



A theological response to racism in post-apartheid South Africa: A Korean perspective



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This article explores a theological response to racism from a Korean perspective as a way to celebrate the legacy of Vuyani Shadrack Vellem who introduced the first Korean author (S.K.) to Black Theology of Liberation (BTL) in South Africa. The article argues that the privilege of white people, inequality, and racism, have continued in post-1994 South Africa, and that this is happening because the political liberation of black people has not been fully realised. To illustrate this point, the article drew comparisons between BTL of South Africa and Minjung Theology (MT) in South Korea through a case study of examples of racism cases to highlight the reality of the lives of black people and their encounters with racism that has continued in the post-apartheid South African context.

Contribution: This article is a theological response to the continuing racism challenges in South Africa despite the collapse of apartheid in post- 1994 South Africa and it is an interdisciplinary approach to BLT and MT, which emerged from the Korean context.

Keywords: Black Theology of Liberation; Minjung Theology; racism; South Africa; Vuyani Vellem.

Introduction

This article argues that the privilege of white people, inequality, and racism, have continued in post-1994 Africa, and that this is happening because the political liberation of black people has not been achieved. To illustrate the key issues that have emerged from analysis, we conducted a comparison between Black Theology of Liberation (BTL) of South Africa and Minjung Theology (MT) in South Korea, which is our theological background. With the theological lens obtained through this, we will analyse the reality of the lives of black people and the racism that has continued in post-1994 South Africa. For this analysis, we will look at the following four cases: Penny Sparrow, Vicky Momberg, the display of the old South African flag, and the coffin case. Through this case study process, we will discover that racism violates life and liberation, which are the elements that both theologies pursue in common. Through this analysis, the authors will utilise the BTL and MT to explore a life affirming theology that expresses solidarity with victims of racism. This article will draw on the Korean experiences of the second author (B.M.) and his encounter with BTL, with a view to exploring a theological response to racism in post-apartheid South Africa. As a way to celebrate the legacy of Vuyani Shadrack Vellem, the authors pay tribute to his work by reflecting on the interface of South African Black Theology and the Korean Minjung Theology. The article will further argue that the privilege of white people, inequality, and racism, have continued in post-1994 South Africa, and that this is happening because the political liberation of black people has not been fully realised under democracy. To illustrate the key issues that emerged from analysis, the article will draw comparisons between BTL of South Africa and MT in South Korea to analyse the reality of the lives of black people and their encounters with racism in post-1994 South Africa.

Methodology

Indeed, the fundamental ideologies and aims of South African racial discrimination and Korean MT are vastly different. In order to strengthen the article's argument regarding the logical framework, a comparative study methodology was employed to analyse similarities between BTL of South Africa and MT of South Korea. In this regard, this article investigated the differences and similarities between the two theologies through qualitative literature analysis. In addition, we triangulated this literature with selected case studies on racial discrimination cases by white

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people as evidence that racial discrimination continued in post-apartheid South Africa. The four cases selected were limited to those that had already been convicted by the courts. For this purpose, court records and newspaper articles were cited.

Apartheid and Black Theology of Liberation

Apartheid was an institutionalised system of segregation implemented in South Africa from 1948 until the establishment of the black government in 1994 (Jeffrey 2013:126–127), and while the state granted political, social, and economic privilege to white people, other races were subjugated to perpetuate the system (Mayne 1999:52).

Apartheid's root is not only found in the colonial policies of 'segregation' implemented in the various British colonies but also in the ecclesial divisions based on race that emerged, especially in the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) of the 19th century (Loubser 1996:321). When the DRC discussed appropriate mission policies, they first used the term apartheid in the 1930s and asserted the need for apartheid because of pragmatic considerations. This policy was dominated by practical considerations regarding how race relations may be structured in areas where the DRC missions were established. Such debates were made relevant to race relations in urban areas following several Congress meetings ('volkskongresse') in the 1930s and 1940s that dealt with the plight of poor whites ('armblankes'). In this context, the DRC began to pressure the government of the day to structure the South African society based on apartheid (Coetzee & Conradie 2010:113). As a response to poor white communities and urbanisation, apartheid was formulated as follows:

In the years 1924–1938, the ideology of apartheid as total segregation was formulated for the first time. It was the logical development of the policy of 'no equality' and the political expression of the romantic nationalism of the previous century... [As] Masses of blacks increasingly flooded into the cities, competing with Afrikaners in the labour market. (Loubser 1996:323)

Through the systematic legislation of apartheid, the whites initiated this system to perpetuate their political and economic privileges in South Africa. From 1970 to 1980, in theological debates:

[A]partheid was appropriately described with categories such as 'sin', as an 'ideology', indeed as a 'heresy'. It was also described as a 'pseudo-gospel' and a quasi-soteriology. (Coetzee & Conradie 2010:112)

Boesak (2019) also asserts and defines it as pseudo-gospel and heresy:

And so, we called apartheid racism a pseudo-gospel and a heresy because it claimed to have salvific power, made demands in the name of the gospel itself does not make, instituted conditions for and a threshold to membership of and full acceptance in the church other than faith in Jesus Christ alone, claimed to know better than God the way of salvation. We

rejected the apartheid pseudo-gospel because it claimed that the most important thing about a person is not that they are human beings created in the image of God the Liberator with inalienable rights, but their racial identity and pigmentation. (pp. 9–10)

For this reason, in 1982, Boesak and others facilitated the declaration of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC), that apartheid was heresy:

... We declare, with Black Reformed Christians of South Africa, that apartheid ('Separate Development') is a sin, and that the moral and theological justification of it is a travesty of the gospel, and in its persistent disobedience to the Word of God, a theological heresy. (ed. Kinnamon 1997:222)

As a means of theological response and struggle against apartheid, the BTL emerged in the 1970s (Bosch 1974:2; Hopkins 2005:31; Motlhabi 2009:162). Black Theology of Liberation was born to protest injustice and the racial society of South Africa theologically (Maimela 1993:100). It had an impact not only on theology but also on other areas, aiming to interpret and appropriate the struggle against the apartheid regime to create a new just society in South Africa (Hopkins 2005:93).

Given that BTL emerged as a response to the injustice of society and inequality in politics, which was based on skin colour, BTL is 'a critical reflection on the praxis of Christian faith, one which participates in the ongoing process of liberation with the Black Christian community' (Goba 1986:60). Black Theology of Liberation prepared churches to face the reality of oppression and exploitation of black people and to participate in liberating them from the injustices they faced. Because Black Theology represented a struggle for black people, it came to be known as BTL. As Laubscher (2018) explained:

More importantly though is that 'blackness' is not employed as a biological, or anthropological construct without necessarily denying ontological blackness, but an existential term. (p. 2)

In the 1970s, the BTL emerged as the student movement and Steve Biko, Sabelo Ntwasa, Mokgethi, Mamphela Ramphele, Malusi Mpumlwana, Manas Buthelezi, Barney Pitjana and others participated in the process of establishment of BTL (Kobo 2018:291; Motlhabi 2009:162–180). They agreed that Black Theology should be carried out as an independent project, developing through conferences and seminars with black theological groups to be carried out later (Motlhabi 1972:4 in Kritzinger 1988:60). The student movement became a womb for the BTL in South Africa. Especially, Biko and Black Consciousness Movement were two major contributors to Boesak's preaching of the gospel in a way that would make black people in South Africa embrace their blackness as a gift. For Biko, the liberation of black people was achieved on two levels, namely psychological and physical. He saw the liberation of black people as a process that began with their dignity and pride in being black amid oppression (Boesak 1977:9). In the 1980s, BTL of this period was facing a paradigm shift. Young theologians returning from studying abroad began to interpret the existing Black Theology anew and

built an academic foundation (Motlhabi 2009:169). Black people in South Africa suffer, and the cause of their poverty is not only racism but also the dehumanisation of women by men, and economic exploitation. This trend marks a paradigm shift in BTL. The BTL was not only interested in the racism practised by apartheid but also the logic of capital behind it. Racist policies and the resulting attitudes of white people were economic privileges they had obtained illegally and unjustly in South Africa. Kee (2008) described this stage as the third wave of the BTL and argues as follows:

The third wave of Black Theology in South Africa can continue beyond the end of apartheid because its analysis of oppression is more profound than opposition to racism. It also includes an ideological edge that comes from a reading of Marx in addition to Black Consciousness. (p. 87)

He continues by arguing that the BTL is rooted in the idea that oppression in the power structure of society is economic. In this regard, Goba asserts that the BTL in South Africa did not deal with it well. Goba (1986:67) argued that the struggle for the liberation of black people was the starting point of the black liberation movement. He not only simply advocated that the BTL should fight against racism but also that liberation should be interpreted in terms of people's destiny, history, and materialism. In this regard, Kee (2008) diagnoses the BTL and Mosala as follows:

Black Theology is not an end in itself- although it has brought tenure and security to some- but rather a means to a greater end, namely the establishment of communities of equity and justice. As theory it can achieve nothing, but as Marx notes, it can become a 'weapon' in the struggle when it is made available to the most oppressed classes. For Mosala, Black Theology in South Africa has not performed this function, because it has not been developed in association with 'black working-class people, the most exploited of the black community. (pp. 87-88)

Although Kritzinger (1988:75) describes this phase as the *terminus a quo*, it can be evaluated to be a phase of preparation for a new phase of BTL. In 1990s, it is unclear whether the ultimate academic purpose of BTL has disappeared or whether many black theologians have begun to engage in politics. Thus, for this period Motlhabi (2009:171) argues that '... [it] is quite elusive, if not in a paradoxical state of non-existence'. He also called this period of 'the theological wilderness' (2009:171). Although Kee describes the Black Theology of South Africa as a 'Redemption of the poor', he is also critical of this period (Kee 2008:71). The fall of apartheid in the 1990s positively brought liberal democracy to black people, but on the negative side, it requires a new paradigm shift for BTL and that demand is an ongoing task. Therefore, this phase can be called the phase of a new leap.

Black Theology of Liberation and Mingung Theology

Black Theology of Liberation and MT are from different geopolitical, political, and historical backgrounds, but both were used in the sense that they should meet habitually for the liberation of people who are suffering. In this sense, this part

will attempt to make an engagement between MT, which is the author's theological background, and the BTL in South Africa.

The literal meaning of *Minjung* is as follows:

Minjung is a combination of two Chinese characters: 'min' and 'jung'. Min may be translated as 'people' and 'jung' as the 'mass'. Thus, *minjung* means the 'mass of the people', or just 'the people' in a literal sense. So, because the meanings of *min* and *jung* are very similar, in ancient documents all these terms: min, jung, min-jung, or jung-min have often been used interchangeably. (Kim 1996:167-168)

It implies that people are in a position opposite to the ruler, and in MT, it means poor, oppressed 'people as opposed to the rich and powerful' (Kim 1987:252). In other words, *Minjung* refers to people in social, political, and economic distress throughout Korean history (Lee 1993:108).

Suh Nam-Dong (1983) defines *Minjung* as follows:

If I define it in words, *minjung* is the common people and masses. However, it has a broader meaning than the proletariat. If we see it from the socio-economic historical perspective, it means the truly oppressed and deprived case. But if we say it from a political and theological perspective, *minjung* is not always the oppressed and deprived class, but *minjung* is and should be the subject of history. (p. 183)

However, what we must remember here is that another founder of the MT, Ahn Byung-mu refused to conceptualise *Minjung* simply and straightforwardly. Even though he cannot escape from the sphere of influence of Western theology, he opposed the conceptualisation of such Western theology. He defines *Minjung* as follows:

When asked 'What is *minjung*?' I refuse to give a short and simple definition. Western sciences understand everything through conceptualisation. I don't do that. Once born, a concept becomes estranged from its substance. Then we are left with not a living substance but an empty concept. Therefore, I was disillusioned with Western scholars. So, I insist on not conceptualising *minjung* no matter what. (Ahn 2019:20)

Considering the literal meaning of the term *Minjung* and the understanding and description of *Minjung* by *Minjung* theologians, *Minjung* refers to people who are alienated from social privileges and live poor and inhuman lives. The BTL of South Africa struggled with the pseudo-gospel, apartheid, whereas MT struggled with the demons of capitalism and the military dictatorship (Lee 1996:17). In addition, MT also responded sensitively to the reality of the division in Korean peninsula and the global issues surrounding it. *Minjung* Theology began to reflect the *status quo* of the Korean *Minjung* and to respond theologically to their reality of life. *Minjung* Theology was born in the process of Korean Christianity participating in the popular movement. *Minjung* Theology includes the grief and pain of Koreans:

The term 'Minjung Theology' emerged when South Korea was going through a painful and gruesome period of its history. It was a theology that emerged from the lowliest people and consoled the oppressed and the marginalised. It is also a theology

that represents *han* of the Koreans and marks a foreground in the history of Korean Christianity. Many South Korean theologians today who identify as mainline theologians or theologians with Protestant spirit, however, characterize themselves and their tradition of theology by criticizing Minjung Theology and its historicity. (Kim 2017:37)

There are three motifs of transliteracy behind the beginning of MT. Firstly, the *status quo* of North and South divided by foreign powers. Secondly, Jung-hee Park's military dictatorship. Thirdly, the reality of the people who are marginalised, oppressed, and exploited in the context of a divided state with a military dictatorship in South Korea. In this context, the *Minjung* are victims of a historical paradox. They alienated from the main society. Park (1985) describes the situation of the *Minjung* in South Korea as follows:

The *Minjung* were suffering the heavy burden of political oppression and socio-economic deprivation; opposition party leaders were removed, laborers who protested the low wage policy were put into prison, and college students opposed to political injustice and corruption were not allowed to gather in any sort of demonstration. (p. 16)

Kim Jin-ho (1994) explains the starting point of MT concerning the historical background as follows:

However, Minjung Theology is about the historical reality of Korea about the suffering of the people who were continuously excluded from the developmental dictatorship from the 1960s to the 70s, and the youth, students and workers who resist this situation. It started from the theological and religious reflection of a group of Christian intellectuals who faced the protests of farmers and urban poor. (p. 24)

Therefore, like BTL, MT emerged from the socio-political context of South Korea in the late 1960s and early 1970s. It is a key factor in MT to be *Jeungeon* (witness) of the *Han* that *Minjung* experienced in the *Hyunjang* of their lives. *Han* is an important factor in MT. It is a unique expression found only in Korea and can be translated as suffering or pain in English. It cannot be translated essentially (Lee 1988:8). If I can find a similar expression in the US, it can be translated into 'blues' in the US Black experience (*Cheheom*) (Cone 1981:xi):

In this respect, the *Minjung* Theology of the 1970s (the first generation *Minjung* Theology) is a theological self-reflection on the claudication and anti-popularity of Korean modernization and emerged and unfolded by crying out 'theology of repression (theology of *Jeungeon*)' (on the reality of oppression). It can be said that it did. (Kim 2002:155)

However, socially, the *Jeungeon* of *Han* from *Minjung* was a powerful accusation against the unrighteous social system, and theologically, it was a prophetic criticism of the blinding and disregard of *Minjung*'s incidents and their suffering. The *Jeungeon* demands a commitment (Ahn 2019:83). This commitment has to be life affirming and seeks to address systems that are life threatening through a life affirming theology. As Melchior Cano (Sullivan 2013:65) stressed that human experience is one of the indispensable places for theologising, we consider the experiences of the poor as central to a life affirming theology. For this article, the

working definition for a theology of life is premised on the idea that humanisation is a principle at the heart of the Theology of Life, and considers all injustices as de-humanising forces, which need to be addressed as part humanisation and contributing to the fullness of life. Black Theology has played a significant role in the process of humanisation of black people.

As Vellem (2015) rightly observed:

Generally speaking, the view that Black Theology is a theology of life derives from a particular understanding of the word or concept 'life.' Life is understood as the starting point of ethics, a precondition of all ethical claims or systems (cf. Petrella; 2008:13ff.). God is thus understood as God of life and this understanding of life is not abstract but material bodily life. (pp. 12–15)

Minjung Theology was born for the liberation of workers and *Minjung* who were marginalised by the development priority of the 1960s and 1970s after the Korean War. *Minjung* was oppressed by the military dictatorship. The fatal shortcomings of the theory centred MT were overcome in the form of a praxis called *Minjung* Church. The purpose of *Minjung* Church was to be together in the *Hyunjang* of life and to save their lives. Spirituality was at the centre of the transformational development of MT. Similarly, Vellem (2014) identified 'the sanity of black Africans, [as] the spirituality of liberation, black African agency and consciousness within the narrative of African religiosity' (Vellem 2014:1).

Black Theology of Liberation emerged in South Africa when white people using racial discrimination oppressed and exploited black people and insisted on the liberation of all life regardless of race. Apartheid, a white supremacist regime, dehumanised black people and even denied their identity. However, MT recognises the underprivileged classes who suffer hardship and poverty because of undemocratic political systems and economic contradictions through the concept of *Minjung* and seeks to illuminate this understanding of the *Minjung* through the framework of Christian theological and biblical hermeneutics.

Black Theology of Liberation asserts that all life should be liberated from injustice and oppression. *Minjung* Theology argued for the liberation of *Minjung* who were oppressed and exploited under the unique situation of industrialisation, military dictatorship, and the division of North and South, and began by opposing injustice and military dictatorship. *Minjung* Theology is both a theological response to protest against injustice and a political protest calling for political change. Despite the differences between the two countries, both government's policies and political implementation were oppressive and unjust. This destroyed the image of God and denied the dignity of life.

The starting points and motive of BTL and MT were different. Black Theology of Liberation in South Africa opposed racism and began as a theological means to overcome it. The theology of South Korea and South Africa engage at the point of contact of life. They must have a common

criterion of the value of life and give a theological response to contemporary problems, especially racism. We can do this through a method called solidarity that understands each other and recognises each other. That is, it must be done with common theological perspectives.

Firstly, BTL and MT are life-saving and life-giving theologies. The criterion for all theological value judgements must be life, which is to admit that life began with the thought that life came from God. Secondly, the theology of South Africa and South Korea is based on the liberation of the people, and this liberation includes not only the liberation of consciousness but also economic liberation in detail. Both theologies began in response to the cries of the oppressed, exploited, and marginalised. It is as if the God of Exodus responded to the pain and groaning of the Israelites who were groaning in Egypt. Therefore, the point of view that interprets the event should be their point of view. We need to look at how well it meets the needs of those who are socially and historically marginalised. Especially when it comes to racial discrimination, it will be necessary to find out who is discriminated against and who will benefit from this discrimination.

Korean perspective on racism in post-1994 South Africa

Like the MT of South Korea, BTL does not simply act for the poor and marginalised; it is a grassroots theology that draws the poor and marginalised into struggle based on human dignity and black identity (Van Aarde 2016:3). In this respect, destroying the identity of an unspecified majority of black people should be firmly rejected. Even from the viewpoint of liberation and life that BTL and MT commonly pursue, racism must be firmly rejected.

From the perspective of the tradition of life and liberation that BTL and MT commonly pursue, the following cases destroy life and go against human liberation. In the following section, we discuss four cases: Penny Sparrow, Vicki Momberg, the display of the old South African flag, and the coffin case as examples to highlight how racism is still a challenge in South African society. Through this analysis, we utilise the creative similarities in BTL and MT to explore a life affirming theology that expresses solidarity with victims of racism.

The Penny Sparrow case

In 2016, Penny Sparrow posted on Facebook about people on the beach. She used the expression 'monkey' for people on the beach, particularly black people. It was posted on Facebook by Penny Sparrow who is a white estate agent on 03 January 2016. Her posting was shared by many through social media, and generated a lot of criticism in South African society, which has a painful and repetitive experience of racism:

Our history has been shaped by segregation, violence, intolerance, and systematic discrimination. Perhaps South Africa stands out amongst the nations of the world as a country which drew a system of apartheid, brutally institutionalised discrimination against the majority of its people ... That is a

historical fact. *The Native Land Act of 1913 and Separate Amenities Act of 1952* are but two relevant examples of repressive laws that affected social behaviour and patterns of life. Millions of black people were forcibly removed from their homes and condemned to isolated existences and a life that was overshadowed by poverty and misery. (ANC v Sparrow 2016:35)

The Equality court mentioned the unfair and injustice law of apartheid and the court also mentioned that this law forced the removal of black people from their homes and caused poverty and misery in their lives (ANC v Sparrow 2016:35). The rights of black people under the apartheid government were seriously restricted and the privileges of the white practised. Racism within South Africa can now be seen riding on social networks and rapidly escalating into a global issue. This reveals the racist thinking that people have in their inner consciousness. Therefore, it has been found that this does not only impact on the victims, but also has a ripple effect on social networks and this causes discomfort and psychological damage to an unspecified number of people. Racism is not a black and white problem; it is an international problem. It is also clear that this is a life-destroying act. Black Theology is a theology of liberation and life. It represents the suffering and sorrow of black people. Therefore, the BTL must not turn away from the pain and sorrow of black people, testify together in the *Hyunjang* of their lives, and participate in the suffering they are experiencing through theological interpretation.

Vicki Momberg case

Vicki Momberg case (Vicki Momberg vs. the State 2018), showed that racism is not only perpetuated through physical harm but also through racial slurs through language. Given that Vicki Momberg in this case was in a panic after a smash and grab incident, it could be said that she used racial slurs unconsciously under the trauma. However, the core of the case is not the psychological shock, but the use of indiscriminate verbal violence and unnecessary 'kaffir' against the public authorities who have mobilised to help in such a situation.

The court sentenced her to 3 years in prison for using racist language against a black police officer 48 times (Davis 2018). It is acceptable for the court to place the historical aspect and the prohibition of the use of racial hatred in the Equality Act as the basis for judging whether Vicki Momberg's use of 'Kaffir' is illegal (Maluleke 2020:24). Racism, which is a typical habit and behaviour of dehumanisation, is permeating into linguistic habits or culture, and a strong legal response to it is a preventive measure to prevent further victimisation of dehumanisation. It also raises awareness not only of South African society but also of the global society.

The display of the old Apartheid flag

In the Nelson Mandela Foundation Trust and Another vs. Afriforum NPC and Others (Nelson Mandela Foundation vs Afriforum NPC EQ02/2018) [2019] ZAEQC 2; [2019] 4 All SA 237 (EqC); 2019 (10) BCLR 1245 (EqC) (21 August 2019), the trial revolved around the question of whether

the display of the old South African flag, as envisioned in the Constitution of South Africa, would be regarded as an expression of hate speech, or allowed as freedom of expression.

The display of the old Apartheid flag is an acknowledgement of past racism and symbolises a return. Relics of an era when unjust racism was legally tolerated pose a threat to the victims, an unspecified majority, as in the previous cases. As explained earlier, this is the same as Japan and Germany, the war criminal countries of World War II, using war criminal flags symbolising the imperialist and war crimes of the time. It is also in the same vein that the use of the US Confederate flag symbolises black slavery and racism (Strother, Piston & Ogorzalek 2017:298).

What is noteworthy in this case is not only verbal hate speech but also the raising of flags that symbolise past criminal acts and remind victims of the pain and suffering of the victims who fell under the hate speech prohibited by the constitution. The legal ban on the display of the apartheid flag in South Africa should be used in the sense of clearing up the past as a racist country and remembering the legacy of apartheid, but not repeating the mistakes of the past. It should not be used as a prerogative of white people or a return to their past. In this sense, the use of the Rising Sun flag of Japan, Germany's Nazi flag, and the US Confederate flag should be legally prohibited from this point of view. Everything that downplays, materialises, and stratifies should be avoided.

The coffin case

This incident, which took place in Middleburg, Mpumalanga, in August 2016, was documented by video footage of farm managers Willem Oosthuizen and Theo Jackson forcing Victor Mlotshwa into a coffin, setting him on fire, or threatening to put a snake in the coffin. After it went viral, they were arrested (Gon 2019; Smith-Spark 2017; Supreme Court of Appeal of South Africa 2019).

In this, the act of threatening to put a person in a coffin did not cause any direct physical harm, but it gave the victim a psychological shock. It happened when it was not certain whether the victim was a criminal or not. Unfortunately, the perpetrators were white farmers, and the victims was a black person. This can be recognised as racial discrimination. Even if the victim has a criminal record, it is extremely dangerous to inflict harm using private power rather than public power. It is even more difficult to accept the fact that the event was filmed to prove that this act was justified. What we learned from the trial process in this case was in the farm area, white farmers were confining and threatening to teach black people a lesson (Nelson Mandela Foundation Trust and Another v Afriforum NPC and Others 2018:14). What was clear in this case was that it was a racist act, and the judgement of the court was no different. This case proves that racism still exists in South Africa.

Conclusion

In this article, we analysed the ongoing racial discrimination in post-apartheid South Africa through the lens of life and liberation, theological elements obtained through a comparison between BTL of South Africa and MT of South Korea. We also discussed four cases of racism to prove that racism still exists in South Africa.

While we acknowledge that the fundamental ideologies and aims of South African racial discrimination and Korean MT are vastly different, a comparative study of similarities between BTL of South Africa and MT of South Korea highlights how both theologies are fundamentally grounded on the experiences of the poor and marginalised. Therefore, we conclude that the understanding the historical background is a key factor in addressing racial discrimination that has continued in post-apartheid South Africa. We have also argued that BTL in South Africa and MT in South Korea have a common theological lens of liberation and life affirming values. To this end, we propose that the two theologies are an expression of theological solidarity and can creatively engage to create a life affirming theology, which expresses solidarity with the poor and oppressed people.

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Competing interests

The authors have declared that no competing interest exists.

Authors' contributions

S.K. drafted the manuscript and conducted literature review. B.M. provided conceptual framework and edited the article through supervision.

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Data availability

Data presented and discussed in this article were drawn from existing literature and there was no new data collected through any procedures.

Disclaimer

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