for these people that God can use them to change those with a bad spirit.

We gather from the above observations that the attitude of the Christians towards the victims of violence really helped in the victims' realization that God really cares for them even in times of need and when they felt that there was no source of help. God was there raising his people to do that, thus portraying his care and concern. This has really helped the victims to re-establish their trust in Gods' faithfulness, to be strong and believe in his unfailing love, care and protection unto his creation.

4.4.2 The issue of self image and self respect.

The saying “what you do makes you who you are” is very applicable here. This is because whatever one does comes from deep within who that person really is and it is only manifestation of the deeds which portrays the real from inside out. It also portrays how one carries and believes in him/herself. This cancels out the belief in the genetic superiority of one group of people and the generic inferiority of others (Ray1988:20). Looking at the role of self image and self respect the study will focus on the context of South Africans’ supposed genetic superiority towards other African immigrants’ generic inferiority. The opposite which is inferiority complex will also be considered. This section therefore deals with the views of both South Africans as well as migrants.

To gain the real picture of the issue we look at who the perpetrator' were and how they are described. The perpetrators were largely young poor South African men, the targets largely the property and businesses of foreign African nationals as well as against the person of these civilians themselves (Simon Bekker 2008:2). It is generally accepted (cf.Saayman 2008:20) in a situation where housing is inadequate and unemployment very high, that it is easy for the anger of the poor, unemployed, and homeless to be directed against these migrants. From this we gather that the self image of the perpetrators is that of people who are frustrated with their lives since they are young, poor and unemployed. Because of their frustrations, they may also be depressed by their situations which they find unfair and in which they are trapped. We also note here that this group, which has been highlighted, presents just an impression of others who were not directly involved and maybe were masterminding the whole violence. We therefore have to consider all these groups as responsible for the violence, whether by actions or by words or strong feelings.

We start with research done by the HSRC. South Africa has a particular historical relationship to the African continent, shaped by its apartheid history, and a particular historical relationship to the West, also shaped by its colonial history. This seems to have led to a South African superiority complex in relation to other Africans, uniting black and white South Africans against other Africans (HSRC “Violence and Xenophobia” 2009:15). This portrays the place of self image of people who want are unsure who they are. Because they are unsure about

their own identity and image, they fail to relate with the fact that they are also Africans. The danger in this kind of life is that it is a lie and will never change the truth that is by not wanting to relate to Africa. It will never change the fact that they are Africans, and that not wanting also to be black will never change the fact or the colour pigment. It is also disastrous since one will tend to treat the inferiors in a discriminating and devaluating manner.

Nyamnjoh also notes the same. The hierarchy of human "races" inherited from apartheid South Africa is replayed, with white South Africans at the helm as superiors, black South Africans in the middle as superior inferiors, and the Makwerekwere as the inferior scum of humanity (2006:44). According to this point of view, the self image of some of the South Africans had been westernized, thus their view of their fellow African immigrants as inferior. The view of one of the respondents H bears this witness as she narrates her story:

When we arrived we were welcomed by our country people and since my husband is a tailor, he wanted to start a business in Marabastat [a very poor part of Central Pretoria], but could not. In every place he could find and wanted to start his business, the South Africans prevented him, telling him he is a foreigner and is not entitled to put up a business.

This wrongful self esteem indicates one cause of violence towards the African immigrants, since unlike the whites' superiority; the African immigrants will never yield to their fellow South African blacks in a way expected of them. This is because they are migrants from African countries which attained their independent from colonial regime and were independent people having their freedom to do their own business before their countries turned chaotic forcing them to seek refuge. This will therefore be a source of conflict between the two groups, with the South Africans looking down on the migrants and the migrants working their way to make ends meet.

The above views can also contribute negatively in the case of South Africans. This can come as a result of them having an inferiority complex in comparison to the African immigrants who stand a better chance with a better education background. Nyamnjoh points out that African immigrant are more educated and better qualified than their South African counterparts, in whom apartheid invested too little to, be useful beyond service and servitude. (2006:31). As a result they will therefore view their fellow Africans as a threat when they see themselves as

inferior due to their education level. They will therefore see the immigrants as taking away their jobs. They will not consider the fact that these migrants are qualified and are getting the jobs legally, to them the jobs is supposed to be reserved just for the South Africans. This is also pointed out in research done by HSRC (2008:7): “Anger that foreign arrivals are 'showing up' local men by earning more, working harder and taking whatever work they can get, diminishes the local men in the eyes of local women”.

The same case will happen in the informal sectors when the South Africans compare themselves with their counterparts who are able to stand hard times like long hours in the sun and even in the cold winter season, then they will see themselves as inferior. It is in such circumstances that they compare themselves with the migrants and find that the migrants are a threat and therefore should be done away with. The truth of the matter is that maybe they just think the informal jobs should be done by them, but on the other hand, when they find the migrants flourishing in these jobs, they realise that it is just a business like any other but they cannot gather the courage to withstand the hardships involved in these menial jobs.

4.4.3 Intolerance and exclusion

All of the above views and attitudes point to the same basic problem: that of human intolerance and exclusion, which we have established above to have been a big problem. How may it be possible to overcome this? We start with the work of Miroslav Volf in his book *Exclusion and Embrace* (1996). In utilizing the concepts of identity and otherness, he has considered the aspect of the creation of the other from the Christian point of view. He draws from what kind of selves we need to be in order to live in harmony with each other. He states, “the will to give ourselves to others and ‘welcome’ them, to readjust our identities to make space for them, is prior to any judgment about others, except that of identifying them in their humanity; the will to embrace precedes any ‘truth’ about others, any construction of their ‘justice’” (1996:29). In this way he points to the self first which is supposed to embrace the other self as a fellow human being. Then from seeing the other as oneself, one can start from there and do to the other as you would want them to do to you. He continues that to do that one need to come out of oneself in order to accommodate the other who is in the same image of humanity with the self. This will solve the judgment since one will be thinking first of what if

it was me, what is it that I would expect of the other. Thus as he continues one will be able to overcome any injustice towards them.

He uses the suffering of Christ on the cross to illustrate this, to illustrate divine solidarity with victims, that is, those who may be suffering from the evils done against them. In this way he brings up the theme of divine solidarity with the victims. He also draws on the theme of self-giving for the enemies and their reception into eternal communion by God. This strengthens the need to feel with those who are suffering and help them out while struggling against evil (Volf 1996:24). In this way he shows the need to be compassionate to the perpetrators of evil just as Christ did on the cross, by embracing sinners as well as giving them opportunity to denounce their sins. This sets for us an example of forgiving the perpetrators of evil which causes suffering of the victims, not only for the victim's sake but also for the perpetrators who need it to realize their sins for repentance as well as God's love for them. In this way it will also have another effect, that while the forgiven and loved perpetrator realizes they are loved they may also turn from evil ways to useful ways benefiting to all. Through this Volf helps us to see the kind of self we ought to be for others, to recognise that it is by the grace and Christ's work in us we are not perpetrators of evil. From there we acknowledge the will of Christ for all and so yield ourselves for the others, being able to give love and forgiveness and receive ill treatment while not using it to hinder us from giving ourselves to those who would ill treat us. The kind of self-giving that Christ portrayed to us when he emptied himself on the cross, not only for our sins but also to gather us to him for his embracing love, is the only way to overcome intolerance and exclusion.

Another important point from Volf's work is that God's universality makes all humans, all over the world, equal. Through Christ's self-sacrifice he draws all humankind to himself despite race, colour or gender. Thus human equality implies equal access to the blessing of the one God (:45). Thus those who were excluded before, are guaranteed of inclusion as the law of exclusion was abolished by Christ's self sacrifice which draws all men/women to one family of God. With it also there is the inclusion of gender where women could have been left out due to a patriarchal cultural belief. The gifts of the Holy Spirit qualify them as equal partakers of the kingdom and all the blessings of God. This unity, borne of the sufferings of Christ, and peace achieved through the cross and by the blood (:47), emphasises the importance of

being one through the analogy of the body of Christ with its different members: for in Christ all of us as different people are baptised into one spirit. This finds bearing with Arthur Sutherland (2006: 28). The reality is that all peoples are members of the human family and this does away with artificial nationalistic excuses that would be used to justify excluding any one from our circle of care. Quoting Barth he continues, "Behind the relative is the fellow countryman and behind the fellow countryman is the stranger that is within the gates". It is precisely the last of these who tells us, if we have not heard it before, that the true concern even in blood relationship is humanity. Sutherland continues that the stranger is not just an abstract idea; our conduct toward the stranger is the measure of our obedience to the command of God.

Another important point discussed is that of distancing from ones culture and belonging to God's promise future. The implication of this here and now is that it helps incorporate others who may not necessarily belong to our culture, who may be different from us, but in view of us belonging to one family of God then, creates room for accommodating them. This distancing creates space in us to receive the other into the catholic community and also entails a judgment against evil in every culture (Volf 1996:51ff). In accommodating others within them it will be easy and effective to judge against evil since it will be done from within and not outside. While pointing at where the evil is coming from as one group, having one thing in common like Christians, then the advocacy against evil in culture will be taken positively and be effective. Volf further emphasizes the importance of inclusion by characterising creation as "separating and biding" rather than simply "separating". In this way he suggests that identity includes the connection to all others, no matter how much difference and heterogeneity.

The human self is formed not through a simple rejection of the other, but through the process of "taking in" and "keeping out". He demonstrates by saying we are who we are because we are both separate and connected, both distinct and related; the boundaries that mark our boundaries are both barriers and bridges. This is very significant for the image of God: we are all one body, but different parts which must co-ordinate for the body to function properly. This shows the need to be incorporated since we will never be the same, but with our difference we are to co-exist and have a mutual relationship for building each other and the kingdom of God.

Dr. Ishmael Noko (2001:1-2), General Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation, emphasizes that amongst the tenets of faith shared by the member churches of the Lutheran World Federation with all the other Christian Churches all over the world an important one is the belief that all human beings have been created in the image of God and that every person therefore has an inherent God-given dignity. In the Kingdom of God, there is “neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28). We are members of the one body. He stresses that this fundamental article of faith leaves absolutely no room for racism, racial discrimination or xenophobia. Our diversity is a gift from God; not a ground for oppression. This also encourages the positive attributes borne out of embracing others.

The aspect of God taking the initiative of drawing all to himself and to one another is also central in emphasising the origin of embrace: not with humans, but with God himself. He continues that whenever a human being is being rejected and abused on the basis of race, churches have a responsibility to uphold the image of God in that person, to seek justice and promote reconciliation. The fact that we are diverse is only Gods way of enriching the cohabitation of humanity and only serves as an empowerment if exercised and given its rightful position. This should help people from different backgrounds and beliefs come together into a dialogue which should be based on mutual benefit to all and also for the glory of God. If this can be practised then the will of God will be done on earth since he is the author of the difference for the good of his creation.

All of this goes to show that the concept of human dignity is highly regarded, and this is drawn first of all from respect for the self first, and then extended to the other as oneself. Therefore whatever one does to self is supposed to be reflected on the others, thus portraying humanity and a difference from all other created beings. In both African Traditional Religions, as well as in Christianity, there is an emphasis on embrace and not exclusion. This is due to the fact that, as observed earlier, Africans valued all human beings equally, and special attention was extended to sojourners amongst them. And Christian faith abolished the distinction between Jews and Gentiles, freemen and slaves, rich and poor, etc. So the evil of discrimination against or exploitation of the other are firmly rejected. It leaves no room for exclusions and intolerance. So we gather from the both the African and Christian point of view that it all starts

with God, who is viewed to be the initiator of love towards his creation. The same love he extends, he also expects of his creation, especially the man/woman whom he created in his image.

4.5 Conclusion

In chapter 3 I reproduced, analysed and summarised the findings based on the empirical study among migrants. In this chapter (chapter 4) I attempted to reflect on the main themes of the findings both contextually and theologically, against the background of literature research. In the process I pointed out that in both the traditional African as well the Christian lifeviews all human beings are regarded as created by the Supreme Power/God and in the image of God. The study has thus established the aspect of humanity/ubuntu as the highest value in the African as well as the Christian community. This entails the imperative for the love for one's neighbor as oneself. Thus the findings on the Image of God as portrayed in the violence explain a deficit in the understanding of oneself as well as of others. It also established that this deficit of understanding of one's own image and therefore of the image of others resulted in violence against one's neighbor since it led to regarding others as inferior, not belonging and also not qualifying for humane treatment. According to the study the issue of African humanity, which is expressed in the concept of Ubuntu, is no longer effective. There is total individualism and nepotism and the aspect of an exclusive nationalism in being a South African which is contrary to the essence of Ubuntu. When we look at it from the Christian point of view, the same also applies the care and concern for one's neighbor; this is no longer a concern and almost everyone is isolated in their own interests to think only of their own welfare, and not of the welfare of the other. This therefore distorts the Image of God.

In the final chapter I am now going to try and draw some missiological findings and recommendations for the churches in Tshwane.

Chapter 5

Findings and recommendations

5.1 Introduction

I set out on this study in order to try and prove my hypothesis that: *Migrants who were victims of xenophobic attacks in 2008 explain these attacks as a lack or deficit in people's understanding of God (theology), and of the fact that he created people in his image, as brothers and sisters to each other (anthropology).*

It is my conviction that I have indeed succeeded in proving the hypothesis correct. I also set out on this study as a missiological study, to try and provide churches in Tshwane with greater insight into the causes for and effects of the 2008 violence. It has become clear that there are dangerous indications that this xenophobia is still alive and threatening, and may result in clashes again. I therefore will now try to indicate some recommendations for the outreach of the churches in Tshwane to work at pre-empting such violence occurring again, and to provide relevant ministry to migrants if it does occur again.

5.2 People's faith and their view of God

The study has established that victims of 2008 xenophobic violence have gone through painful traumatic experiences. Victims harbour different opinions on the role God played in these experiences, and have different faith experiences. In general, though, the majority feel convinced that God is in some way involved in their lives. There are especially two points of view that came up:

5.2.1 Fatalistic view of the role of God

Some victims have developed a fatalistic view due to the fact that the violence and the loss of life and belongings was as a result of the actions of fellow African people who are created in the same image and therefore supposed to be concerned about their fellow human beings. As this was clearly not the case, this caused the victims to be negatively influenced and come to

the conclusion that it is the will of God to allow the perpetrators to persecute them. This is a very negative view, and should be interpreted as a call to all South Africans to examine their relationship to strangers in their midst, as their attitude has a negative influence on the faith of other Christians.

It also points to problems in the migrants' image of and faith in God. As we have seen, they were all convinced that God was in some way present in the bad experiences. If they interpret it in such a fatalistic way, however, one has to ask: do they understand what faith in God implies and requires? Is God just present in a situation, without making any changes to it? Such a fatalistic understanding cannot be biblically justified. It is therefore also a call for the migrants to reexamine their faith which seems to fail while this should not be the case.

Belief in God calls for perseverance in suffering as explained by Paul to the Romans 5:1-5. In Paul's opinion, God is just and faithful and will not leave his loved ones alone to face what is beyond them. James 1:2-4 also gives the assurance of God's faithfulness in times of trials. Going by this, Christians should therefore be firm in faith trusting in the unlimited power of God, as being in control of their lives. He will never leave them or forsake them, and he never lets them slip from his hands. Furthermore the fact that all things work together for good for them that love and are called according to his purpose (Rom 8:28) should be a strong guidance that God is always in control. This does not call for fatalism, to just accept whatever bad things happen; it calls for faith that God can change things. The example of Gods' dealing with the Egyptians for the sake of the Israelites is also an example of his care and concern for his people who suffer misery at the hands of their enemies and also how he punishes the enemies of his loved one (Exodus 4:31b).

The fact that God is a rewarder of good and a punisher of evil should give his people faith in him even in the time of suffering in that they will not quiver but will be strengthened in faith and be able to persevere. This is also true of the perpetrators of evil that whatever they do will not go unpunished as God says he is a jealous God, bringing punishment to third and fourth generation of those people who hate him (Deuteronomy 5:9). This proves that the sinners will not go unpunished but actually will be punished more and should also help those who suffer at the hands of their enemies to have faith and even be strong to withstand any sort of suffering. Through his involvement the wrongs will be righted and bring peace and thus

people will dwell together in peace and in love. So it seems as if migrants have to be taught about what the kingdom of God means in everyday life.

5.2.2 Loss of faith

We also established that at least one of the victims has altogether lost faith and belief in God as a result of the violence. As we have made clear, it is very strange for an African person to say that he no longer believes in God. This has come about as a result of the actions of fellow Africans and how they treated him when he was in need. This person could not deal with the fact and as a result laid the blame on God who was supposed to protect him, to make his brothers and sisters care for him in his times of trouble, but then failed to do so. Although this happened with only one of the respondents, it is possible that there were more like him. And to say that one has lost one's faith in God as a result of how others treated you, is a very serious accusation.

In the African context faith mainly exists in a communal form due to the belief that human beings exist with others and for others. Therefore while we consider the fact of one losing his faith as an African as a result of ill treatment of fellow men/women, then it calls for a review of the conduct of the community which is lacking in the essence of caring for fellow human beings. Also in the Christian teaching the golden rule is to do to others as you would them do to you; this is not effected in such a case and calls also for a re-examination of one's relationship with neighbors. This is therefore for us in Africa, and in this case specifically the South African Christians, a call of reviving the Spirit of Ubuntu and also a call for love and care for the foreigner as one of you (Lev 19:33-34; Deu 10:19). This is also expressed in Luke's Gospel which portrays the love of Christ without discrimination, but inclusive of all people as created in the Image of God and therefore as brothers and sisters to each other and in Christ. To be human is to take care of oneself and of other human beings as well as the larger creation.

5.3 Migrants' views of other people

This also gave rise to at least two different opinions. It was the feeling of the majority that some of the South Africans are really good people and portray kindness to the strangers.

However others felt that this was true only for some South Africans – the majority was not hospitable and did not care about those who are foreigners. This was very much determined by the South Africans' perception of the strangers, which determined their acceptance or rejection. It is helpful here to keep in mind Volf's advice (Volf 1996:18) that it would be better to keep problems of identity and otherness at the margins of our reflections, reserving the place at the center for human rights, economic justice, and ecological well-being. This is after all what a long and honorable tradition of social thinking, both Christian and non Christian, teaches. The fact that these two opinions exist makes it clear that there is a lack in human interrelation and interaction between many South Africans and foreigners, a lack in their anthropological understanding. The issue of our shared humanity goes beyond race, culture or any other human boundaries and even relates at the level of our Christian faith. Human beings are therefore supposed to interact and interrelate in a way that portrays care and concern for each other because of the fact that one is created in the likeness of the other. However, the absence of this concern in everyday practice is proof enough that the relationship is greatly disrupted, so that cohabiting becomes impossible due to violence and hatred.

5.4 Missiological and missionary implications

It has been established from the study that the Church and other faith communities have played a pivotal role in meeting the physical and spiritual needs of the victims of the 2008 violence. The Church actually stood with the migrants, also after the closure of the shelter camps by the government without a definite plan of integrating or catering for those who were still unsettled when the camps were closed by government. It is therefore clear that the aftermath of the 2008 violence, as well as the rumours and threats that there can be a new outbreak of xenophobic violence later in 2010, call on Christian communities to reach out to both migrant communities as well as their South African hosts. In this section I wish to spell out some missiological and missionary implications.

5.4.1 Christians and "the least of these who are members of my family" (Matt 25:40, NRSV)

In his parable about the final judgment, Jesus emphasized that judgment will be passed on the basis of how we as human beings related to other human beings, especially those who are less privileged than we are. The role of the Church in any case of violence against

migrants would then be to advocate for them as the people on the margins who are in a special way Jesus's brothers and sisters – and therefore also our own brothers and sisters. The church has a caring role in this regard, providing simple daily needs such as food, shelter, clothing, etc. But the church also has a prophetic mandate in such a situation. It is called by God himself to take up the issue of these vulnerable members in society, especially also to the policy makers and government functionaries. A very important prophetic calling of South African Christian communities in this regard is to campaign for the abolition of hateful speech that dehumanizes the less fortunate, like the derogatory term *amakwerekwere* for migrants. Old derogatory South African terms for despised "others" (such as, for example the term *kaffir*) have been declared to be hate speech. There is every reason for the churches to campaign that *amakwerekwere* also be treated as such.

5.4.2 Creating places of safety

Although various levels of government tried to provide safe places to stay for the persecuted migrants, it became clear that these were insufficient and unsustainable. As a result churches tried to provide alternative places of safety. In this regard the example of the Central Methodist Church in Johannesburg stands out. It hosted migrants already before the violence broke out, and continued to host those who did not have anywhere to go even against strong government and community resistance. This effort has been highly appreciated. As the parable of the final judgment quoted above indicates, the life of any Christian community will be measured in terms of how it is related and connected to those on the margins of society. In any situation of large-scale social disruption such as the outbreak of xenophobic violence, therefore, churches are expected in terms of how they understand themselves to provide places of safety for those who are persecuted.

5.4.3 A teaching mission

Since the Church is the custodian of faith it is therefore her role to reinstate and correct it when it is distorted in one way or the other. Her obligations go to the perpetrators as well as the victims. To both these groups the Church should be an advocate for peace and reconciliation. This peace can only be achieved through belief in God, forgiveness, and after which they receive reconciliation with God and also with the fellow human beings. It is the role of the Church to stand with those whose faith might have wavered and teach them the

principles of God which are abiding and can therefore not be shaken by perpetrators of evil, as God in his own way and time will punish the sinner and reward the forgiver. In this teaching the aspect of how one relates with oneself (self-respect) must be emphasized as one cannot hurt him/herself, and thus since others are created in the same image, then it is expected of one to extend the care and concern for oneself also to others. Failure to do this then will be betrayal of God's divine trait of human unity which he attributed to us. The church should use all the mechanism which will not only point to the spiritual aspect but also to the social in the day to day relationships and encounter of people. Teach values that add human concern, to the person walking beside you, sitting next to you, staying next door, and the like. These people are to be appreciated since they are there at that time by God's purpose which might be even benefiting to the neighbour.

5.4.4 An integrating and humanizing mission

The Church can and should contribute to the awareness of and preparedness for prevention of such outbreaks. This can be achieved through the use of the pulpit as a weapon of reconciling people who would otherwise feel alienated and not related. The church is in a better position to advocate integration of neighbours as the one who is next door, although not next of kin. This can be achieved through promoting a culture of interaction between various churches and denominations, especially those consisting mainly of foreigners and migrants with South Africans, to worship together as a campaign against discrimination and also a way of bridging the gap between "citizens" and "foreigners".

This would maybe easily accepted and appreciated by the migrants who are vulnerable, but it is also an avenue for the Church to make a call and appeal to local people to be hospitable, and, as Volf (1996:30) puts it, continue the mission of God by utilising an embrace to fight against the destructive evil called "exclusion". As he continues (:291), only the cross breaks the cycle of violence; hanging on the cross Jesus provided the ultimate example of his command to replace retaliation with the principle of non resistance and reconciliation. The church is yet to come up with visible and audible message and ways to advocate the message of integrating South Africans and foreigners as neighbours and friends.

5.4.5 A message to Civil Authorities

The study has established a negligence of the civil authorities at local level to provide security to victims, thus rendering them more vulnerable and helpless at the mercies of their attackers. This is against the constitution of South Africa, which seeks to safeguard all within her borders. The government as the head of civil authority thus has to work more on the security issues to safeguard everybody, foreigners included, as the constitution promises. This will also be helpful in terms of discouraging those who might be thinking of disturbing the peace and by so doing tarnishing the name of the country and also the government of the day. The issue of inadequate service delivery also has to be taken up. This is a controversial issue, but it illustrates that there are those who feel neglected for so long and tend to blame migrants for the delays in service delivery. It is only the civil authority who can be able to deal with these issues amicably since they alone have the authority to deal with them and provide answers to the questions which are in the minds of their people. The study would therefore wish to appeal to the civil authority to come up with ways to negotiate with their people who they owe dialogue with and in the dialogue educate them on the right channels to follow in case of any grievances.

5.5 Conclusion

The study has established that the churches and other faith based communities have indeed played a role to stabilize the heated violence together with other NGOs and individuals who stood up and resisted the violence. Based on this evidence, then, it is clear that the civil authorities can use the same channels to relate to the locals and help them learn and understand what it entails to cohabit and what benefits would be gained if violence and hatred would be replaced with the effort to learn and live peacefully together. In the South African context and in the context of this study in particular, it is a call for the Faith Based Communities and the civil authority to spearhead the campaign that it is possible to make South Africa a better place for all those who are within it, a blessing to the entire human race to live together in peace, love and unity. This will only be achieved if the spirit of division is eliminated in the minds of the people and replaced with the virtue of unity. And in terms of our Christian faith this unity stems from our unity as creatures created by God, our Creator, in his image, as brothers and sisters of each other.

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The Coordinator
PEN Ministries
Adult Care

Dear Mr. Enos,

RE: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH WITH YOUR BRANCH.

This letter is a follow-up of the conversation we had earlier about the proposed research. I am a student registered with Unisa Department of Christian Spirituality, Church History and Missiology for a Masters Degree in Missiology.

As a requirement for this studies am to write a dissertation. The Title of my study is : “A Study of migrants’ Understanding of God and the image of God in the face of Xenophobic attacks in Pretoria”. The purpose of the study is to conduct an investigation of the understanding of the image of God in the context of xenophobic attacks. Upon completion the findings will not only be to my own advantage, but your work among the victims will also be documented.

Since the study involves a sensitive topic, I promise to consider ethical codes to safeguard the feelings of the participants and also their dignity. I will only conduct my interviews with those willing to be interviewed. I will solemnly undertake to regard their information as confidential.

I’m appealing to you for support in order to be able to finish my studies.

I will appreciate your permission as I look forward to working with you.

Yours faithfully

Susan Nganga



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CONTACT US NEWS DONATE HELP US

Susan Nganga
P.O.Box 290 Burgers Park
0002 PRETORIA

Dear Susan

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH WITH PEN MINISTRIES (ADULT CARE) BRANCH

This letter refers to your request to undertake research with our Organization Pen Ministries, Adult care department.

It is with great pleasure that we welcome you in our organization to do your studies with us. We will continue to work with you providing any information needed that is relevant to your research

Wishing you success in your studies

Enos Humbelani
PEN MINISTRIES.

QUESTIONNAIRE FORM.

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research project. This research questionnaire is a part of my master's degree in Theology.

All information that is shared remains confidential in that all respondents will remain anonymous.

Please complete the questions below. If you need to talk about any of these questions feel free to ask me.

Thank you.

Susan Nganga

Student.

5. Why did you come to South Africa?

Why did you come to South Africa?

3. Do you have relatives here or are you in any way related to a South African family?

4. How do you relate to South Africans in general?

5. How do you think God is involved in your situation?

6. What can you say about Gods' people and their attitude and assistance in your assistance?

7. Where do you see yourself in two years from now?

Thank you for being part of this research project.