**Liturgy’s outlook on the *oikumene* exposes distorted attitudes and memories of ecumenism**

This article explored the interplay between ecumenism and people’s distorted attitudes. Viewed from a South African historical perspective, faith communities have endured a robust experience of denominationalism. The authors were thus interested in the influential impact of attitudes and people’s memories in a praxis that recognises the importance of ecumenism but demonstrates limited efforts to promote it. This aspect is evident in the descriptive-empirical section of this research. Ironically, people are firm in their confession, which explicitly embraces ecumenism. However, distorted attitudes present challenges in the praxis thereof. The authors applied visualisation as part of the research methodology, and executed the research as developing from the description to systemising (exploring practical wisdom and understanding) to strategising (practising strategic, practical theology). The notion of the *oikumene* pinpoints the kingdom’s interest, but people are focused on liturgical and other differences, which challenges ecumenical relationships. The authors presented the following research questions: How can an elucidation of ecumenical liturgy serve as a means to uncover negative attitudes and bad memories while simultaneously providing building blocks for fostering the realisation of the *oikumene*? We offer systemising perspectives to denote the importance of crossing borders to promote ecumenical relations and debate the power of liturgy to enhance awareness.

**Intradiciplinary and/or interdisciplinary implications:** The authors concluded the article by emphasising that liturgical elements should incorporate an outlook on the *oikumene*. The attitudes of people should be altered, and a liturgical praxeology can play a pivotal role in facilitating this process.

**Keywords:** liturgy; *oikumene*; attitudes; memories; ecumenism.

**Introduction**

The current research aims to explore liturgy’s unique outlook on the world or *oikumene*. The authors intend to provide insights on how this outlook will expose a faith community’s attitudes and memories of ecumenism (cf. Raiser 2018:33). Raiser (2018) emphasises that no faith community can remain impartial regarding ecumenism. The only way to appreciate ecumenism is by continuously engaging in the endeavour of interpreting ecumenism as an integral constituent of the *oikos*. The notion of the *oikumene* highlights a poignant memory among people in South Africa: the tension between the state and church in the apartheid years, where both parties appealed to the same source to justify their actions – Scripture. Following the emergence of a new dispensation in 1994 for South Africa, it is evident that considerable effort is still needed to make the concept of ‘ecumenical’ vivid in people’s minds. In the words of Theron (2003:17), terminological misunderstandings could be harmful in obtaining the view mentioned earlier. Words like ‘unity’ and ‘ecumenism’ or ‘ecumenicity’ and ‘denominationalism’ are often utilised in the same breath but with different meanings, leading to a praxis in which the idea of ecumenicity denotes various churches or denominations functioning independently. Bosch (1992:5) delves deeper into the serious

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1. However, at the centre of engaging in an attitude of openness lies memories surrounded by different understandings of theology and liturgical practices (Duncan & Egan 2019:1–2; Engelhardt 2007:40; Ratzinger 2006:11).
consequences of adopting a narrow, limited ecclesiastical view of the church. Such a restricted view confines the church’s experience of Catholicism to a certain denomination, posing the risk of prioritising self-preservation over the greater interests of the kingdom of God.2

Consequently, when referring to ecumenical liturgy, it starts with an awareness and exposure to the liturgical practices of other denominations without diminishing the value of one’s practices. Ecumenism, or the Greek idea of oikumene, is, after all, concerned with the inhabited world (Schakelkamp 2005:155). The concept of oikumene was later used descriptively, indicating the shared faith experience, [oikos], among different denominations. It also denotes an understanding of the community between believers (Plantinga 1999:3). Therefore, Newbigin (1993:133) postulates that if the church seeks to order its life based solely on its own concerns unilaterally, it deviates from its true nature and identity. Hence, Wainwright (1997:44) aptly underlines that it is impossible to deny the importance of worship and liturgy in debating the matter of ecumenism.

The Confession, endorsed by Reformed faith communities, reflects ecumenism. In mentioning the so-called attributa ecclesiae according to the Nicene Creed, namely the unity, holiness, apostolicity and catholicity, one has to acknowledge that the church is confessionally bounded and simultaneously focused on the world or oikumene (Smit 2006:94). We assume that a demeanour of holding on and concentrating only on the interests of people, a punctilious attitude towards any other viewpoints, and even animosity towards others who do not hold sentiments in conformity to their own could emerge (cf. De Klerk 2013:7). Hervieu-Léger (2000:4) pinpoints the idea that tradition could probably be best described as the official version of a church’s memory (Hervieu-Léger 2000:9). Therefore, Christianity is sometimes described as a memory religion (cf. Vosloo 2017:12).3 The following research question was thus formulated: How can an elucidation of ecumenical liturgy serve as a means to uncover negative attitudes and bad memories while simultaneously providing building blocks for fostering the realisation of the oikumene? This problem is addressed by applying Browning’s (1996:13) research methodology, which envisions the progression of a research activity from description to systemisation (exploring practical wisdom and understanding) and ultimately to strategising (practising strategic, practical theology).

Descriptive-empirical perspectives on an ecumenical outlook on liturgy

This section explores the descriptive-empirical perspectives surrounding an ecumenical outlook on liturgy, which plays a vital role in understanding what is happening in faith communities from a Reformed background in South Africa.4 The 19th and 20th centuries could be best described as the flowering of the movement of ecumenism (Kasamu et al. 2012:47–48). Despite numerous ecumenical conferences being held, the challenge of maintaining the own denomination identity was a challenge.

Descriptive perspectives on memories and the challenging essence of denominational identity and ecumenical engagement

Kasper (2015:152–153) is concerned about what he describes as an ecumenical winter, meaning new causes for division among denominations have recently emerged.5 Rausch (2017:90) observes that the search for denominational identity in a postmodern world has further prevented churches from progressing with ecumenical engagement. Raiser’s (1991:82) intriguing observation of the growing emphasis on collaboration based on shared values rather than visible unity since the 1990s is noteworthy. Leithardt (2016:35), on the other hand, makes a very interesting comment, referring to what he called the collapse of denominationalism and the emergence of Protestant Catholicism in the years to come. It is contradictory that while people mention a collapse of denominationalism, faith communities shy away from discourses on unity. Writing from a Reformed background, the authors of this article are interested in the underlying attitudes undermining the idea of ecumenism.

Similarly, Pont (1968:197) highlights the challenge of discussing visible unity among South African churches. Reflecting on history, he notes that after the Great Trek, three distinct republics and three divergent churches among the Afrikaans-speaking people developed within a decade or two in South Africa. The persistent disunity and schism between Afrikaans-speaking churches continue to pose challenges in ecumenical discourses.6 Müller (2006:605) describes it as an ecumenical tragedy, realising that the ecumenical riches have caused disunity instead of fostering a sense of unity. Hence, the interplay between denominationalism and ecumenism remains challenging in faith communities.7 Although denominations’ leadership attempts to discuss ecumenical relations, it is still a valuable question: if denominations share the same underlying liturgical presuppositions and contexts in South Africa,8 why

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2 Following this idea, Lathrop’s (2013:50) plea for a liturgical rejoinder could only make sense if one deals with the departing point of unity and the interests of the kingdom rather than self-preservation.

3 In addition to this idea, Chauvet (1989:14) describes memory as a hermeneutic re-reading of a faith community’s history where tradition and meaning in the present are coming into play. Therefore, according to Alberini (2010:3), people tend to remember facts that hold significance in their lives and the tasks they frequently engage in.

4 A qualitative systematic review brings together research on a topic, in this instance about people’s memories and attitudes on ecumenism. The authors are interested in gathering information about ecumenism. Therefore, the empirical work will employ a qualitative approach, utilising a Likert scale to collect the data. The latter is used to find meanings, opinions or the underlying reasons from its subjects.

5 Some aspects, among others, are biomedical issues, sexuality and the much-debated matter of the ordination of women.

6 Olivier (2011:78) elucidates that memories of the past have cultivated deep-rooted attitudes regarding ecumenism. Vernacular expressions for the various denominations like Gatjeponder, Dopper and Stoopsitter to distinguish between various denominations were often used with a less favourable meaning to it.

7 Tolmay (2014:2) refers to the struggle of mainstream Afrikaans-speaking churches. He discusses the functioning of the Interdenominational Church Council (ITK) and the Conventus of Reformed Churches, in which ecumenical relations are debated. All expectations are that the three denominations will decrease in size as relevant statistical data show that the three are all losing members.

8 Olivier’s (2011:75) words that history can keep people’s ankles in chains, despite their aspirations to run, comes to mind.
is it less important for many faith communities to pursue the idea of unity in ecumenism?

The authors of this article acknowledge the functioning of memories related to what happened during the unfolding of history. Our memories of South African history deal with the embodiment of various Afrikaans-speaking denominations, not even to mention English-speaking denominations but also with the establishment of ethnic denominations (cf. Theron 2003:692).

**Descriptive perspectives on the starting point for ecumenism, namely enhanced attitudes on friendship and koinonia**

Rausch’s (2013:400) restorative comment serves as a starting point, highlighting that ecumenism should start with a Biblical injunction to unity and the exposure of friendship in altering attitudes. A planned visit of other denominations by faith communities could become vital in enhancing and establishing ecumenical relations. Consequently, friendship deals with faith communities deliberately seeking new avenues to form new friendships, notwithstanding historical reasons for divisions and denominations. The deeper-lying challenge lies in avoiding the attitudinal terminology of us against the other denominations and establishing a friendship based on our shared identity as brothers and sisters in Christ (Rausch 2013:402). O’Callaghan (2002:37) concurs and underlines the importance of the church rediscovering its nature as a relational and hospitable community, acting on behalf of the world.

The remarks of Beardsall, Budde and McDonald (2019:52) hold significant relevance when discussing the narrative and challenges encountered by a faith community and a local congregation. According to these authors, friendship creates a unique space to experience permeability to each other when encounters with one another and a seeking for opportunities to become friends based on sharing their lives and living spaces becomes evident. They further emphasise that the concept of koinonia ultimately denotes the idea of sharing or participating in something of intrinsic value (Beardsall et al. 2019:53; Martin 1995:12).

**Descriptive perspectives on liturgy and ecumenism dealing with an attitude of doxological unity-in-truth**

Van Wyk and De Klerk (2007:3-4) touch on the essential interplay between unity, disunity and faithfulness to calling. This idea necessitates the vital role of discerning in which unity could be found, and disunity could be allowed.

Cognisance of the uniqueness of each local church without ignoring the sharing of the same calling with other churches seems to be challenging in approaching the topic of ecumenism. Müller (2006:601–602) makes a significant contribution by highlighting the transformative power of liturgy in changing attitudes and thus emphasises the importance of acknowledging the reality and harm caused by disunity rather than ignoring it. Wainwright (1997:38) applies the focus on ecumenism in stating that liturgy could enable faith communities to realise the richness of unity in the living God. Still, this unity should always be based on what he called doxological unity-in-truth. Berger (2018:2) supports this idea and asserts that doxology is both the starting point and end goal in pursuing unity. Wainwright (1997:39) continues to underline that mutual confession of faith is needed for the liturgy to be meaningfully conducted in changing one’s attitudes. Sauca (2022:71) is adamant that theology, and liturgy should never be separated, and the interplay between the two aspects is intertwined in the doxology (cf. Wilson 2009:5).

**Empirical perspectives on the influence of attitudes and memories on liturgy’s outlook on ecumenism**

**Rationale for the empirical research**

A literature review on the functioning of a problematic praxeology dealing with liturgy and ecumenism revealed the presence of underlying attitudes rooted in memories. However, the interrelationship between liturgy and a focus on ecumenism raises concerns because memories of the past and the functioning of attitudes, and a praxis without acknowledging respondents’ attitudes should be avoided.

**Method**

A qualitative approach was utilised to explore respondents’ underlying understanding and attitudes. Likert scales are a convenient way to measure unobservable constructs and participants’ attitudes (Baumeister, Vohs & Funder 2007:398; Botma et al. 2016:138). A Likert scale was thus used, where...
respondents had to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement based on the statements provided. The questionnaires were distributed to five local congregations from a Reformed tradition in the Potchefstroom area. These included: one congregation from the Dutch Reformed Church, one from the Nether-Dutch Reformed Church of Africa and three from the Reformed Churches in South Africa, selected by purposive sampling to participate in the study.17

Data capturing according to the responses on the Likert scale

The data interpretation was used to make deductions or conclusions based on the respondents’ responses. Only 60% (three of the five congregations) of the respondents completed the questionnaire.18 The sample, representing three denominations within the Reformed tradition, was regarded as a reliable reflection of participants’ attitudes on liturgy and ecumenism in South African society.19 Of the respondents, 45.8% were females, and 54.2% were males. The age distribution of the respondents ranged from 18 years to 80 years. Among them, 12.8% fell within the age group of 20 years to 23 years, and 8.3% belonged to the age group of 48 years to 50 years. The remaining age groups were evenly distributed, accounting for 4.2% of the responses.

Respondents were requested to provide their responses across four interdependent sections, encompassing the formative essence of liturgy and worship; attitudes on ecumenism; attitudes on the functioning of liturgy in ecumenism and memories of the interplay between liturgy and ecumenism. The results of the data capturing, which the Statistical Services did at the North-West University (NWU),20 are presented below:

• Section 1: The formative essence of liturgy and worship

Responses to Statement 1, which deals with ‘worship as an essential aspect of my spiritual growth’, indicate that 12.5% of the respondents partially agreed, while 87% fully agreed. The respondents agreed that worship is formative and should be regarded as essential. In terms of Statement 2, the majority (83.4%) of the respondents agreed that ‘I need other people to grow in my faith life’, 4.2% fully disagreed and 83.0% opted for the neutral option. The results for Statement 3, ‘others are vital

17 When employing Likert-type scales, it is essential for researchers to calculate and report the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient for assessing internal consistency reliability (Croasmun & Ostrom 2011:22). This reliability measurement is crucial in determining the extent to which the statements in the Likert scale are internally consistent. The Cronbach’s alpha coefficient for this study is 0.176, indicating a relatively satisfactory level of response alignment with the questions posed.

18 It is interesting that respondents between 48–80 years agree about the importance of liturgy and worship’s formative functioning. The stronger respondents’ attitudes are on liturgy’s role in ecumenism, the stronger are their attitudes that liturgical elements should cultivate an ecumenical outlook. Furthermore, the data capturing indicates that the more respondents feel that liturgical differences are problematic in engaging with ecumenism, the stronger they feel that they need further motivation. Moreover, it is interesting that the stronger respondents’ attitudes are on the problematic essence of liturgical differences, the less they agree that worship and liturgy enable them to remember about concrete efforts being made by their local congregations to promote ecumenism.

19 Furthermore, 12.5% of the respondents identified themselves as Afrikanders, 20.8% described themselves as South Africans, 4.0% described themselves as Christians and 54.0% described themselves as white Afrikans. It seems that an attitude dimension in terms of ethnicity could be identified.

20 Ethics clearance was obtained after providing the minimal Sacrosanctum Concilium SC [Constitution on the sacred liturgy] risk level, informed consent letters, permission letters of Church Councils and the Likert scale.
The following deductions are now offered:

- **Deductions from the data capturing**

  The following deductions are now offered:

  - **Worship and liturgy offer a powerful opportunity to engage in formative activities regarding ecumenism, and respondents agree with this view.**
  
  - **Most respondents acknowledge that they need koinonia and other people for spiritual growth. However, respondents seem reluctant to reach out to others because of different liturgical practices.**
  
  - **Only 37.5% of the respondents fully agreed that they have positive memories of other denominations, while 33.3% indicated a mixed attitude on this matter and only 25% underlined the neutral option. Hence, 12.5% underlined the neutral option.**
  
  - **Furthermore, 45% of the respondents either partially agree or did not remember any substantial efforts being made by their local congregations to promote ecumenism.**
  
  - **If only 50% of respondents feel that liturgical elements should enhance the realisation of ecumenism, one cannot deny that the essence of liturgical enactment should be revisited. It is also evident that 71% of the respondents do not need further motivation to promote ecumenism, and only 21% agreed that people need encouragement to become involved in this endeavour.**

### Systemising perspectives on liturgy’s outlook that exposes attitudes and memories

In this section, the authors expound on three important aspects:

- Delve into the interplay between liturgy and theology, focusing on the notion of life.
- Provide interdisciplinary perspectives from the viewpoint of social psychology, exploring the rectangular interplay between liturgy, ecumenism and the functioning of attitudes and memory.
- Present normative perspectives from 1 Corinthians 14.

#### Systemising perspectives from an ecclesiastical viewpoint on lex orandi, lex credendi, lex vivendi and lex convivendi

Kater (2020:117) stresses an even more nuanced way to interpret the Latin words in the above heading, emphasising that theology and liturgy function in a dialectical interplay or a two-way relationship (cf. Wainwright 1982:94–108). He further makes an interesting comment regarding the interplay between lex orandi, lex credendi, lex vivendi and lex convivendi, (how we pray remains intrinsically connected to how we confess and live, as well as a community). The author’s argument, as mentioned above, accentuates the intimate interplay between dogma, doxa, theology and liturgy. Hence, both theology and liturgy are mutually formative. The [lex orandi] prayer enables participants in the liturgy to understand their beliefs. Prayer and liturgy will always blossom in knowledge about God, therefore the dialogical character of liturgy offers wonderful opportunities to engage in this dynamic. Cilliers (2009:513) not only interprets Wainwright’s words but also expands upon this notion by suggesting that theology without worship is akin to scaffolding surrounding nothing, and worship without theology is like a building without a foundation. The authors mentioned above are concerned that theology and liturgy could become alienated. If this alienation is allowed, even creeds could become hardened and lifeless (De Waal 1982:121). The previous section discussed the interconnectivity between faith communities’ rich theological traditions [lex credendi] and liturgy. Therefore, Stott (2007:53) argues the importance of churches in understanding their theology. If churches fail, they could fall into the trap of not grasping their identity or calling. When participants in the liturgy come together in worship to remember poignant aspects, they confess their faith by employing a creed, prayer, hymns or prayers.  

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21. One could also say that the above-mentioned interplay concerns the interdependence between theologia and theolatreia (cf. Müller 2006:601).

22. Foucault (1990:11), reflecting on the significance of this acknowledgement, feels obliged to make an interesting comment in describing humans as confessional animals.
Hence, confession of faith within the liturgy is closely connected to the idea of a corporate act of praise given to God based on what the faith community has learned from the gospel (Fennel 1999:25). This opportunity to confess provides a space in which the faith community could say back to God and participants in the liturgy what they have learned from the gospel and especially about their memories of God Himself. The element of the confession of faith based on the Creed offers a poignant opportunity for praise and renewal of humble commitment to the cognisance of who God is, what He does and what He calls forth in people’s lives to be realised. It furthermore provides the opportunity of fostering the vivid remembrance of the unity and ecumenicity of the church (Fennel 1999:26). Liturgical enactment in worship is a prominent mode of transition of the uniqueness of the faith tradition to daily life. If the embodiment of the tradition and the voice of confessions stand central, surely the epitome of ecumenism should also emerge (Daiber 1992:17–19). It means that the presence of ecumenism should become a living reality because this is part and parcel of what a faith community is confessing. If the previous arguments are true, discernment about the communal liturgical heritage, the Catholica, should also be ideal to pursue (Moltmann 1977:342; Wolterstorff 1992:277).

Systemising perspectives from the viewpoint of social psychology on liturgy, ecumenism, the functioning of attitudes and memory

The previous section highlighted the potential danger of people being divided by theological differences or the pitfall of prioritising individual interests. Metz (2007:90) has warned against a dangerous memory of the salvific event in Christ. This deals with the reality described by Denis (2015:7) that when people remember, they select, omit and sometimes invent aspects of past experiences according to what they need and believe in the present moment. When people remember, that is always shaped by what they have heard, seen and read (Todorov 2001:13). Denis (2015:7–9) makes a valuable remark in warning against two dangers that could emerge when it comes to memory. The first aspect deals with the desire to take control of the past and erase all of it. The second, more subtle danger, occurs when people sacralise the events of the past that align with their search for identity while disregarding or suppressing the memories that do not correspond with their view of history.

Thus far, the rectangular functioning of liturgy, ecumenism, attitudes and memory have emerged during this research. Noble (2010:11) embroiders on the complexity of the interplay between liturgy, culture (tradition), attitudes and memories. We should start and acknowledge the complexity of the functioning of attitudes and define them as structures stored in people’s memories (Fiske 2004:216). It becomes even more complex to realise that the cognitive component or beliefs could differ, leading to variable responses from people. Prejudices or biases are harmful because people have negative feelings towards people of other denominations. We cannot ignore that prejudices are sometimes deeply embedded in people’s memories (Berg & Theron 2006:174; Böhnner 2001:22; Chryssochoou 2004:32; Schneider 2004:40).

As a starting point, it could be stated that although memory cannot be separated from an attitude culture, memories are simultaneously not fully within the culture (Crano & Prislin 2006:350). One could say that memory is established in the proximity of a culture and related attitudes and that it is also passed on through generations within a culture (Noble 2010:12). This is exactly why Crano and Prislin (2006:352) underline that people are more certain of attitudes that they have repeatedly expressed in their conversations, as the repeated expression makes it easier to recall these attitudes from memory. The danger of what is called attitude certainty, in which people believe their attitude is correct, is indeed harmful. The more intense the attitude of certainty becomes, the more resistant they will become when persuasive messages about ecumenical relations are communicated (Petrocelli, Tormala & Rucker 2007:42).

Morrill (2020:47) and Atkins (2004:13) enable us to understand the importance of remembering and draw a more concrete picture of remembrance as a purposeful event of editing memories. They are adamant that remembrance is how people remember, put things back in their original place or create a living reality based on memories. Hervieu-Léger (2000:4) underlines the importance of (ecumenical) religion, suggesting that it should be seen as a chain of memory or, put differently, as a collective memory. Within this framework, the continuity between past and present emerges.

To remember, you need other people. In ecumenical relations, this aspect should not be neglected. No one’s memory of the past provides the most accurate version of what happened. Therefore, Ricoeur’s (2004:131) observation is valuable in denoting that collective memory shared between denominations becomes dynamic when close relations between people matter and are cultivated. Ricoeur (2004:131) continues by saying that close relationships within ecumenical ties operate with a deeper-lying attitude of regarding other denominations as privileged others. In intimate relations, people tend to approve

24.To make it concrete, if the emotional dimension of an attitude’s functioning is considered, the danger of the manifestation of prejudices could emerge in which a group or denomination is disadvantaged without tangible support for the feeling being experienced (Fiske 2004:399). It could also be motivated by referring to memories of the past.

25.Therefore, Prislin and Crano (2008:44) assert that if an attitude deals with an evaluative belief, it has to be the result of previous thoughts and feelings people have about this matter.

26.The tradition of a faith community provides continuity between the past and present (Hervieu-Léger 2000:87). Bergh and Theron (2006:128) take the argument even further and point out that people organise their memories into schemes that provide a coherent image of interaction with people (cf. Eysenck & Keane 2010:401).

27.Pakphan (2012:16) establishes a connection between recollections, memory and the functioning of attitudes, emphasising the crucial element of acknowledging that for Christianity to remain a vibrant and living reality, it is imperative to recognise that Christians are deeply united not by mere concepts, but by the event and living memory of the Christ event, which revolves around a Person.
of what one affirms. Even when they disapprove of one’s actions, they never disapprove of one’s existence (cf. Tracy 1981:234).

Systemising perspectives on 1 Corinthians 14:20–25

Background and misunderstanding of pneumatology in Corinth

Paul learns through a report and letter that divisions among Corinthian members are evident over the self-identified allegiances with certain leaders (Oropeza 2017:9). The church has fallen into arguing, forming cliques within the functioning of the larger congregation, over a combination of issues that even included the varied social status of its members.28 Certain gifts were championed over others, and certain persons displaying those gifts were preferred over others (Garland 2003:13). In the congregation of Corinth, negative attitudes and memories of the past played an important role. How the Apostle Paul addressed those concerns was the desire of certain Corinthian members to build a harmonious community, enhancing the excitement and self-gratification of speaking mysteries in public worship without interpretation.29

Paul faced a complex and deeply troubled congregation that has disrupted the behaviour of nearly unimaginable proportions manifesting within it. Apparently, at the root of all these concerns was the desire of certain Corinthian Christians to establish their spiritual position. Attitudes and memories played an important role. According to Oropeza (2017:176), Paul elaborated on spiritual gifts, highlighting their importance for the solidarity of members (1 Cor 12) and emphasising their inherent worthlessness without love (1 Cor 13). Now, he proceeds to address their ability to build up members when they assemble.

The carnal Corinthians were more interested in the mysterious than the edifying, and their concern was for the excitement and self-gratification of speaking mysteries in the spirit. Garland (2003:13) underlines that the prominence of the references to the Spirit in this letter suggests that the Corinthians misinterpreted their experience of the Spirit in some way; ‘They have understood the Spirit to be the inrush of heavenly power into their lives that granted them a new status.’ Garland (2003:14) further accentuates the concern that they became puffed up and arrogant and fancied themselves as spiritual, mature and wise – attitudes that played a negative role. Garland (2003:14) continues that Paul seeks to thwart personal rivalries and squash elitist splinter groups to build a harmonious community, enhancing the realisation of the oikumene.29

Paul and the problem-laden praxis of the congregation of the Corinthians

Paul presented the rationale for their desire for prophecy over tongue-speaking (1 Cor 14). Now, he proceeds to address their ability to build up members when they assemble.

28 The desire of certain Christians to establish their spiritual status was seemingly the underlying concern (Soards 1999:6). The prominence of claims to the work of the Spirit suggests that the Corinthians have misinterpreted their experience of the Spirit.

29 According to Soards (1999:285), Paul redirects the energies of the Corinthians. He calls for them to excel in edification – gifts that build up the church – as the genuine manifestation of the Spirit alive and at work among them.

FIGURE 1: Parallelism.

Speaking in the gathering of the congregation

According to Oropeza (2017:181), verses 20–25 represent Paul’s conclusive argument to persuade the Corinthians to emphasise prophecy instead of tongues in public worship. He asserts that Paul presented the rationale for their desire for prophecy over tongues, bolstering it with Scripture and two scenarios related to assembling. One scenario portrays a hypothetical situation in which uninterpreted tongues are disadvantageous, while the other illustrates an ideal situation in which prophecy is advantageous. In Paul’s argument, love plays an important role. De Klerk (1987:69) shows that love is the vantage point through which the participant in the congregation’s gathering will always ask: how may my contribution affect the other congregants? Lanier (1991:265) stresses that no gifts, abilities or talents individuals may possess are valuable unless driven by the spirit of unconditional love. Paul calls the Corinthians away from childishness – perhaps a fascination with things that dazzle – to maturity (Soards 1999:292). He asserts that failure to recognise that speaking in tongues in public worship without interpretation does not benefit the congregation is a sign of immature thinking.

In a beautiful parallelism, Paul describes the outcome of speaking in tongues and of prophesying in the gathering of the congregation (Figure 1).

We agree with Garland (2003:645) that the implication is that the Corinthians’ preference for tongues, at the expense of other gifts that use the mind, will result in their church degenerating into an unthinking, incoherent cult that is more interested in entertainment than education. MacArthur (1983:384) aptly argued that an unbeliever who observes such a service thinking that speaking in tongues is the sign for believers, a supreme gift around which to rally the true church would likely perceive it as just another wild and meaningless ritual, resembling those practised in pagan contexts. Outsiders will not be impressed by this spiritual outburst but will conclude that these Christians are starkly mad. Garland (2003:652) denotes that ‘mad’ frequently combines insanity or the mind with raving or wild speech. Uncontrolled ranting was part of some mystery rites. Oropeza (2017:183) suggests that upon hearing the cacophony, unbelievers would remain in their unbelief. They would perceive this as just another pagan cult meeting where everyone is overwhelmed by ecstatic and frenzied experiences, appearing out of their mind.30

30 Johnson (2004:263) astutely highlights the significance by saying that the child image in 14:20 evokes the natural tendency of children to be self-centred, vain and attention seeking, as well as captivated by outward displays of grandeur.

31 Lanier (1991:265) believes that the Corinthians seem to have been exalting tongues as the sign for believers, a supreme gift of the true body of Christ.

32 According to Billings (2016:285), the possibility that those present come to a saving faith in and through the church’s liturgy is greatly diminished if the same persons are disempowered. It is enfranchised by an inability to understand and, so, to participate meaningfully in what is taking place, and all but non-existent if the service is conducted unintelligibly. They will leave without hearing the message of God’s redemptive love in Christ (cf. Johnson 2004:263).
De Klerk (1987:73) underlines that, in contrast to the reaction of an outsider hearing strange languages in the gathering of the congregation, Paul shows in an increasing line the elaboration of the prophetic speech of the congregation on the outsider: ‘he will be convinced that he is a sinner, the secrets of his heart will be laid bare, he will fall down and worship: “God is really among you!”’ In that way, the Spirit uses believers in the gathering as instruments to create new life in lifeless hearts. In 1 Corinthians 14:23–25, according to Nagel (2013:46), Paul explains the impact of prophecy, understood as linguistic sound, well-structured and familiar to both believer and unbeliever. Prophecy delivers the greatest good for unbelievers and Christians as it communicates, enlightens and convicts. Taylor (2014:336) adds that the presence of unbelievers in the gathered assembly of believers provides one more reason why prophecy is preferable to uninterpreted tongues. Only prophecy can bring about conviction and conversion, resulting in worshipping the one true God.

Prophecy has the potential to penetrate the innermost sanctum of an unbeliever’s soul with the laser of divine judgement, according to Garland (2003:653). He continues that it presents evidence that causes the individual to be scrutinised, exposed and convicted of sin or the truth. It calls the individual to account. In this case, prophecy must be gospel proclamation. MacArthur (1983:384) states that the convicted person comes to see themselves as they are because the secrets of their heart are disclosed. Their sinful intentions and acts are revealed to them.31 What is exposed are the secrets buried in the hidden recesses of the heart that one hopes no one else will discover. Garland (2003:653) convincingly indicates that prophecy opens and heals these secrets, though it might be painful. It unmasks secrets and reveals the one who loves and accepts them even when fully exposed. They will fall down on their faces as an attitude of worship (Gn 17:3; Rv 7:11) and as an acknowledgement of unworthiness. Garland (2003:651) further maintains that for Christians, converting unbelievers through their prophecy is another sign of God’s presence among them. Prophecy thereby becomes a means of grace. Taylor (2014:246) emphasises that Paul is not saying that the one prophesying knows the secrets of the unbeliever but rather that the unbeliever becomes keenly aware of his alienation from God. Taylor continues that prophecy not only leads to conviction and discernment of matters concerning the heart but also has the potential to transform one’s perspective completely. Instead of proclaiming, ‘You are out of your mind!’ the visitor declares, ‘God is among you!’ – an echo of Isaiah 45.34

According to Taylor (2014:242), prophetic speech characterises the believing church at worship; uninterpreted tongues constitute negative signs generating inappropriate alienation for believers. Garland (2003:654) concludes that prophecy is superior to tongues because it bears fruit in producing illumination, conviction, confession and worship.35 Prophecy as persuasive communication could be seen as an effective way of changing one’s attitudes, inevitably leading to someone falling down in worship. The Corinthians are reminded that everything they do in liturgical enactment should be functional to a deeper-lying attitude of πιστευομεν [upbuilding]. The attitude of realising the importance of oikos and upbuilding through the liturgy is decisive when it comes to ecumenism.36

Strategising perspectives on liturgy’s outlook on the oikumene that exposes attitudes and memories

In this section, the authors intend to provide perspectives emanating from a hermeneutical interaction between sections 2 and 3:

- Section 2.1 (pp. 7–9) mentioned the interplay between denominationalism and ecumenism. In section 2.4, which dealt with empirical perspectives, the respondents indicated that they need koinonia and other people for spiritual growth. However, the respondents seem reluctant to reach out to others because of different liturgical practices. In section 3.3 (pp. 18–21), which dealt with perspectives from 1 Corinthians 14, it became abundantly clear that people’s attitudes in liturgical enactment matter and participation in the liturgy should have an outlook on ecumenism. The participants’ attitude in the liturgy should be one of upbuilding within the oikos. No faith community should be different from what they do in their liturgy. The various dynamic movements in liturgical elements like confessing, singing and receiving God’s blessing should point towards ecumenical engagement.

- The idea of painful memories was mentioned. In section 2.4 (pp. 21–23), it became apparent that the responses provided a testament to the fact that people’s memories of their relationships with other denominations highlight the necessity for a transformative and constructive approach to shift people’s attitudes towards ecumenism. Only 45% of the respondents could recall any significant attempts – either partially or not– made by their local congregations to promote ecumenism. Section 3, which focused on the systemising perspective, emphasised that faith communities are involved in a long tradition of religious memory. The functioning of one’s attitudes cannot be separated from their memory. Within a South African society and based on empirical work, a liturgical praxeology could contribute significantly towards a bigger awareness of attitudes that should change to

31.Louw and Nida (1993:289–292) denote that the word (παρακαλεων) and comfort (παραμυθ) could be placed underneath the subdomain of attitudes. This concept is utilised to describe one’s attitude when it comes to prophecy: strengthening (πυστευομεν), encouragement (παρακαλεον) and comfort (παραμυθ).}

36. The Holy Spirit uses the prophetic testimony of believers to create a new life in dead hearts (De Klerk 1987:73). In elucidating prophecy as one of the most important aspects of ecumenical liturgy, Paul exposed the bad memories of the Corinthians from their pagan background. He showed them their negative attitudes of becoming puffed up and arrogant.

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embrace ecumenism. Participation in all elements of the liturgy should enable the listeners to understand their reasonability to revisit their memories and, based on the remembrance of God’s involvement in their lives, edit their memories, but this time, with the liturgy’s poignant message.

- In section 2.3 (p. 9), the notion of unity in truth was denoted. The feedback from the respondents underlined that differences in liturgical practices should be carefully addressed in an ecumenical outlook, and exposure to other practices could be seen as a unique starting point. The idea of unity in truth and greater exposure to other practices seems vital to promote ecumenism. Section 3.2 (p. 16) revealed that within intimate relations, individuals tend to approve of what one affirms, and even when they disapprove of one’s actions, they never dislike one’s existence. Local congregations must actively seek opportunities to embrace friendships with other denominations and visit them without ignoring what is important to them.

Conclusion
At the beginning of this article, the authors raised the question: How can an elucidation of ecumenical liturgy serve as a means to uncover negative attitudes and bad memories while simultaneously providing building blocks for fostering the realisation of the oikumene? According to descriptive, empirical and systemising perspectives, we have ascertained that negative attitudes and bad memories are not conducive to an ecumenical outlook. The empirical section of this article emphasised the need for motivation for an ecumenical outlook via liturgical enactment. Within a liturgical praxeology dealing with remembrances of the salvific event, participants in the liturgy should be enabled to change their attitudes regarding ecumenicity. Elements in the liturgy, like singing, confessing and receiving God’s blessing, should highlight the importance of liturgy, which should be concretised in everyday life. It plays a significant role in fostering friendships and exposing one to other practices while retaining the value of one’s own interests.

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Authors’ contributions
The authors, F.P.K. and B.J.D.-K., contributed equally to this work.

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