AOSIS

Spiritual intelligence can heal South Africa and Christianity has a major role to play

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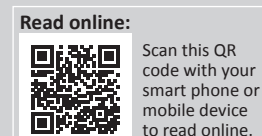
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In South Africa (SA), we live in a sick society with drugs, alcohol abuse, rape, murder, shootings, theft, hijackings, gambling, pornography and so many more evils. What is wrong in SA? The author of this article argues that our problems in SA are a result of God, religion and religious scriptures being marginalised in society – a growing absence of spiritual intelligence. A lack of spiritual intelligence contributes to people's abuse of power. This power abuse can be prevented once human race has been made aware of a supernatural power. This awareness, known as spiritual intelligence, thus seems to be an answer to our country's problems. The author shows how the idea of spiritual intelligence has emerged into a modern debate and how the importance of spiritual intelligence has become known and debated among academics, psychologists, educators and business people. This article suggests that Christianity should take part in this debate and play a role in developing spiritual intelligence, in making human race aware of the supernatural power of the Christian God, in providing moral behaviour that can benefit the world by bringing religion back to society to prevent power abuse and to heal an out-of-control world.

Keywords: Spiritual intelligence; South Africa; Power abuse; Power of God; Christianity; Spirituele intelligensie; Suid-Afrika; Magsmisbruik; Die mag van God; Christendom.

Introduction

In South Africa (SA), we live in a well-developed, modern society. We have more knowledge than our forefathers had, more life experience and, most importantly, we have ever-developing science and technology that has made our lives easier, more convenient and more enjoyable. Because of the latest findings and inventions in the field of science and technology, our lifestyles are improving – every day sees improved infrastructure, more advances in medicine, more effective and faster communication, improvements in travel, stronger defences and greater industrialisation.

However, make no mistake: we also live in a sick world! You need only open a newspaper, turn on your radio or television or log onto social media and you will see to what extent our society is permeated by corruption, violence, drug and alcohol abuse, theft, shootings, hijackings, pornography, murder, rape and child abuse. Our country has spun out of control! On Maroelamedia of 12 September 2019, Cornelissen (2019) gave the latest crime statistics for SA, announced by the minister of Police, Khehla Cele. The statistics for April 2018 to March 2019 are as follows:

- Murder cases in SA increased by 1.4%.
- Attempted murders increased by 4.1%.
- Serious attacks increased by 2.2%.
- Rape and sexual assaults increased by 4.6%.
- Arson and property damage increased.

The following message was shared on Facebook (Burger 2019:n.p.), stating that 'our beloved country has become an unsafe, corrupt, sick, violent, inhuman, lawless land where the lives of people are not worth anything'.

The problem that this article focuses on can be formulated by two questions:

- If we indeed have so many more advantages than our forefathers, why do we then live in a sick world?
- What is the role that Christianity can play in the healing of SA?

The causes of the problems in SA, which are also experienced in the rest of the world, will first be studied by examining the opinions of politicians, journalists and people who are concerned about

Note: Special Collection: Impact of Reformed Theology.

immorality in the world. If the absence of spiritual intelligence turns out to be a major factor contributing towards SA's problems, various literature studies on spiritual intelligence will be explored to follow the current spiritual intelligence debate and to determine how relevant it is as a solution to the problem addressed in this article. Finally, the role of Christianity in the healing of SA will be proposed.

What is the problem in SA?

What is going on in SA? People from all backgrounds who cast an eye over South African society will realise that our society is morally out of control and that out-of-control societies are sick societies. As South Africans, we live in a sick world! What is wrong with the society?

As many other countries are experiencing the same 'morally out of control' problems, people all over the world are trying to answer this question. Scott (2017) asks the same question. People are addicted to drugs, alcohol, pleasure and materialism. We hear of school shootings, drug abuse, rapes, robberies and people being threatened. We see a rampage of crime, families torn apart, fathers refusing to take responsibility for their families, learners attacking teachers, Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) stealing retirement funds from the elderly, the killing of farmers, rape, hijackings, theft, land-grabbing without compensation, sexually transmitted diseases in epidemic proportions, pornography and gambling now available on the Internet, adultery, sexual activity (now said to be common among primary school children), as well as lying and cheating evident in every socio-economic group.

People affected by this kind of world use social media to discuss these problems. I have used the opinions of a few writers on the causes of these problems to understand how people see them.

- *Social media*: Stephens (2017) says: 'Social media is the worst thing that could have ever happened to us'. On social media, it is easy to express one's darkest thoughts behind a screen, to manipulate people by putting certain stimuli in front of their faces. Stephens says, 'We can get a whole group of people to hate an entire population if we are persistent enough' because we are so consumed by technology and we fail to realise who we have become because of it.
- *Television*: Stoll (n.d.) says that with the coming of 'television and Hollywood's set of morals, or lack thereof, TV has become a "baby sitter" to impressionable children's minds, along with an escalating problem of divorces, one-parent families, day care centres and everything else, so that one can easily see the impact it has had on children, who are growing up insecure in the very insecure world of today'. 'It is no wonder a child goes to school carrying a gun', he says.
- *Being human*: Stephens (2017) explains that as humans we are not perfect. We will automatically have wild thoughts, behaviours and intentions. In religious terms, 'we are all sinners'.

- *The self-centredness of human race* (Stoll n.d.).
- *Changes in education*: Stoll (n.d.) explains that in the past, there were 'three elements that provided a foundation of strength' for children: the church, the school and the family. While the church was the centre of spiritual instruction, the school reinforced the spiritual principles in teaching, reading and writing and arithmetic, and the family followed the school and church by reinforcing the learning and discipline. These three elements produced educated children who were 'well-taught spiritually, morally and ethically' to go out into the world. Teaching, however, changed.
- *Ignorant people:* Stephens (2017) lists the following faults: human beings are biased, quick to attack those who challenge them and impulsive. Human beings do not know when to shut up, and everything offends them.
- *Changes in thinking*: Stoll (n.d.) argues that 'Darwinian evolution' and 'humanistic philosophy' changed the minds of teachers. Learners then became 'indoctrinated with an anti-God philosophy' and a totally self-centred way of life which have 'produced selfishness in society rather than Biblical principles' upon which our nation was founded.

Social media thus empowers people to be immoral behind screens. Is social media the problem? No, human race chooses to be immoral on social media. Television (TV) has become our children's babysitter, and therefore, the lack of morals depicted in movies and TV programmes enter our homes. Is TV the problem? No, absent parents are allowing this. Human race has become self-centred and self-focused and no longer has a conscience about sin. That is a fact. Human race is no longer educated through the cooperation of schools, parents or churches and makes bad choices. People are indoctrinated with an anti-God philosophy. This last point gives an indication of what the problem could be – God has disappeared, religion has disappeared and religious writings have disappeared. These three things have become marginalised in our society. And this is how we have ended up. That is perhaps why immorality has taken hold of the world. We are killing ourselves.

A few comments in the South African context were studied:

- *Political interference weakens the rule of law in South Africa* according to Burger (2016), a Consultant to the Governance, Crime and Justice Division of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS).
- Among many factors contributing to the lost value of education in SA, Holborn (2013), previous research manager at the South African Institute of Race Relations, reports that it is also a result of *provinces getting more power over education.*
- Jacks (2015) asks 'What exactly is wrong with SA?' and reports that 'c*orruption* is at the helm of problems facing SA, as government tenders are given to unqualified people *as long as they pay a bribe and belong to the ruling party,* the ANC'.

- News24Wire (2017) reports in Businesstech on 28 February 2017 that 'South Africans are fed up with corruption and *abuse of power*'.
- Karim (2019) reports in the Daily Maverick on 12 April 2019 on the topic of the *abuse of power* that *corruption* within the South African Policing services is on the rise.
- Rossouw (2011), CEO of the Ethics Institute of SA and Extraordinary Professor at the University of Pretoria, is of the opinion that corruption is major ailment that is impeding the development of SA. This situation requires, according to Rossouw, *personal and institutional change.*
- Naude (2011), Director of the University of Stellenbosch Business School, is clear about the fact that 'turning corruption around is an inter-generational task' – he refers to the necessity of 'values, ethics, codes of conduct, expected behaviour, the living of values, a strong family life; functional schools with teachers as moral examples; religious communities that reinforce commitment to truth and honesty; and workplaces that embody good values'.

From the above, the concept of 'power abuse' is clear. In most discussions about the problems in SA, power abuse seems to be the scapegoat. Cornelius (2019) argues that human race's obsession with greatness leads to power abuse and it harms society. Girls are raped as the rapist abuses his power as a strong man, women in marriages are abused because the husbands abuse their power as husbands and men, employers abuse their power and mistreat their employees, employees abuse the power given to them by their employers and steal from the companies, rich people abuse their financial power and harm people, political leaders abuse their political power and corruption and crime hurt those under them and beautiful girls abuse their power of beauty and seduce men. People take power into their own hands and take what they want; they walk over others and damage society. Rossouw (2011) acknowledges that we need change – personal and institutional. Naude (2011) even reaches out to religious communities in turning things around for SA!

How is the problem addressed by society? I agree with Stoll (n.d.) that we have merely 'been putting a Band-Aid on' our society's problems instead of solving the problems. Crime is increasing so that we build more prisons. Theft and violence threaten us every day and everywhere, so we put more police on the streets, high fences around our properties and alarms in our buildings and vehicles. Young learners steal at school and attack each other with knives, so we install cameras. When we are not satisfied with current affairs, we fight in public, on social media and in newspapers, and we protest and take power into our own hands and just create more and more problems. This is how society tries to survive. We treat the symptoms, but the problem is never addressed.

What is the reason for power abuse in SA? Although it is true that in SA, we live in a well-developed modern world with more knowledge, more life experience and with an ever-developing technology and science, the problem in SA is not about what South Africans have, but about what South

Africans lack. Something is missing in our modern South African society and this something leads to power abuse.

In SA, the government has tried to solve some of our problems of conflict, inequality and discrimination by enforcing a law to enshrine the right to freedom of religion. This law observes strict neutrality with the right not to believe or hold or observe any religion. The Bill of Rights contains a number of provisions dealing with religious freedom. In this bill of rights (see Constitution of South Africa: Bill of Rights 1996), the equality clause in Section 9 prohibits 'unfair discrimination' on various grounds and requires national legislation to be enacted to prevent unfair discrimination. Section 15 claims that everyone has the right to 'freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion' and allows religious observances in state and state-aided institutions. Section 31 protects the right of persons belonging to a religious community to practise their religion together with other members of that community, and to form, join and maintain voluntary religious associations.

This has also affected the role of religion in our schools. The National Policy on Religion and Education, adopted in September 2003, provides for 'Religion Education'. Religion education implies education about diverse religions in the Life Orientation subject and should not promote any particular religion. In accordance with Section 15 of the Constitution, religious observances are permitted in public schools, provided that they are 'conducted on an equitable basis, which acknowledges religious diversity, and attendance is free and voluntary' (Department of Basic Education 2014:7; Department of Education 2003; Republic of South Africa 1996).

Religion has thus been marginalised by law. One does have the freedom to choose one's religion, but it has nothing to do with one's school career, work environment or the environment of the government. South Africa will respect your choice, but the country will not remind you of God and his prescriptions for life when you are disobedient or disrespectful or dishonest or violent at home, at school, in the work environment or in public. Schools will no longer play a role in establishing and feeding religious knowledge and belief.

Religion has been marginalised and spiritual intelligence has disappeared. People have become their own gods, following their own rules, taking power into their own hands. And disaster has struck our society.

Cornelius (2019) proposes that the only way to heal society is by making human beings aware of the existence of a power beyond themselves – this realisation is referred to as 'spiritual intelligence'. This is what is missing in South African society. The only way to prevent power abuse is to make human beings aware of a power beyond themselves, of their submissiveness to this power and their duties towards this

supernatural power. We live in a sick world because we lack spiritual intelligence. If there was ever a time that SA needed God, then now is the time!

If a lack of spiritual intelligence can be seen as a contributing factor to the problems we are experiencing in SA, research needs to be performed on this concept first.

What is spiritual intelligence?

While we have all been familiar with the term 'intellectual intelligence' (one's IQ) for many years, we were eventually introduced to the term 'emotional intelligence' (EQ) where one needs to be aware of one's own emotions as well as those of others. It was Gardner (1983) who came forward with *inter alia* the term 'spiritual intelligence'. Zohar and Marshall (2000) called this the 'ultimate intelligence'.

It is defined as:

- the 'central and most fundamental of all intelligences' because it becomes the source of guidance (Covey 2004:53)
- the 'adaptive use of spiritual information to facilitate everyday problem solving and goal attainment' (Emmons 1999:164)
- the 'ability to act with wisdom and compassion, while maintaining inner and outer peace, regardless of circumstances' (Wigglesworth 2006:4–5).

I would like to explain that spiritual intelligence first of all implies that 'one recognises the existence of a God' (Cornelius 2019). The moment one acknowledges the existence of a super power, one reaches out to a form of religion, providing one with the resources that are essential for getting to know this God and for living a good life.

Who uses this term except for psychologists?

It has been shown how the term 'spiritual intelligence' is used frequently in academic circles among educators and how 'spiritual intelligence' has even become a modern demand in South African society (Cornelius 2019). Cornelius (2014:590–591) shows how scholars in academic circles have already realised the importance of spiritual intelligence (see, e.g. Hyde 2004:39; Sisk 2008). Companies have already realised the benefit of spiritual intelligence for their employees and working environments (see, e.g. Wylie 2005:3). Those concerned about global awareness have already realised the importance of spiritual intelligence (see, e.g. Collins 2010:320). Those working with criminals have already realised what role spiritual intelligence can play (see, e.g. Axinia 2011). The world has thus finally realised the value and importance of spiritually intelligent people.

Various scholars researched the effect of spiritual intelligence on:

- job satisfaction (Utomo et al. 2018:74–83)
- organisational commitment (Utomo et al. 2018:74–83)
- meaningful employment (Utomo et al. 2018:76)
- the workplace (Isfahani & Nobakht 2013:253)

- task performance (Khawaja 2017:34–45).

Ahuja and Ahuja (2015:1) conclude that the world is now moving quickly towards a dependence on spirituality in various degrees.

How is spiritual intelligence relevant to our South African society?

How is spiritual intelligence relevant for our societies?

People take power into their own hands and will do anything to expand their powers – this is called the 'power paradox' by the psychologist Keltner (2016). It is the tendency among human beings who are in power positions to abuse their power. This power paradox can be blamed on the absence of spiritual intelligence. As long as human beings do not acknowledge the existence of an ultimate power beyond themselves, they will claim power for themselves and will fight to expand their power. The problem with our sick South African society can be blamed on South Africans' choice to let God and religion disappear from society. Religion has become marginalised in society and this is how we ended up. Immorality has taken hold of this world and we are killing ourselves. We live in a sick world because of the absence of spiritual intelligence.

Solving SA's problems has become the responsibility of government and the reason for this unfair situation is because religion is no longer influential in our society. Hubbard, author of the Scientology Handbook (1994), makes a general remark in an article (2014) which can be applied directly to our South African situation: The burdens of public morality, crime and intolerance were inherited by the South African government and the political leaders have the immense task of using punishment and the police to try to solve the problems. Hubbard (2014) says that this situation can never be successful as 'morality, integrity and self-respect are not inherent in the individual, and cannot be forced on him or her with any success'. This article suggests that we need to encourage our government to bring back religion into society, and to persuade and beg our society to become spiritually intelligent and find their way back to religion.

We lack spiritual intelligence and the power of religion. The absence of spiritual intelligence limits our functioning. Christians must see this as an opportunity to jump in with vigour and help heal society.

How can spiritual intelligence heal SA?

Spiritual intelligence has the potential to bring human race to a point where individuals search for more knowledge about God. It also has the potential to bring human beings to a point where they want to serve and please this superpower. However, this knowledge, which human race automatically has access to through observing the creation, will not automatically result in saving the world. The vague awareness of a spiritual power cannot heal the world. This

vague awareness needs to move people to seek an effective knowledge of God through revelation. In Colossians 1:9–14, Paul describes the knowledge of God's will as the essence of Christian life, leading to wisdom and understanding to live a fruitful life. Bruce (1984:46) refers us to Proverbs 1:7, saying that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. Davis (2000:27) says a well-ordered life and a peaceful mind do not result from a high IQ, but from 'the fear of the Lord' – a good, well-ordered life only results from spiritual intelligence. Romans 1:21 shows that if spiritual intelligence and wisdom are absent, human beings will just become foolish in their reasoning, and their unperceptive hearts will be darkened.

Moreover, this is where religion becomes relevant. Cornelius (2014:605) argues that Christianity does indeed 'offer teaching and opportunities for the development of spiritual intelligence'. Christianity considers the Bible to be an authoritative book that contains the word of God, offering believers the revelation of God. This book is full of claims that God is the ultimate power in the world. People can choose to study this revelation, get to know God and be persuaded to follow God to save the world. The Bible teaches that faith and commitment to God will yield the fruits of life: love, joy, peace, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. It is full of guidelines for human beings on how to live a life of compassion, love and selflessness. It teaches that we should act peaceably with others and serve one another. The Bible has the potential to guide behaviour in such a way as to heal the world. When a person becomes a Christian, and lives his or her faith according to the revelation of God, as ordained in the Bible, that person can grow spiritually intelligent and can develop compassion and selflessness which brings power as a force for good in his or her society.

I believe that adherents of other religions will step forward and make the same claims. They might show us how their religions can also offer teaching and opportunities for the development of spiritual intelligence. The fact is that we need spiritual intelligence in the world.

What role can Christianity play?

The role of Christianity in a sick world

Christianity has played a major role in the history of the world. It is one of the world's leading religions. Throughout history, the role that Christianity has played has often changed.

I am of the opinion that at this point in the history of SA, Christians should step forward in the debate on the realisation of spiritual intelligence. This is a once-in-a-lifetime chance to spread the gospel in a country that urgently needs help! Christianity does indeed offer teachings and opportunities for the development of spiritual intelligence. Christians can help to solve the devastating problems in our societies.

Make society aware of the benefits of spiritual intelligence

There is a *Spiritual Intelligence Education Program*[1] available online to help one to 'think better, feel better, relate better, and perform better'. The 3Q Essentials online course teaches how to use a simple secular method to activate spiritual intelligence. Griffiths (2012–2019), a psychologist and corporate trainer and founder of the 3Q Institute, offers training at the institute. The personal and social benefits of spiritual intelligence, he says, are wisdom, compassion, integrity, joy, love, creativity and peace. This programme is an example of how people can become involved in making society aware of the benefits of spiritual intelligence.

Spiritual intelligence implies an awareness of something larger than oneself, something beyond oneself, something we consider to be divine or of exceptional nobility. This awareness provides one with the security that one is not alone; it kills a selfish heart and prevents power abuse. Spiritual intelligence can save society from everything that results from selfishness and power abuse. As spiritual intelligence is the aim of Christianity, Christianity needs to start campaigns to make society aware of how spiritual intelligence can benefit the members of society – how it can help them to create meaning and a vision of life within chaos, uncertainty and fear. Because of spiritual intelligence, they will feel more fulfilled, and find in-depth meaning and purpose in their lives. They will operate from the perspective of positivism, put in their best efforts and derive joy in helping others and improving society by using a higher dimension of intelligence (Singh & Sinha 2013:3).

Spiritual intelligence will provide human race with the ability to act with wisdom and compassion, regardless of the situation (Wigglesworth 2006). As Christians we need to help people to realise that the more people who become spiritually intelligent, the less we will have to face destructive situations in society. We can show companies and employers the benefits of appointing spiritually intelligent employees who will be more likely to contribute towards task performance and productivity. We must persuade employers to treat their employees with spiritual intelligence so as to motivate them to work for the benefit of the companies.

Christians should be available to teach, motivate and inform people in companies. Christians should persuade society to vote for spiritually intelligent leaders in positions of power as these will be the people who are least likely to abuse power. Christians should become involved in schools, not only to start the day with Scripture reading and prayer, but also to show learners the benefits of faith.

We need to educate, motivate and give people hope in a violent, corrupt and inhuman world in which we feel unsafe.

1.See https://sqi.co/spiritual-intelligence-education-program/

Make society aware of the benefits of religion

Being spiritually intelligent means we put our actions and our lives into a wider, richer and more meaningful context in which we distinguish between right and wrong. Although spiritual intelligence does not depend on religion, spiritual intelligence does play an essential role in religion (Finch n.d.). Christianity needs to go one step further – we need to teach society that spiritual intelligence in itself does not necessarily mean that a person will live with integrity and contribute to a better society. People need to be made aware of the fact that spiritual intelligence can start one on a lifelong journey to meet the power beyond oneself and to discover spiritual values that can help one to act with integrity, wisdom, love, hope, compassion and peace. We cannot do more than invite people back to religion for spiritual growth.

Religion as an organised, community-based system of beliefs identifies and introduces one to the ultimate power, and it provides structure and leads one to groups of people who share the same beliefs. Religion can help people to cope with difficult life situations as it provides guidelines to live by. A leading expert in the psychology of religion and spirituality, Pargament, answered questions from the American Psychological Association and explained that religion and spirituality are generally helpful to people in coping, especially people with the fewest resources facing the most uncontrollable of problems (Pargament 2013). Scholars such as Smith et al. (2000), Pargament (2002, 2011), Pargament et al. (1998) and Bowie et al. (2004) have performed proper research on how religion can improve life. Religion provides believers with a moral conscience, says Atran (2018). This moral conscience that religion encourages, Atran explains, provides a means to check the ruling power, and even a duty to rebel when that power imposes unethical, dishonourable, dishonest or unfair burdens on citizens. Becker (1973) argues that our awareness of death creates human race's most basic fear in life, and he shows that religion is the most potent antidote to this fear. Scimecca (1979:68) agrees that only religious beliefs can help people to overcome the crippling fear of death. Religion can lead individuals to meaningful life philosophies and provide them with a sense of belonging.

Christianity needs to:

- join hands with all disciplines
- take part in this very important debate and realisation
- write and talk about what spiritual intelligence means
- urge people to bring back religion into society
- introduce people to the God of the Christians
- teach believers compassion, forgiveness and gratitude
- persuade spiritual intelligent people that their spiritual intelligence can be developed within Christianity.

Persuade society that spiritual intelligence can be developed within Christianity

Spiritual intelligent people who are already aware of a power beyond themselves will be open and eager to meet that power. This is the perfect situation in which to introduce these people to the God of the Christians and to a meaningful context in which to distinguish between right and wrong.

The God of the Christians is not just a god like in many other religions[2] – he has a specific nature: he cared enough about human race to reach down, build a bridge for human race and compassionately provide a way for human race to be in a close relationship with him. God sent his son Jesus to be sacrificed for human race's sins. This reach of God implies that human beings no longer have to earn salvation by doing good deeds or by making sacrifices. And what is more, God sent his Holy Spirit to be with human race every day. God has made it possible for human race to know him and experience his presence every day. God thus loves with no conditions.

Christianity also has the advantage of introducing people to the word of God in the Bible.[3] We need to be open about the nature of the Bible, the process of canonisation and the wonder of the entire library of the Bible with stories, letters, poetry, wisdom, songs and history – the literature brought to us by many authors who share the conviction that the world is God's creation where he actively rules. We should persuade people that this ancient library can transform the way one thinks and feels and the way we behave – it can influence one's world view and view of God in such a way as to result in good behaviour.

We can show them the promises of God in his word:

- If we confess our sins, God will forgive us and purify us from all unrighteousness (1 Jn 1:9).
- God will guide you like a shepherd (Ps 23:1–6).
- God will never leave you (Heb 13:5).
- God will be with you till the end (Mt 8:20).
- God will answer your prayers (Jn 14:13–14; Jn 15:7; 1 Jn 5:14–15).
- God will not let you be tempted by Satan beyond what you can bear (1 Cor 10:13).
- God will protect you from evil (2 Thess 3:3).
- God promises us eternal life (1 Jn 2:25).
- Believers will inherit the kingdom of God (Jm 2:5).
- Believers will be the heirs of God (Rm 8:16–17).

The realisation that there is a higher power in this world will not only help people to meet the higher power, but it also has the potential to let these people find ground for morality and ethics, as we persuade them that human beings have a responsibility to follow God's rules and guidelines for life. At this point, Christianity can once again prove why our God is different. We need to persuade people that our God does not demand good behaviour to be accepted by him, but that good behaviour is a way to show that we are faithful to him.[4]

2.Read about the character of God in Grudem (1994:141–438) and Frame (2013:121–518, 877–997), and the role of Christ in Grudem (1994:529–852).

3.Read about the Word of God in Grudem (1994:47–140) and Frame (2013:519–696).

4.Read Frame (2013:809–844) for a discussion of human race's responsibility and freedom.

Offer teaching for the development of spiritual intelligence

The Bible offers many guidelines for a life dedicated to God – a holy life – and it provides sufficient teaching to attain spiritual knowledge. The Scriptural passage in Galatians 5:16–26 is but one of the passages that provides guidelines for what Christianity calls a 'spirit-filled' life (Cornelius 2014). Ephesians 4:2–3, Colossians 3:12–15, 2 Peter 1:5–7 and Titus 2:1–12 add to the list of good behaviour: patience, goodness, self-control, perseverance, kindness, love, humility, peace, compassion, gentleness, forgiveness, joy and faith.

In the Bible, God claims to be the ultimate power (Ex 20:1–17) and commandments are given as a safe guide for human conduct. As long as God is served as the ultimate power, no abuse of power will come to the fore to destroy societies. As long as believers are faithful to their God, they will behave with love towards God, themselves and others.

Christians who worship God, living their lives according to his word, may be the 'spiritually intelligent people that companies are searching for or the leaders people are voting for' (Cornelius 2014:605; see Wigglesworth 2006). Spiritually intelligent people may be those who know how to address their problems, how to handle conflict, how to behave in relationships, how to relate to the government, how to act as employers or employees, how to make a marriage work, how to treat their children, how to handle differences and how to work through losses and suffering and depression (see Singh & Sinha 2013). These teachings, however, must be available on the streets, in companies, in schools and in government – evangelisation needs to relive in SA.

Teach people the benefits of being a member of a Christian organisation

Idler (2008) says that religious congregations become 'social circles that provide support, reduce stress and provide rules for living'. Christianity should invite people to have connections with others who share the same beliefs to let them have a sense of belonging and to offer them a safe and trustworthy environment in which they can grow.

As the difficulties we experience in this world often get out of hand or remain unsolved because of a lack of support, people can benefit by becoming involved in a faith community[5] or a Christian organisation.

Christianity should guide people to the different Christian communities and organisations – those designed to help the youth, those helping the needy, those focusing on the family, those helping drug addicts or alcoholics or people with depression or those supporting the elderly.

Conclusion

Spiritual intelligence is what we need in our South African community. We need people to bring religion back into focus,

5. See Grudem (1994:853–1090) and Frame (2013:1017–1046) for a discussion of the role of the church.

we need South Africans to worship God and to love themselves and others as God loves them. Respect for God and love for others will combat rape, theft, land-grabbing, murder, violence, torn-apart families, racism, violence in schools, the killing of farmers, discrimination, hijackings and many other problems.

In all of this, Christianity has an important role to play. Christianity has a major role to play:

• in making human race aware of this supernatural power
• in preventing power abuse
• in providing moral behaviour that can benefit the world.

Society and law have marginalised and undermined religion in our society and Christianity has a major role in bringing religion back to society. We need a government that not only advises South Africans to embrace their religion, or makes laws to force religion back into society, but we need a government that begs and prays for South Africans to bring religion back into society so that all can serve their God and behave responsibly.

Afterthought

After the completion of this article, during the publication process, the Coronavirus became a shocking reality to literally the whole world. A disaster has struck the world and South Africa could not escape this pandemic. During lockdown in South Africa, South Africans were forced onto their knees. Schools and universities closed, all sport activities have been cancelled, businesses closed, no public gatherings are allowed and South Africans cannot but become aware of the existence of a power beyond themselves. With the coming of the Coronavirus, doors opened for spiritual intelligence and Christian churches can no longer rely on members attending church services. Suddenly the church has to rethink their ways of evangelization. Spiritual intelligence can heal South Africa and Christianity has a major role to play – especially now.

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Data availability statement

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this article.

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