

Standing where God stands

JNJ Kritzinger as an encountering missionary and missiologist

Thinandavha D Mashau¹

Abstract

This article is written in order to pay tribute to one of the unsung heroes in the field of Mission and Missiology in South Africa, Johannes Nicolaas Jacobus Kritzinger. As a student of David Bosch, Prof. Kritzinger has always lived under his shadow. The same applies to his theology and praxis thereof. This article is aimed at providing a critical appraisal of Prof Kritzinger's theology in the public square as an encountering missionary and missiology whose transforming encounters impacted and changed the lives of many South Africans, Africans, and others in the global community. In his theological praxis, Prof. Kritzinger chose to stand where God stands by not only fighting against the oppressive system of apartheid but also standing with the poor and marginalised, especially black South Africans (Africans, Coloureds and Indians).

Key words: Standing, Encounterology, Mission, Missionary, Missiologist, JNJ Kritzinger.

1. Introduction

A lot has been written about professor Johannes Nicolaas Jacobus Kritzinger (popularly known as Klippies). This includes a *feestschrift* that was written and published in a special edition of Missionalia in November 2009. Articles in that *feestschrift* ranged from those speaking about his personal life and theological formation and contribution (Saayman, 2009), his question for belonging under the African sun (Nel, 2009) to his profile as an activist who contributed positively to wellbeing of others (Banda, 2009) among others. This article is an appraisal of the work that has already been written about Prof. Kritzinger. It seeks to answer the question, "what and where does Prof. Kritzinger stand as a missionary and missiologist?" Does he stand where God stands? The intention of this article is not only to critically engage Prof. Kritzinger on his theology and contribution, but to also lift his theology and the praxis thereof into the public square. Having studied and reflected on his theology, I can safely conclude that Prof. Kritzinger will go down in history books and be remembered as a theologian of encounters; hence, the reflection below on encountering mission and missiology in order to shed more light on these encounters.

¹ Prof TD Mashau is Chair of the Department of Christian Spirituality, Church History and Missiology. He can be contacted at mashatd@unisa.ac.za

2. Encountering mission and missiology

As a descendant of David Bosch, Prof. Kritzinger's paradigm of mission and missiology can be summed up as 'transformative encounters'. Practically, the 'transformative encounters' in the life of Prof Kritzinger are summed up by De Beer in the following words:

Klippias has inserted himself into different urban contexts, moving between worlds and cultures, making space for different and often conflicting voices to be heard, between academia and ecclesia, always seeking to maintain his personal and professional integrity (2012:252).

The foregoing suggests that Prof. Kritzinger was a liberated human being whose theology was more rooted in creative spaces that he found himself in, be it the hills or valleys of our communities. His contextual theology and praxis thereof were highly influenced by the black theology of liberation. In his efforts to seek answers on issues of whiteness, white superiority, racism and practices thereof, Prof. Kritzinger was pushed to study black theology of liberation for his doctoral degree. His research, and in particular his study of Steve Biko and other earlier theologians of black theology of liberation as his interlocutors, compelled Prof. Kritzinger to wrestle with social and political issues such as gender, race and class. His studies helped to shape his theology as transformative encounters.

Prof. Kritzinger's understanding of mission as transformative encounters is captured in the following words: "Mission as praxis is about concrete transformation; it is specifically about transformative encounters: among people, and between the living God and people, leading to people being called, sent, healed and empowered" (2011:52). The mission of God (*missio Dei*) is the source and foundation of these transformative encounters. According to Kritzinger,

It is about the Reign of God that has entered into this broken world as a transformative power in Jesus; that continues to be manifested transformatively in our midst by the work of the Holy Spirit; that takes hold of our lives and transforms us so that we too may encounter other people, thus creating the church as the community of the kingdom, working for and waiting for the coming Reign of God. God's mission, the arriving of the Reign of God, is about transformative encounters (2011:52).

Prof. Kritzinger's transformative encounters led him to coin the concept 'encounterology' as a critical and scholarly reflection of the very mission of God and the use of the church as transforming agent thereof. Consequently, Prof. Kritzinger's missiology can also be defined as transformative missiology. Building on Prof. Kritzinger's contribution, this article seeks to lift the notion of 'pavement encounters' to

make it 'transformative pavement encounters'. This is to locate our interlocutors on the pavements of the City of Tshwane where those in the margins of our society are found. Our preoccupations as theologians make us seek to distance ourselves from 'ivory tower' or 'desktop' research. We have a calling and a responsibility to respond to the pain and suffering of those who are homeless and hopeless on the pavements and margins of our communities.

2.1 Encountering mother earth and the formation of racist identity

Johannes Nicolaas Jacobus Kritzinger was born on 5 February 1950 in Potchefstroom. He matriculated in 1965 in Johannesburg and completed two years of study in chemical engineering at the University of Pretoria (1966-67), before embarking on the study of theology in 1968. Since 1977 he has been married to Professor Alta Kritzinger, who teaches in the Department of Communication Pathology at the University of Pretoria, and they have one daughter, Marita, who is presently working in the UK. They live in Pretoria.

Professor Kritzinger was not only born an Afrikaner, but he was also formed to embrace a racist identity, consciousness and practice of whiteness and white superiority, from childhood. In the narration of his personal story, "Becoming aware of racism in the church: The story of a personal journey", Kritzinger mentioned the following:

I first became aware that not all people are the same when I was four or five years old. Both my parents were school teachers and we had a black woman in the home to do the housework. Her name was "Mina" but my sister and I were told to call her "Aia Mina." "Aia" was a term we were taught to use when speaking to an older black woman. It was a sign of respect, because my parents insisted that children should never address adults by their first names. We were taught to address all white adults as "oom" (uncle) and "tannie" (aunt), and all black adults as "outa so-and-so" (in the case of a man) and "aia so-and-so" (in the case of a woman) (1991:1).

The story above is very particular in mapping out certain traits around issues of racism, whiteness and white superiority. Firstly, it reminds us that parents play a critical role in the formation of a racist identity and consciousness. It is clear from the foregoing that no one is born racist; you are taught and also learn it as you grow. His story reminds us of the popular quote by Nelson Mandela, who said: "No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin or his background or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite" (Mandela, 1995:384).

Secondly, the narrative unmasks 'power dynamics' with regard to the power of 'naming'. It becomes clearer in the story that those who are superior and powerful always have the upper hand when coming to naming the powerless other(s), while at the same time defining how they (the powerful) should be named. The powerless were given demeaning names and ones that reminded them that they were not the same or equal. Thirdly, the story reminds us that racial discourse is about the politics of identity and belonging. Fourthly, the story reminds us that those who are powerful also have the powers to define one's movements and activities. Speaking of this reality, Kritzinger remarked:

I do not remember much about Aia Mina, except that she bathed my sister and me and that she worked in the kitchen. I also remember that she and her daughter, whose name I can't remember, but whom we called a "meidjie" (a young black girl), lived in a single outside room called a "bediendekamer" (servants' quarters) attached to the garage of the house that our family was renting at the time (1991:1-2).

In the fifth place, the story of Prof. Kritzinger reminds us of the politics of 'swart gevaar'. Swart gevaar is an Afrikaans concept for 'black danger' and was used during the apartheid times to instil fear among white communities when coming to the manner in which they should relate to blacks. Blacks were always treated with suspicion. In his story, Kritzinger recalls the following:

I also remember that their room was very dark and smelt rather stuffy; and that I was rather scared when I entered it one day to fetch a tennis ball that had run in there. I also remember how my mother scolded me for going into Aia Mina's room, and told me that one doesn't go into the house of a black person. I asked why, and I cannot remember the exact answer I got, but it made me apprehensive and scared of the dark stuffy houses where dark people live. I was also surprised that Aia Mina's bed was raised onto bricks, which made it much higher than the beds I knew in my white world (1991:2).

We can safely conclude that Prof. Kritzinger grew up in the context where he was taught to treat blacks as different from others and dangerous. It was not just his parents who contributed in transferring to him the dominant Afrikaner ideology, but also institutions of learning were also used to complement and enhance what parents were doing. Kritzinger asserted: "That experience of otherness and fear was the basis on which my own racist attitudes were gradually formed and reinforced as I grew up in Afrikaans primary and secondary schools" (1991:2).

2.2 Encountering God

The first part of this section deals with Prof. Kritzinger's personal faith formation from childhood. Prof. Kritzinger was never raised in the environment of parents who were strictly religious people. In his personal narrative, Prof. Kritzinger noted that his parents stopped going to church when he was eight or nine years old. His personal encounter and journey with God was therefore not enforced on him. This is captured in the following words:

My parents stopped going to church when I was eight or nine years old. I never understood exactly why that was. The minister in the local DRC congregation where we lived was a rather emotional preacher and he must have alienated them either by *what* he said or by *how* he said it. A year or two later, with nobody else in the house going to church, I got on my bicycle and rode to church myself, five kilometres uphill from Berario to Northcliff, to the neighbouring DRC congregation of Aasvoëlkop. My brother, who had already left home at that stage, had married a member from the Aasvoëlkop congregation, where Rev. Beyers Naudé was the minister. I remember being very impressed with "Oom Bey" (as he was universally known to us) when I met him at my brother's wedding when I was ten years old (Kritzinger, 1991:5).

With the influence of the preaching of Rev. Beyers Naudé (Oom Bey), Prof. Kritzinger learnt to discover his personal journey with God that led him to be the Christian that he is today. It is a journey that helped him not only to be critical of his own upbringing but also to critically engage what was going on in his church circle and among people of other faiths.

In his theology and the praxis thereof, Prof. Kritzinger's experience of God is one of encountering God. Building on David Bosch's understanding of *missio Dei* (Bosch, 1991:488), Prof. Kritzinger related to God as an encountering God who is forever involved in a transformative way in the life of his people, and in particular those on the margins (Kritzinger, 2011:52). God's involvement with humanity is not only spiritual, but deals with all ailments caused by the fall of man. In his interpretation of these encounters, Prof. Kritzinger is aware that God uses human beings to bring about transformation in the lives of others and the polluted environment. Consequently, it is concluded that: "Kritzinger's transformation journey as already discussed clearly points to the fact that one cannot have a true encounter with God and be at peace with injustice" (Banda, 2009:119).

The last part of this section pays attention to how Prof. Kritzinger views the encounter with God in worship. In his personal experience of dealing with injustice in the context of the City of Tshwane, Prof. Kritzinger concluded that the encountering

God should be worshipped, firstly, as a dependable God that should be trusted with our lives and wellbeing at all material times. In one of the responsive liturgy that he has created for the worship of the Melodi ya Tshwane congregation of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA), Prof. Kritzinger named the “principalities and powers” in which we often wrongly put our trust as undependable. He names among others the hills such as Meintjieskop, Union Buildings (centre of political power), Thaba Tshwane (centre of military power), Monumentkoppie, Voortrekker Monument (reminder of the power of the past), Reserve Bank (centre of economic power) and UNISA and University of Pretoria (centres of intellectual power). While we can easily be deceived into putting our trust in these powers, Prof. Kritzinger prophetically warns us against it. We should instead learn to place our trust in the unchanging God, who has created heavens and earth. This “... could help create, in the hard realities of the city life, a concrete spirituality of trust” (Kritzinger, 2008a:338).

Secondly, Prof. Kritzinger projects the encountering God as beautiful. In his article, “Concrete spirituality”, Kritzinger contends that the beauty of God can nurture a concrete spirituality to mobilise urban church members for a justice-seeking lifestyle (2014:1). Prof. Kritzinger is of the view that believers are called and sent out to participate in the mission of God by preserving the relationship between God’s beauty and efforts to seek human justice in our creative liturgies and the praxis thereof. He maintains that what we do to the weak and vulnerable – the least of the sisters and brothers of Jesus – we do to him (Kritzinger, 2014:5).

2.3 Encountering the religious other(s)

As a minister of the word within the Dutch Reformed Churches (DRC) and as a missionary and missiologist, Prof. Kritzinger has always been exposed to encounters with religious other(s). In his journey within and with the DRC, his life was always covered with controversies around issues of ‘blackness’ and ‘whiteness’. In his personal narration, Kritzinger said:

At university I got involved in Christian youth groups, especially one pietist group doing “mission work among Indians.” As I started teaching Sunday school on Sunday afternoons in a poor part of Laudium, the Indian “group area” outside Pretoria, a number of political questions came up in my mind: Why are the people’s houses so small? Why do Indians have to live in a separate group area? Did they have to be forcibly removed from Lady Selbourne and Marabastad to fit into the big apartheid plan? For the first time in my life I found myself on the other side of apartheid’s “barbed wire fence” to see “the other side” – and it was the much maligned “narrow pietist theology” of missionary Christianity that got me there! As I

met Indian people – as people – for the first time in my life, and made friends with some members of the small Christian community there, I started seeing the world through new eyes and started asking awkward questions (2001a:6).

In his association with people of other races - Indians in this case – Prof. Kritzinger learned to develop a sense of disgust towards his fellow Afrikaners. He stopped singing *Die Stem* (the former national anthem) to distance himself from Afrikanerdom. Prof. Kritzinger intentionally started watching soccer instead of rugby. He became a member of the Indian Reformed Church (IRC) in East Rand and stopped going to the worship services of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC). In his own words, Kritzinger said that: "... I gradually became estranged from the Afrikaans Bible translation, Afrikaans hymns and the whole ethos of the DRC" (2001:7). However, this feeling of estrangement from the mainstream Afrikaner community changed with time.

In accepting his whiteness, it developed a clear consciousness in Prof. Kritzinger to accept his identity as white and Afrikaans, but also as a Christian who should stand where God stands, even when it comes to issues of social justice. This helped Prof. Kritzinger to take a stand against all atrocities perpetuated by whiteness, white supremacy and racism during the apartheid era; hence, he was able to take a position of solidarity and stand side by side with the oppressed.

Apart from standing side by side with fellow Christians in his spiritual journey, Prof. Kritzinger also chose to stand side by side with people of other faiths. In his article, "Faith to faith – Missiology as encounterology", Kritzinger (2008b) argued for an inter-religious encounter that seeks to encourage dialogue between people from different faith orientations. According to Kritzinger (2012:247), Christian theology which is contextual "... does not incite Christians to 'convert' people of other faiths to Christianity, but starts from the empirical observation that Christian communities (like Muslim, Buddhist and neo-Hindu communities) are busy spreading their faith to others". Kritzinger called for "... Christians to walk side by side with people of other faiths (and of no faith) in building a new society, but this does not mean being less committed to the truth" (1991b:112).

2.4 Encountering the homeless other(s)

With the Group Areas Act and dislocation of people during the apartheid era in South Africa, blacks, coloureds and Indians were meant to feel like the homeless other(s). They were meant to feel like strangers in their own country. In his personal journey, Prof. Kritzinger learnt not only to live with the homeless other(s) when he intentionally took refuge and found a home in the Indian Reformed Church and in Melodi ya Tshwane (see Saayman, 2009:21; Saayman, 2010:135), but also to be

formed and shaped by their faith(s) and worldview(s). This helped him to rethink and reshape his personal identity and approach to faith and life. Speaking in the context of the homeless other(s) with particular reference to foreign migrants, Kritzinger said the following: “The collective memory of being welcomed as migrants in South Africa during colonial times compels me morally and spiritually to work for the welcoming of refugees and migrants in postcolonial South Africa, taking my cue from Deuteronomy 10:17-19” (2016:3).

3. Standing where God stands

According to Kritzinger (2014:5), the metaphor of ‘standing where God stands’ is derived from Article 4 of the Belhar Confession and Psalm 109:30f. This is a metaphor that I have chosen to use as the title of this article in honour of Prof. Kritzinger. Irrespective of being a child of his time, Prof. Kritzinger’s life has always been characterised by deep yearning to stand where God stands in everything he does. This is captured in the following:

Through worshipping, eating, playing, struggling and simply being with black fellow Christians, I experienced a long, slow process of growth towards self-acceptance as a human being, as an Afrikaner, as a Christian and as an African (of sorts). All of this happened not because anybody saw me as a do-gooder missionary, or because I thought that I was doing something *for* other people. It was through mutual human interaction in the church – becoming friends, sharing the gift of community, receiving the sacrament of the brother and sister – that I became aware of my racism and how to overcome it, how to resocialise myself into new attitudes, new patterns of thinking and acting. It was through this same process that I discovered the urgent need to struggle for new social structures and processes, in order to overcome the systemic, power dimensions of racism – also within the church (Kritzinger, 2001a:12).

The foregoing quotation captures Prof. Kritzinger’s understanding and use of the metaphor ‘standing where God stands’ and it includes the following:

3.1 Standing for God

According to Kritzinger (2014:5), Christians are called to ‘imitate God’ in all areas of life. The encountering God always works with human beings to accomplish his mission on earth. When God has encountered us in a transforming ways, we are also expected to take the stand as God and radiate his being in the lives of others. We therefore become same expressions of the very being that has transformed us. In his interpretation of the Belhar Confession on the question of ‘standing where God stands’, Prof. Kritzinger is of the view that this is an issue of identity and belonging. It highlights that the church belongs to God and, as a community of disciples, they

are compelled to follow God by taking a stand against injustice and with wronged people (see Kritzinger, 2014:7). Speaking of Prof. Kritzinger's transformation journey, Banda correctly concluded that: "... one cannot have a true encounter with God and be at peace with injustice" (2009:119).

3.2 Standing for the truth

Guided by the *sola Scriptura* principle of reformation, standing where God stands implies knowing God's will which has been revealed in the Scriptures. This, however, is not knowledge which is abstract; it is applied knowledge. In this case, Prof. Kritzinger cited Psalm 109:30f as his scriptural basis for his call. God is always there to stand with the poor and those who are wronged against the unjust oppressors (Kritzinger, 2014:5). It is asserted that, as disciples of Christ, we are also called to stand by God's side in his hour of grieving for the suffering humanity (Boesak, 2008:18). We can therefore not bear the injustice inflicted on our brothers and sisters because it is the injustice inflicted to God who always stand by the side of the oppressed and aggrieved. The prophetic witness of the church in the face of injustice is critical (Mashau, 2014b:2).

3.3 Standing beyond known borders

Standing where God stands, for Prof. Kritzinger, meant to go and stand outside the gate to share the shame of Christ, as reflected in Hebrews 13:13 (Kritzinger, 2014:6). It is about crossing one's own comfort zone as you venture into the unknown in pursuit of Jesus Christ outside the camp. In his article, "White Christians Crossing Borders: Between Perpetuation and Transformation", Van Wyngaard (2014) uses Prof. Kritzinger as one example of those whites who, in standing where God stands, successfully crossed the borders of whiteness and white supremacy, reached out to those in need (blacks) but at the same time also called for the liberation of whiteness. As much as Prof. Kritzinger was not immune to racial tendencies, in his thoughts and actions, he should be applauded for not remaining an ally to white colonial mentality of subjugating blacks to racial captivity. Prof. Kritzinger's solidarity with blacks was a conscious effort on his side to step out of his comfort zone (see Banda, 2009:112).

3.4 Standing in solidarity with those in the margins

Standing where God stands, as used by Kritzinger, implied the conscious choice of standing where God stands with "... the abused children and women, underpaid workers, people struggling with illness, those burying their relatives, widows, orphans and strangers, fearful elderly people and frustrated unemployed youth" (Kritzinger, 2014:6). This is a liberating mission which shaped Prof. Kritzinger's approach to life and it is asserted by Saayman (2009:18) that the proper locus of God's *Missio Dei* is

one's commitment to the poor and the oppressed. Kritzinger captures this kind of solidarity as follows: "Having interacted daily with people who were politically oppressed and economically exploited, I have learnt to do theology and ministry in solidarity with black fellow believers, working for justice, equality and freedom" (Kritzinger, 2016:2). True theology and ministry, therefore, takes place on the pavements of cities and villages while serving as hands and feet of Jesus Christ by ministering to the needs of those on the margins. This kind of solidarity comes with the price of rejection (Banda, 2009:120), rendering oneself vulnerable (Banda, 2009:122), and embracing a level of discomfort (Van Wyngaard, 2014:197).

3.5 Standing for justice

For Prof. Kritzinger, standing where God stands is a justice issue. It is about service as a transforming agent for social justice and equality. It is about finding creative ways of working and fighting for justice, in the face of injustices perpetuated by oppressive powers of this broken world. Speaking in the context of churches which were on the receiving end of apartheid between 1986 and 1990, the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (DRCA) and the Dutch Reformed Mission Church (DRMC), as churches where his ministry context can be located, Prof. Kritzinger called for an ecclesiology of active involvement in the struggle for justice. The 1980s were the years where mission of the church took place amidst repression and injustices enforced among blacks in the form of the "state of emergency" (Botha, Kritzinger and Maluleke, 1994:27). It was during this time that the mission of the church was defined as participation in the struggle for social justice and this gave birth to the Kairos document in response to the need for advocacy for social change (see Botha, Kritzinger and Maluleke, 1994:29). In defining the role of the church in such a context, Prof Kritzinger concluded that: "The church therefore has a double calling: compassionate solidarity ("*stand by* people in any form of suffering and need") and courageous prophecy ("*witness against* all the powerful and privileged who selfishly seek their own interest and this control and human others") (2013:198).

4. Kritzinger as a decolonial and African scholar?

Public discourse on issues of decoloniality and Africanisation are receiving serious attention in the public square (see Mashau, 2018:2). The hashtag and fallist movements in South Africa are helping to propel the decoloniality agenda and call for Africanisation of the curriculum in institutions of higher learning. Where does Prof. Kritzinger stand in this discourse? Does he stand where God stands? Can we consider Prof Kritzinger as a decolonial and African scholar? Prof. Kritzinger, compared to his peers and in particular white Afrikaners of his time and age, has always been one of the most progressive and liberated Afrikaner. Prof. Kritzinger's

engagement with black theology of liberation as his interlocutor did not just enrich his knowledge about blacks, their worldviews and spiritualities, but also helped him shape his personal decolonial turn and contribution in the Africanisation agenda. He became a decolonial and Africanisation prophet whose prophetic witness was not missing in the public square at the time when it was not popular to do so. For the purpose of this article, I have chosen to reflect on four issues to unmask Prof Kritzinger's contribution to the decolonial and Africanisation agenda, namely:

4.1 Kritzinger on white identity and the quest for belonging

Kritzinger strove for an inclusive identity and an inclusive Africa as a motherland for all who live in it, but not without some degree of ambiguity. On the one hand Prof. Kritzinger, in fostering an inclusive humanity, called for whites in South Africa to strive to become 'white Africans', while on the other hand he, in acknowledging his whiteness, called himself an African (of sorts). In narrating his personal story, Kritzinger remarked: "Through worshipping, eating, playing, struggling and simply being with black fellow Christians, I experienced a long, slow process of growth towards self-acceptance as a human being, as an Afrikaner, as a Christian and as an African (of sorts)" (2001:12). In this instance, Prof. Kritzinger was not sure if he is a true African or not. This shows a real struggle that he had in shrugging off his and other whites' European heritage; hence, in his call for decolonisation, Kritzinger preferred to call white people 'white Africans' or 'European Africans' in the same way as Afro-Americans in the United States of America (Kritzinger, 1991:110). This could be interpreted as a quest to finding a place under the African sun.

4.2 Kritzinger on whiteness, white supremacy and racism

As a liberated white Afrikaner, struggling to define and find his own place in Africa, Kritzinger became more convinced that the church, during the apartheid era, served as a racist institution (2001:13) and as a factory of racist attitudes and practices (:21). Prof. Kritzinger called for the liberation of whiteness in terms of their identity and racial practices. According to Kritzinger (1988:274), "The first dimension of a liberating white theology is an admission of collective responsibility for the suffering of black people". He called white people to bid farewell to their innocence. He is of the view that whiteness, in the context of the colonial and apartheid South Africa, came with a deliberate attempt to nurture white privilege where all white South Africans would have benefited, directly or indirectly.

4.3 Kritzinger on land

As someone influenced by black consciousness, it would be naïve and unthinkable to want to conclude this article without reflecting on the question of land.

The land issue is something that runs through the veins of black consciousness and the dignity of black lives will never be fully restored until such time that they can also proudly own land. It remains a contentious issue to date (Mashau, 2014a:192). In his efforts to redress the colonial past of land dispossession, Kritzinger called white people to renounce the colonialist claim to ownership of the majority of the land and to dismantle the unjust system of white minority rule (1988:319). Prof. Kritzinger's prioritisation of blacks in this discourse is in line with the Black theological praxis of liberation which has informed and shaped his theology and praxis thereof. With particular reference to this theological praxis, Methula remarked that: "... [it] is to search for an alternative economic system founded on economic reconciliation that prioritises the victims of colonialism and apartheid" (2014:113). In the efforts to redress the injustices of the past, Kritzinger concluded that it is the task of Black Theology [of liberation] to call black people to affirm their right to the land and to commit themselves to the struggle for regaining it" (1988:129).

4.4 Kritzinger on decoloniality and Africanisation of the curriculum

In setting the agenda for transforming Missiology and transforming encounters thereof, it called for a recurriculation that would seek to prioritise the Africanisation of all theological disciplines (Kritzinger, 1995:386). This, according to Nel (2009:138), was aimed at redressing the legacy of racism, xenophobia and colonialism in an African context. In his clarion call, Kritzinger pushed for a curriculum that sought to grapple with the realities of our African context with "Black lecturers and students ... determining the agenda" (1995:386-387). As a missiologist, Kritzinger called for an African Christian Missiology that "... can make its unique contribution as a liberating and humanising discipline, dedicated to the coming of God's reign on our suffering but hope-filled continent" (1995:394). What is remarkable about Kritzinger is his call to overcome voicelessness and marginalisation of African sources in knowledge generation. When encouraging African scholars to drink from own sources and also tap into our own resourcefulness, Kritzinger said: "We need to explore the indigenous faith-and-knowledge systems embodied in the proverbs, idioms, rituals, songs and prayers of our communities and bring these to bear on the theological and political questions we are grappling with" (2012:242-243).

4.5 Kritzinger on decoloniality and language

In his decoloniality project, Kritzinger called for white South Africans to learn one or two African languages as a way of inserting themselves into Africa and also embracing their Africanness (see Van Wyngaard, 2016:3). Whilst speaking against the abuse and exploitation of domestic workers (blacks) by white families, Kritzinger

viewed their presence in white homes as an opportunity that whites could have utilised to learn African languages (1991:110). Prof. Kritzinger should be credited for hitting the right note on this issue. However, this remains a challenge to him personally, seeing that Kritzinger has to date not mastered at least one African language. Kritzinger must also be applauded for the multilingual dictionary project in theology that he has initiated and is still working on, within the College of Human Sciences at UNISA, even though it has in a way exposed his great affinity with Afrikaans when insisting that it must be included alongside isiZulu, Sesotho and English. Like English, Afrikaans is a well-developed language with as many theological dictionaries out there and it could have at least given way to an extra African language like Tshivenda, Tsonga, Xhosa and so on.

4.6 Kritzinger on decoloniality and Africanisation of the church

In pursuit of justice, Kritzinger called for the re-evangelisation of the white church (decolonise and Africanise it). The need to re-evangelise the white church was, for Prof. Kritzinger, premised on their continued support of the inhuman system of colonialism and Apartheid. According to Kritzinger, "... the term *re-evangelisation* implies that something went seriously wrong in the evangelisation of the white community until now, thus leading to a deeply inhuman church and community life (1991:107). According to Kritzinger, "Re-evangelising the white Christian community means to help ourselves develop an inclusive sense of humanity, flowing from the image of the church as the body of Christ, according to which an injury to one is an injury to all (1 Cor 12:26)" (1991:112-113). In proposing a way forward, Kritzinger (1991) proposed the following: "The four colonial dimensions that I wish to address are the exploitation of black domestic workers, the perceptions that white people have of their own identity, their attitudes to other religions, and their isolated "enclave" existence" (108)

5. Conclusion

Prof. Kritzinger's journey as an encountering human being, missionary and misanthropologist is one of a prophet who was never received in his home town (whites), but one who was also treated with suspicion and/or rejection among the gentiles (blacks). Kritzinger was a white Afrikaner who faced rejection among his people (including his own church) because of his allegiance to the black theology of liberation, black consciousness and solidarity with blacks. His story is exciting, but also confusing (ambiguous) and a bit sad at times. Kritzinger was, without doubt, a white man with a black heart, but not too white to be embraced by racist whites and at the same time not black enough to comprehend black lived experiences. Prof. Kritzinger would at some point have developed self-hatred as an Afrikaner

and tried to disown and distance himself from his own people (whites) only to have his personal Damascus to a point of embracing his whiteness and Africanness to a certain degree.

We can safely conclude from his story that Kritzinger's journey is one of transformative encounters where he chooses prophetic dialogue as a way of engaging and navigating through all of life's challenges. He remains a prophet who should be hailed for his prophetic voice against the social injustices perpetuated against blacks, but also one who started asking critical questions regarding decoloniality and Africanisation when it was not popular to do so. What is left of us (as a new generation of scholars at UNISA) is to accompany him and amplify his critical voice in his search for a true liberated and inclusive Africa. Mayibuye iAfrika!

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