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Missiology Through a Two-Eyed Lens: Epistemological and Practical Insights

Renee Rheinbolt-Uribe and Fazel Ebrihiam Freeks[1]

Abstract: Employing a "two-eye" approach that integrates Indigenous and Western epistemologies, the study analyses two Global South-focused doctoral works. Rheinbolt-Uribe's Chapter 4 uses mixed methods and sentipensante logic to evaluate a Colombian congregation's resilience after an institutional crisis. Fazel's Chapter 5 examines a South African youth programme, advocating holistic mission that merges spiritual formation with social action. The studies, one explicit and one implicit, showcase the two-eye approach's versatility in bridging epistemological and geographical divides. By promoting cultural negotiation and ethical relationality, this cross-continental dialogue contributes to Indigenous, decolonial, and tribal theologies within South-South contexts, ensuring both methodological rigour and spiritually resonant outcomes.

Keywords: two-eye seeing, missiological empirical research, LIFEPLAN®, critical realism, missio Dei

1. Introduction

This paper argues for the two-eye approach as a vital methodological framework for contemporary missiology. As the epicentre of global Christianity shifts overwhelmingly to the Global South, and with the recognition that "The Bible is not a Western book" (Rohrbaugh 2007: ix), there is a pressing need for research methods that move beyond

[1] Dr. Renee Rheinbolt-Uribe, mother of three, is an independent researcher and Research Fellow at Stellenbosch University. She completed her Ph.D. through the OCRPL partnership with Stellenbosch University. An ordained minister based in Bogotá, Colombia, she and her husband engage in mission work across North and South America.
Prof. Fazel Ebrihiam Freeks, Ph.D., father of three, is an associate professor at North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus, South Africa, in the Faculty of Theology and the Unit for Reformed Theology & Development of the South African Society. He serves as the Coordinator for Community Engagement and is a member of the editorial teams for the international *Pharos Journal of Theology* and the national *Journal for Christian Scholarship*. He also occasionally preaches at his home congregation.

Eurocentric paradigms.[2] The main research question addressed in the following paper is the following:

> *How does the two-eyed approach that integrates Indigenous and Western epistemologies enhance missiological research and practice in Global South contexts?*

The two-eye approach, inspired by Chilisa (2020), offers such a model by integrating one eye grounded in Indigenous knowledge systems and the other in Western critical realism. This epistemological stance aligns with Kritzinger's (2013) seven-point praxis matrix for "missiological evaluation", which centres the spiritual dimension of research. It also resonates with Nel's (2019) vision of scholarship shaped by "an atmosphere of celebration and an ethos of prayer". Within this framework, knowledge is not merely produced but discerned—through listening, participation, and a theological commitment to justice within the unseen dimensions of the *missio Dei*.

At its core, this approach champions ***sentipensante logic:*** a way of knowing that integrates thinking and feeling, formal knowledge, orality, and lived wisdom.[3] The two doctoral chapters under examination embody this dynamic. One, a missiological evaluation from a Stellenbosch University dissertation, traces the ripple effects of internal fractures within a North American mission agency on its Latin American congregation (ICI-Colombia). The other, from a North-West University dissertation, confronts systemic challenges facing youth in Christiana, South Africa, through a biblical-theological evaluation of the LIFEPLAN® programme, while drawing inspiration from Global South stories of hope. As Priest (2012: n.p.) reminds us, missiology is not an "armchair activity" but an embodied engagement with God's redemptive work. By bringing these South African-based studies of Latin American and African contexts into a cross-continental dialogue, this paper explores how the two-eye approach can bridge not only epistemological divides but also geographic and cultural distances—linking Indigenous methodologies like ethnopoetics and duoethnography with critical theological reflection and connecting South-South mission praxis with a global theological imagination.

To give readers a clear point of entry, Table 1 below summarises the core details of each dissertation chapter:[4]

[2] Although "Eurocentric" and "Western" also include a United States-centric perspective, we will primarily use the term "Eurocentric" to convey this concept.

[3] The concept of '*sentipensante*' is drawn from the work of Colombian sociologist and liberation theologian Fals-Borda, a key figure in the development of Participatory Action Research (PAR). As Robles Lomeli and Rappaport (2022:608) explain, Fals-Borda's notion of the *sentipensante* refers to the 'thinking-feeling' actor, whose sentiment is integral to political engagement and historical agency.

[4] Table provided by TextCortext, May 21, 2025.

Table 1: Summary of Key Details of Each Dissertation Chapter

Information	Chapter 4: Renee Rheinbolt-Uribe	Chapter 5: Fazel Ebrihiam Freeks
1. Author	Renee Rheinbolt-Uribe	Fazel Ebrihiam Freeks
2. Title of Dissertation	*Transforming Mutuality in a Theology of Mission: A Missiological Evaluation of a Colombian Congregation Case Study*	*A Missional evaluation of the LIFEPLAN Training and Equipping Programme for youth in rural areas: A case study of its impact in the Christiana district of South Africa*
3. Main Research Question	In view of the collapse of an international USA-based RBO, how have shifts in self-understandings and practices of mutuality shaped the ministry and mission of the Colombian congregation?	To what extent does the LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping programme for young people in the Christiana District of South Africa provide a tool for effective Christian missional outreach to the youth in disadvantaged communities?
4. Date of Graduation	December 2023	June 2018
5. University	Stellenbosch University, South Africa	North-West University, South Africa
6. Supervisor(s)	D. Xolile Simon, J. Andrew Kirk	Flip J. Buys
7. Chapter Title	"METHODOLOGY" (Chapter 4) pp. 99–129	"HOLISTIC MISSIONAL OUTREACH TO THE CONTEMPORARY YOUTH OF SOUTH AFRICA" (Chapter 5) pp. 102–159.
8. Research Population	ICI-Colombia congregation members (n = 12; 8 males, 4 females), all of whom were married and represented diverse socioeconomic backgrounds.	Youth in Christiana community, South Africa, who participated in LIFEPLAN® (n = 151; 87 males, 64 females), ranged in age from 21 to 62 years, with an average age of 35.8 years.
9. Two Main Authors Cited[5]	A Motswana from Botswana Bagele Chilisa	South African Fazel E. Freeks (2004, 2007, 2008, 2011,

[5] Speakai's response to the question: "Which author is cited the most?" (May 21, 2025).

	(2020) is cited 15 times, and South African David Bosch (1991) appears 8 times.	2013, 2015, 2016), including collaborations with co-authors such as South African George A. Lotter (2009, 2014, 2015), is cited 30 times; South African J.A. Van Rooy (1994) is cited 6 times.

1.1 Duoethnographic Framing

While this article is structured around a thematic comparative analysis, it also draws on principles of duoethnography (Sawyer & Norris 2012).[6] As co-authors reflecting on our own doctoral research, we engage in a dialogical, reflexive process—allowing our respective chapters to "speak to each other" across diverse cultural and theological contexts. This intersubjective engagement not only aligns with the two-eye approach but also deepens it by bringing relational accountability, mutual vulnerability, and co-constructed meaning to the fore. In doing so, we acknowledge our positionality not merely as Global South academics, but also as mission practitioners and parents—inviting readers into a shared space of critical reflection and contextual insight.

2. Explanation of the Two-Eye Approach

The assertion that the biblical text is not set in the Western context serves as a critical starting point for decolonising theology, equally decolonizing missiology. While often interpreted through modern Western lenses of individualism and abstract rationalism, the biblical texts originated in a Middle Eastern, communal, and relational world. Scholars suggest that many Indigenous worldviews are, in fact, epistemologically closer to the ancient cultures that produced the Scriptures. Woodley (2012), a Keetoowah Cherokee theologian, argues that both Indigenous North American and ancient Hebrew thought share a relational, place-based cosmology, where the concept of *shalom* resonates deeply with Indigenous notions of harmony. Similarly, Goldingay (2016) notes that ancient Israelite epistemology was storied, performative, and communal; characteristics that align more with Indigenous oral traditions than with systematic Western theology. This cultural proximity is equally vital for understanding the New Testament. Bailey (2008) and a myriad of other scholars situate Jesus firmly within his first-century Jewish context, where teachings were shaped by honor-shame dynamics, covenantal narratives, and communal identity which are frameworks often muted in Western interpretations. Therefore, employing

[6] **Duoethnography**, as developed by Sawyer and Norris (2012), is a qualitative research methodology in which two or more researchers place their personal narratives in dialogue to explore a shared topic. Unlike traditional comparative studies, duoethnography is reflexive and co-constructive focusing on how differences in researchers' identities, experiences, and perspectives can generate new insights. It challenges the notion of a single, fixed truth, instead emphasising dialogic inquiry and relational knowing. The goal is not consensus, but transformation—both personal and epistemological—through the act of "becoming together in conversation."

a two-eyed approach that values an "Indigenous eye" is not merely an act of postcolonial inclusion, but an essential part of the wider project of decolonising theology (Ragui 2024), itself offering a path towards a more contextually authentic and relationally whole understanding of the biblical witness.

The work of Shoki Coe and the World Council of Churches (WCC) Theological Education Fund (TEF) significantly influenced the shift toward contextual theology by affirming self-theologising as central by the 1970s and 1980s (American Society of Missiology 2014). Building on this, Bosch (1991:451-52) further recognised the need to move beyond Eurocentric models. He proposed adding a 'fourth self' – self-theologising – to the classic missiological formula of the 'three-selves' (self-government, self-support, and self-propagation), acknowledging the shift away from Eurocentric approaches within Global South churches. This concept is further explored in a contemporary context by Trull (2013) Cathcart and Nichols (2009). Bosch's student, Kritzinger (2013), developed a 7-point praxis matrix (see Figure 5) as one method to approach 'self-theologising', but we propose that the two-eye approach builds on this trajectory.

This approach resonates with Samuel's South Asian viewpoint, as elaborated by Sugden (2011) in *Seeking the Asian Face of Jesus (Sugden,1997).* Samuel fundamentally challenges Eurocentric theological frameworks by advocating for contextual, culturally grounded interpretations of Christ and the Gospel. This work exemplifies the spirit of epistemological integration advanced by the two-eye approach, contributing to the broader project of decolonising theology by moving beyond Eurocentric paradigms. The following figure (Figure 1) illustrates the two-eye approach as a collaborative framework that centres Indigenous knowledge systems as essential partners in theological reflection and missional practice.

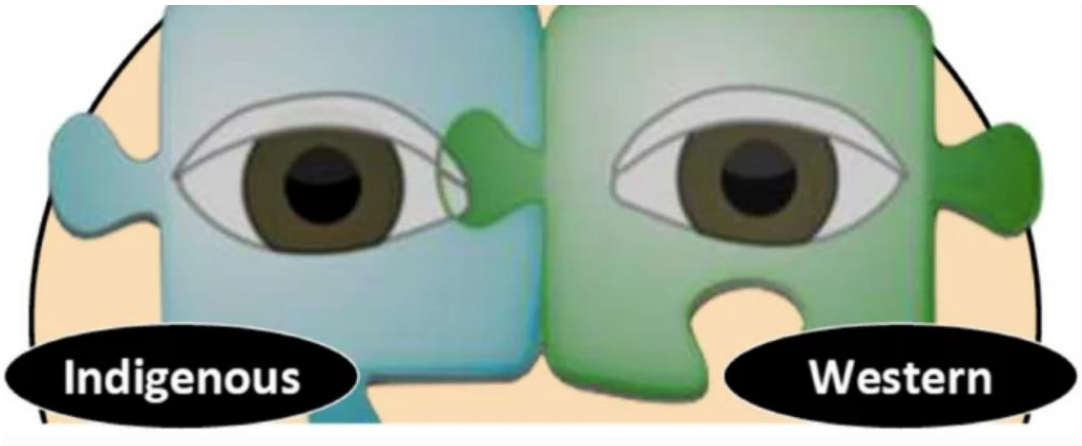

Figure 1: Two-Eyed Seeing (TES)[7]
(Source: Bartlett, Marshall & Marshall 2012)

[7] The connection represents an informed vision using both eyes.

Chilisa's (2020) two-eye approach promotes a decolonial epistemology that values multiple knowledge systems—particularly Indigenous and Western paradigms—as complementary rather than conflicting. While Chilisa does not explicitly reference the Mi'kmaq Elders' concept of Etuaptmumk, or "Two-Eyed Seeing" (TES), in her major works, scholars—especially in the fields of education and participatory research—have drawn methodological and epistemological parallels (Kovach 2021). Both the two-eye approach and Two-Eyed Seeing advocate recognising the strengths of diverse ways of knowing, challenging mono-epistemic worldviews. As Bartlett et al. (2012:335) describe, "…learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing, and from the other eye with the strengths of Western knowledges and ways of knowing, and to using both these eyes together, for the benefit of all."

The two-eye approach described in Rheinbolt-Uribe's Chapter 4 refers to a research methodology that integrates both transformative postcolonial Indigenous research paradigms (Chilisa 2020) and Western critical realism (sub-section 4.1.2.8).[8] This approach uses one "eye" to view the research through the lens of Indigenous methodologies—foregrounding relational accountability, spirituality, and communal understanding—and the other "eye" through Western critical realism, which understands reality as composed of both visible and invisible elements. The tree metaphor presented in Chapter 4 of the thesis illustrates this integration: the branches and trunk represent the empirical, the soil symbolises the actual, and the roots signify unseen realities. Together, this methodology bridges the visible and invisible dimensions of reality, offering a rigorous and spiritually attuned framework for research into themes of spirituality (section 4.1). Figure 2 below illustrates critical realism.

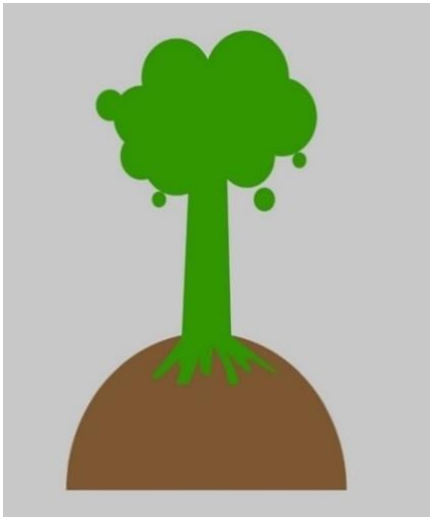

Figure 2: Illustration of critical realism (Source: Rheinbolt-Uribe 2023:370)

[8] The section references are to both these chapters.

Taylor (2020) applies critical realism to explore the unseen dimensions of the *missio Dei*, drawing connections between Indigenous knowledge systems and the mission of God. She cites a Uniting Church in Australia (UCA) document that affirms, "God has been at work in nurturing and sustaining the First Peoples, people who had already encountered the Creator God before the arrival of the colonizers" (Taylor 2020:54). In unison, Bosch (1991:355) advocates for a holistic and interconnected worldview: "A basic reorientation is thus called for. One should, again, see oneself as a child of Mother Earth and as sister and brother to other human beings. One should think holistically, rather than analytically, emphasize togetherness rather than distance, break through the dualism of mind and body, subject and object, and emphasize 'symbiosis'" (sub-section 4.1.2.5).

Although Freeks' Chapter 5 does not explicitly reference Indigenous methods such as talking circles or orality, nor Western approaches like critical realism or thematic analysis, its focus and context suggest a blended methodology consistent with the two-eye approach. The chapter's focus on giving young people a voice and listening to their hopes and dreams reflects the spirit of Indigenous oral traditions (sub-section 5.9.4). While talking circles are not named, the participatory and communal ethos points to similar values. On the Western side, the interpretation of spiritual and social issues—such as ancestral beliefs, crime, violence, and fatherlessness—indicates a critical hermeneutical engagement with context (section 5.5). Additionally, themes like youth empowerment and church involvement imply the use of thematic analysis (section 5.3). Although these methods are not formally cited by the author, our interpretive reading of the chapter's structure and narrative focus suggests a practical application of the two-eye approach.

3. Overview of Both Chapters

3.1 Chapter 4: Methodology

Rheinbolt-Uribe's chapter explores methodological hybridity through what Chilisa (2020) describes as the "paradigm dance floor" (section 4.1) in a case study of a Colombian congregation during the aftermath of an international institutional collapse (2004–2021). The study centres on grassroots voices, primarily collected through virtual interviews (section 4.7) conducted between January 17 and May 26, 2021 (section 4.6). Its epistemological foundation is relational accountability (Wilson 2008; Chilisa 2020), interpreted through a *sentipensante* logic (section 4.2), and integrates critical realism with Indigenous research methodologies such as talking circles and orality (section 4.1).

The research employs a mixed-methods design, combining content analysis (Neuendorf 2019; Humble & Mozelius 2022) with reflective thematic analysis (Clarke & Braun 2014), resulting in a hybrid reflective thematic content analysis. Qualitative interview data are further enriched through quantitative keyword sentiment analysis using the Speakai.co platform (sections 4.2 and 4.8). The methodological framework

is also deepened by poetic inquiry (Faulkner 2019; sections 4.1, 4.8, and 4.11) and ethnographic techniques, including duoethnography (sections 4.8 and 4.11).

Ethical integrity is maintained using participant pseudonyms, member checking, and formal approval from the university's ethics committee (sections 4.3, 4.5, 4.6, 4.9, and 4.10). The study is further shaped by a maternal-thinking logic (section 4.4) and informed by an ethics of care perspective, particularly evident in the bilingual negotiation of language and the emotional labour embedded throughout the research process (section 4.12).

3.2 Chapter 5: Holistic Missional Outreach to the Contemporary Youth of South Africa

Freeks' chapter presents a practical theology of holistic mission for South African youth, rooted in biblical and theological integration (sections 5.1 and 5.3). It challenges the common division between the redemptive and cultural mandates by proposing an interconnected, incarnational model (section 5.2). The chapter outlines the profound socio-economic, moral, and spiritual challenges confronting youth—including issues such as gangsterism and ancestral syncretism (sections 5.4 and 5.6). LIFEPLAN® is introduced as a biblically grounded training programme designed to support holistic development (section 5.8). It addresses physical, social, and psychological well-being while incorporating core Christian teachings. Churches use the programme as a missional tool to transform communities, focusing particularly on youth through modules on relationships and life skills. The LIFEPLAN® programme is analysed as a case study,[9] revealing positive outcomes in life skills and psychosocial development, but also points to notable spiritual deficiencies (section 5.9). Recent missiological research spotlights the importance of community, health, and spiritual resilience (section 5.5), while real-world "stories of hope" from Brazil and South Affrica illustrate the transformative potential of holistic mission (5.7). The chapter concludes with practical recommendations for church-based engagement and deeper spiritual integration (section 5.10).

[9] The LIFEPLAN® Training and Equipping Programme was developed by North-West University to support youth in the Christiana District of South Africa's North-West Province in making healthy, high-quality life choices. Its mission is to strengthen, motivate, inspire, and develop young people—particularly in their decision-making around behavioural challenges.
The programme emerged from the FLAGH (Farm Labour and General Health) initiative, which resulted from research conducted between 1996 and 2000. This research identified farm dwellers in the North-West Province as a highly vulnerable group, facing poor nutritional status and compromised physical and mental health. FLAGH, one of the custodian projects at North-West University, began with a needs assessment study in 2001–2002. This was followed by in-depth, interdisciplinary research (2003–2007) on general health and its interconnected dimensions, including food insecurity, HIV/AIDS, and economic factors. Scholars from diverse fields—nutrition, social work, psychology, physiology, nursing, consumer sciences, economics, and theology—contributed to this work.
This research guided the development of LIFEPLAN® (Life Inequalities Amongst Persons Addressed by Means of Purposeful Living and Nutritional Interventions), which was officially launched in 2008 and has continued since. To date, the programme has reached over 5,000 participants, equipping them with a wide range of life skills. On September 14, 2010, LIFEPLAN® received accreditation from the Institutional Committee for Academic Standards (ICAS), where its goals and objectives were formally presented and approved (Freeks 2008; NWU: Institutional Committee for Academic Standards 2010).

4. Thematic Analysis

Before exploring the chapters thematically, the table below maps their key contributions across six core dimensions. This comparison draws attention to the distinct yet complementary ways in which each chapter engages the two-eye approach—explicitly in Chapter 4 and implicitly in Chapter 5. Together, they demonstrate how epistemological integration, spiritual depth, and methodological hybridity can enrich and strengthen missional praxis. Table 2 provides a comparison:[10]

Table 2: Comparison of Chapter 4 and Chapter 5

Aspect	Chapter 4 (Methodology)	Chapter 5 (Holistic missional outreach to the contemporary youth of South Africa)
Epistemological Alignment	Explicitly adopts Chilisa's (2020) two-eyed approach, integrating Indigenous methodologies with Western critical realism. The South African 7-point praxis matrix is applied.	Implicitly applies to a holistic missional lens that integrates spiritual formation and social engagement, without naming the two-eyed framework.
Methodological Tools	Employs mixed methods, including qualitative interviews and quantitative analysis using Speakai.co, alongside poetic inquiry and ethnography.	Draws on biblical-theological analysis and programmatic case studies (e.g., LIFEPLAN® evaluation).
Spiritual Integration	Spirituality is embedded through prayer rituals and maternal-thinking logic; foregrounding the unseen dimensions of *missio Dei*.	Identifies spiritual gaps in youth formation programmes and advocates for Christ-centred healing.
Relational Emphasis	Relational accountability (Chilisa 2020) and communal dialogue are prioritised as central to knowledge production, with a particular emphasis on motherhood.	Affirms unconditional love and restorative relationships as central to youth ministry, with a particular focus on fatherhood.
Cultural Negotiation	Spanish-English bilingual tensions are navigated, and Indigenous rituals—such as virtual talking circles—are contextually adapted.	Addresses tensions in African worldviews (e.g., ancestral spirits vs. Christianity), warning

[10] Table provided by TextCortext, May 21, 2025.

		against syncretism in rural churches.
Outcome Orientation	Community resilience: rigorous missiological evaluation with two-eye approach.	Seeks transformative impact on youth through holistic mission (body, mind, and spirit).

The following sub-sections delve into these comparative insights found in Table 2.

4.1 Epistemological Alignment: Maternal-Paternal Integration Through Two-eyed Methodology

Chapter 4 explicitly adopts Chilisa's (2020) two-eye approach, blending Indigenous methodologies—such as relational accountability and communal dialogue—with Western critical realism and mixed methods, including qualitative interviews and quantitative analysis via Speakai.co. This creative integration fosters a comprehensive understanding of the research context, honoring both Indigenous and Western epistemologies.

4.1.1 Maternal-Thinking Logic and African Epistemological Foundations

The epistemological foundation of Chapter 4 is deeply rooted in maternal-thinking logic (Ruddick 1995), which serves as an epistemological lens linked to the African parallel concept of "thinking-with-the-womb" (Kiboko 2001). Chilisa (2020:306) describes African womanism as emphasizing the central role of motherhood in African households and family structures, accentuating the agency and power of mothers as foundational to communal solidarity. She further asserts that an endarkened feminist epistemology fosters a methodology rooted in healing (Chilisa 2020:308).

This approach recognizes that such situated forms of female knowledge often exist on the margins of mainstream feminism, which tends to universalize the Western experience as normative for all women. The maternal-thinking framework enables access to "unseen realities" through the integration of prayer, maternal-thinking logic, and African womanism, allowing researchers to document spiritual resources for community resilience that secular Western methodologies would systematically exclude.

4.1.2 Duoethnographic Design: Creating Unified Maternal-Paternal Perspectives

The duoethnographical design and two-eye approach leads to creating a vital unified perspective of both maternal and paternal aspects transformative mission. Each of the authors speaks from the locus of their own parenting perspective; one eye is on Rheinbolt-Uribe's maternal-thinking, whereas another eye focuses on Freeks' missional fatherhood, each from the locus of their own parenting experience and perspective.

This integration creates a methodological innovation where relational accountability (Chilisa 2020) and communal dialogue are prioritized as central to knowledge production, with a particular emphasis on motherhood in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 affirms unconditional love and restorative relationships as central to youth ministry, with a particular focus on fatherhood. The concept of "missional fatherhood" is introduced as a corrective response to the problem of absent fathers, where missional fathers are described as those who lead sacrificial lives for their families, instilling a love for Christ in their children and engaging with them on matters of significance.

4.1.3 Biblical-Theological Grounding Versus Indigenous Methodological Grounding

The epistemological alignment reveals a crucial distinction between approaches. Chapter 5's epistemological alignment is primarily theological and missiological (section 5.2). Grounded in a Christian theological framework, this chapter focuses on holistic mission as derived from biblical teachings. It stresses the integration of evangelism and social responsibility, viewing them as inseparable aspects of the mission of God. Scriptural references and theological interpretations support its arguments, reflecting an epistemology that draws on religious texts and theological scholarship.

In contrast, Chapter 4's Indigenous methodological grounding prioritizes relational accountability (Wilson 2008; Chilisa 2020), interpreted through a *sentipensante* logic, integrating critical realism with Indigenous research methodologies such as talking circles and orality. The research employs a mixed-methods design, combining content analysis with reflective thematic analysis, resulting in a hybrid reflective thematic content analysis.

4.1.4 Integrated Spiritual-Academic Framework

Both approaches converge in their commitment to spiritual integration. Chapter 4 adopts a 7-point praxis matrix that places spirituality at the heart of the research process and supports the inclusion of practices such as active prayer during interviews. Chapter 5 places spirituality at the foundation of its missiological work, critiquing the lack of spiritual formation in existing youth outreach programmes.

Although Chapter 5 does not explicitly reference the two-eye approach, this integration reflects the *sentipensante* principle and affirms the framework's holistic orientation. This convergence demonstrates how African relational and spiritual frameworks can enhance rather than contradict Western analytical tools, creating methodological innovations that neither purely Indigenous nor Western approaches could achieve alone.

4.2 Methodological Tools

Chapter 4's methodological design incorporates mixed qualitative and quantitative methods, poetic inquiry, and a *sentipensante* approach. In contrast, Chapter 5 relies primarily on biblical-theological analysis, but could benefit from incorporating some of

Chapter 4's hybrid tools—such as Speakai.co sentiment analysis—to quantify spiritual dissonance and strengthen its methodological rigour.

An example of hybrid tools, such as poetic inquiry detailed by Rheinbolt-Uribe in section 4.11, identified an 'ethnopoetic rhythm' in the participants' narratives. This distinct poetic quality, frequently observed during the interviews, is interpreted as a manifestation of the study's *sentipensante* logic. This finding stresses the persistence of ethnopoetic expression in oral-based cultures (Hymes 2003, 2016) and its accessibility through attuned research practices.

The following is a specific example of poetic inquiry, namely ethnopoetics,[11] as noted in section 4.11:

Poem – Ethnopoetic Evidence (Participant 115)

Que en medio del desmoronamiento yo estaba firme,
en medio del vacío yo estaba lleno,
en medio de la desesperación yo estaba en paz.
('In the midst of the collapse,
I was firm In the midst of the emptiness,
I was full In the midst of the despair, I was at peace').

The two-eye approach embraces several methodological tools and yields rich findings, such as the above poem.

4.2.1 Digital Tools as Two-Eyed Integration

The two-eyed approach's integration of Indigenous and Western epistemologies was practically demonstrated through the strategic use of AI-assisted digital tools, which enabled methodological innovations that neither purely Indigenous nor Western approaches could achieve alone. As both authors critically engage with their respective doctoral research, we intentionally incorporated these tools to support analytical objectivity while maintaining the relational accountability and spiritual depth central to Indigenous methodologies.

AI platforms supported the Indigenous *sentipensante* logic that "integrates thinking and feeling, formal knowledge, orality, and lived wisdom" by preserving the relational and spiritual dimensions of participant narratives. ChatGPT's cross-analysis of thematic patterns honored the communal dialogue processes essential to Indigenous research, while maintaining the "ethical relationality" and "cultural negotiation" that characterizes African epistemologies.

[11] Hymes (2016:178) points out the presence of rhythm and structural order in non-Western texts and forms of verbal communication. Furthermore, Hymes (2003:223–224) asserts the value of ethnopoetics as a tool for exploring the cognitive frameworks embedded in these texts. This involves analysing verse structures and identifying patterned relationships by segmenting the text into lines—an approach that reveals variations in emphasis, form, and interpretation (section 4.11).

The systematic documentation and quantitative validation, a priority of Western scholarhip, required for broader academic credibility was enhanced through:

- **SpeakAi.co**: Applied for sentiment and keyword analysis in Chapter 4 and this paper, enabling the quantification of spiritual and emotional dimensions in participant responses (Figures 3 and 4)
- **TextCortex**: Used for content comparison and generating analytical tables (Table 1 and Table 2), supporting the systematic analysis required for academic rigor
- **ChatGPT (OpenAI)**: Used for cross-analyzing and refining thematic patterns across both Colombian and South African contexts, facilitating the duoethnographic dialogue

This digital integration demonstrates how "African relational and spiritual frameworks can enhance rather than contradict Western analytical tools". The tools served three primary functions that directly support the two-eyed approach: (i) increasing transparency around digital methods in theological research; (ii) providing a replicable, scalable model for interdisciplinary scholarship; and (iii) fostering critical distance and reflexive depth while maintaining relational accountability.

4.3 Spiritual Integration

Chapter 4 embeds spirituality not as an afterthought but as a core epistemological commitment. The text reflects spiritual integration through a rich synthesis of theological, Indigenous, and relational elements. At its centre is a deeply personal connection to the Divine, often framed in terms of a child–parent relationship—a metaphor shared by both Christian and Indigenous spiritualities, in which the Creator is viewed as nurturing and relational. This theme is further grounded in the concept of *missio Dei*, understood here through a Trinitarian lens as the mission of God expressed through the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Mission, therefore, is not limited to institutional church activity but is conceived as a broader spiritual movement embedded in everyday life. Bosch's holistic vision reinforces this by rejecting dualisms such as mind/body and subject/object in favour of relational interconnectedness—an idea that resonates with Indigenous spiritual frameworks centred on wholeness.

Spiritual integration also informs the research methodology itself. Chapter 4 adopts a 7-point praxis matrix that places spirituality at the heart of the research process (as seen below in Figure 5) and supports the inclusion of practices such as active prayer during interviews (section 4.3).

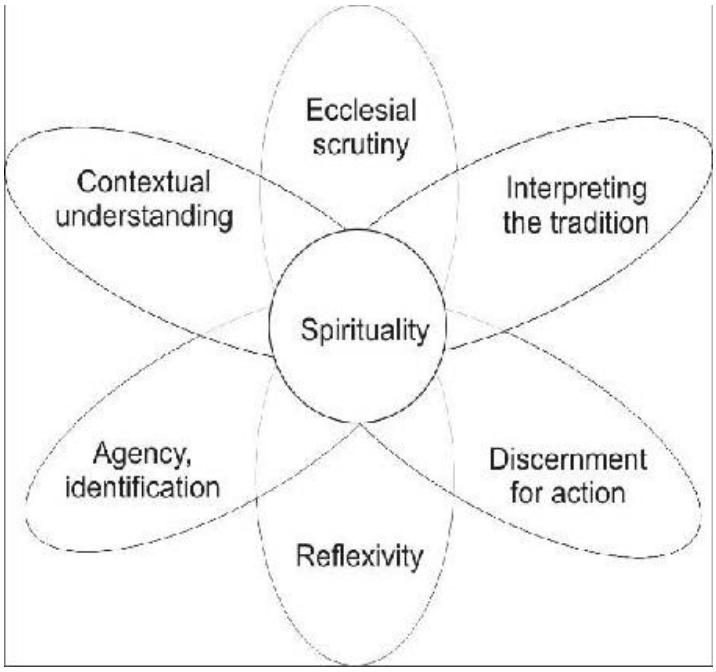

Figure 5: Graphical overview of the 7-point praxis matrix (Source: Kritzinger 2013:37)

This matrix bridges critical realism with liberation theology, ensuring that spiritual discernment informs both data collection and ethical engagement. The *praxis matrix* comprises seven interrelated dimensions—agency, contextual understanding, ecclesial scrutiny, interpreting the tradition, discernment for action, reflexivity, and spirituality. The use of communal spirituality and a maternal-thinking lens further brings to the fore nurturing, relational, and embodied knowing—paralleling Indigenous and feminist spiritualities that value connection and care. Bosch's embrace of critical realism introduces a dimension of theological openness, allowing for evolving understandings of truth. Together, these elements reflect a spirituality that is neither theoretical nor peripheral but deeply integrated into every layer of the research and missional engagement—connecting thought, feeling, action, and prayer. The text utilises maternal-thinking logic (section 4.7), poetic inquiry, and ritual-inflected research practices (sub-section 4.4.3), treating the unseen dimensions of *missio Dei*—prayer, presence, and relational discernment—as valid forms of knowledge.

Likewise, Chapter 5 places spirituality at the foundation of its missiological work, critiquing the lack of spiritual formation in existing youth outreach programmes (sub-section 5.5.6). While the LIFEPLAN® initiative yields positive social and psychological outcomes, participants report limited engagement with prayer, Scripture, and church life (sub-section 5.6.6). The chapter responds by advocating for intentional spiritual integration—through practices such as worship, Bible study, and communal prayer—to address what it identifies as "God's greater plan and purpose to restore humanity's brokenness, which is caused mainly by sin" (Freeks 2018:104-05). This emphasis on integration reflects a broader vision of holistic transformation that addresses not only physical and social needs but also the spiritual dimension of human life. Freeks

(2018:128) further affirms this point: "The programme should also be amended to give the youth a platform which allows them to partake in discussions about the importance of God, church life, and youth impact in South Africa."

Spiritual integration in Chapter 5 is framed around the concept of holistic mission, where transformation encompasses body, mind, and spirit. The text stresses that the LIFEPLAN® programme should incorporate spirituality as a core component—alongside values such as hope, faith, and love—to deepen its impact (sub-section 5.9.3). The church is positioned as instrumental in deploying the programme as a missional tool to reach those outside the Christian community, merging practical life skills with spiritual growth. Additionally, the chapter displays the role of spirituality in positive youth development, suggesting that experiences of transcendence and personal connection with God foster purpose, resilience, and healing. This integration of spirituality into everyday life aligns with the overarching mission of God to restore wholeness through Christ and affirms the theological foundation of holistic transformation.

4.4 Relational Emphasis

Chapter 4 prioritises relational accountability, engaging in ongoing dialogue with participants for validation and employing member-checking processes to ensure research integrity and community engagement (section 4.9). Reality is understood as interrelated—both seen and unseen—as illustrated by the tree analogy (Figure 2). Chapter 5, meanwhile, accentuates unconditional love as central to youth ministry, addressing systemic issues such as father absenteeism (5.6.13), gangsterism (sub-section 5.6.5), poverty (sub-section 5.3.1) and employment (sub-section 5.4.7) through relational healing.

Both chapters indicate the importance of togetherness. Chapter 4 fosters this through virtual talking circles (due to pandemic restrictions) and active prayer during each interview (sub-section 4.1.2.7). Chapter 5 reflects togetherness through fellowship and shared meals, drawing inspiration from Acts 2:42–47 (sub-section 5.2.1).

The concept of "missional fatherhood" is introduced as a corrective response to the problem of absent fathers (sub-sections 5.6.13 and 5.9.7). Missional fathers are described as those who lead sacrificial lives for their families, instilling a love for Christ in their children and engaging with them on matters of significance. These fathers are seen as disciple-makers within their homes and communities, shaping their children's worldviews and passing on the mission of doing good to others. The text pinpoints the importance of a father's presence in a child's life to guide decision-making and suggests that the LIFEPLAN® programme should incorporate teachings on missional fatherhood to counteract the negative impact of father absenteeism.

Both Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 emphasise relational dynamics between parents and children, drawing parallels to God as a nurturing Parent. As Bosch (1991:493–494)

writes: “It is mediating the love of God the Father who is the Parent of all people, whoever and wherever they may be” (cf. sub-section 4.1.2.5).

4.5 Cultural Negotiation

Both chapters demonstrate cultural sensitivity and theological clarity. Chapter 4 seeks to balance Western and Indigenous methodologies and perspectives, as seen in its application of the two-eye approach. The text stresses the importance of understanding and respecting Indigenous knowledge systems—which are inherently relational and interconnected—while also engaging with Western academic frameworks.

The research process reflects cultural negotiation through practices such as member checking, where participants are actively involved in verifying the accuracy of their voices and perspectives (section 4.11). The use of ethnopoetics (sections 4.8 and 4.11) and oral histories gathered through in-depth semi-structured interviews further calls attention to the value placed on Indigenous ways of knowing and communicating (section 4.7).[12]

Additionally, the text acknowledges the challenges posed by language barriers and accentuates the need for cultural sensitivity when presenting data, as many participants speak English as a second or third language (section 4.7). The researcher’s reflexivity and engagement with participants’ cultural contexts demonstrate an ongoing negotiation between differing cultural paradigms, aiming to achieve a more holistic and inclusive understanding of the research subject.

Chapter 5 explores cultural negotiation through the interaction and tension between traditional African beliefs and Christian teachings (sub-section 5.6.12). It points to how animistic religions—which include beliefs in spiritual beings, ancestors, and witchcraft—coexist with, and sometimes conflict with, Christian doctrine. This syncretism can be evident in some congregations, such as in African Initiated Churches, where Christian beliefs are blended with African Traditional Religion, for instance, the veneration of ancestral spirits (sub-section 5.6.12).

The text further examines how these traditional beliefs shape social practices and perceptions, such as attributing prosperity to witchcraft or seeking ancestral intervention during hardship. Cultural negotiation becomes even more complex for the youth, who are caught between traditional belief systems and the Christian faith promoted by the church.

In response, the text frames the church’s role as offering a holistic mission that addresses both spiritual and social needs. It encourages the youth to discover their

[12] The interviews (talking circles) encompassed three key life cycles: (i) **family history**, with special emphasis on the participants’ relationships with their mothers and grandmothers; (ii) personal walk of **spirituality history;** and (iii) **congregational history**, with particular emphasis on the period surrounding the congregation’s collapse. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed.

identity and purpose within the Christian faith while navigating the broader cultural landscape of traditional beliefs (section 5.3). The text proposes that the church should engage these cultural elements thoughtfully and respectfully, aiming to transform and integrate them into a Christian worldview that offers hope and guidance to the youth (section 5.9).

4.6 Outcome Orientation

Outcome orientation, as demonstrated in both chapters, refers to a deliberate focus on achieving transformative, real-world impact through research. It involves designing methodologies that not only generate insight but also lead to measurable change, aligning practical interventions with theoretical and spiritual frameworks. Chapter 4's outcome orientation centres on fostering transformative mutuality within a Colombian congregational context through rigorous and ethical missiological evaluation, strategically using a 7-point praxis matrix, a two-eye approach, *sentipensante* logic, and arts-based methods to achieve actionable insights that strengthen community resilience and address global-local crises.

Chapter 5 similarly gives centre stage to a transformative vision, focusing on holistic outcomes that nurture the body, mind, and spirit of South African youth (section 5.2). It critiques the LIFEPLAN® programme for prioritising relational and psychosocial skills while neglecting deeper spiritual formation, and advocates for a more integrated model that combines prayer, Scripture, and service (section 5.9). Both chapters accentuate ethical accountability by grounding their outcome orientation in relational responsibility. Whether through Chapter 4's communal dialogue processes or Chapter 5's sensitivity to African worldviews, each study prioritises the dignity, voice, and cultural context of its participants as essential to meaningful transformation.

In essence, outcome orientation bridges methodological rigour (Chapter 4) and missional efficacy (Chapter 5), ensuring that research and practice lead to ethical, culturally grounded, and spiritually resonant solutions.

5.6.1 Returning the Knowledge: Community-Centred Research Dissemination

A central tenet of transformative postcolonial Indigenous research paradigms, particularly as articulated by Chilisa (2020), is the ethical imperative to both conduct research with the community and to share the findings in meaningful, accessible ways—a principle also closely aligned with PAR (sections 4.0, 4.1.1, and 4.5). In line with this commitment, Rheinbolt-Uribe pledged to deliver a copy of the dissertation to the gatekeeper of ICI-Colombia, who would then distribute the findings within the community (section 4.11). Inspired by the participatory values of PAR, she also chose to create an arts-based narrative to present the results in a format more accessible to the majority of community members—many of whom do not speak English, and for whom even a scholarly Spanish translation of the dissertation might pose a barrier (section 4.8). This approach culminated in Figure 6, which is presented below.

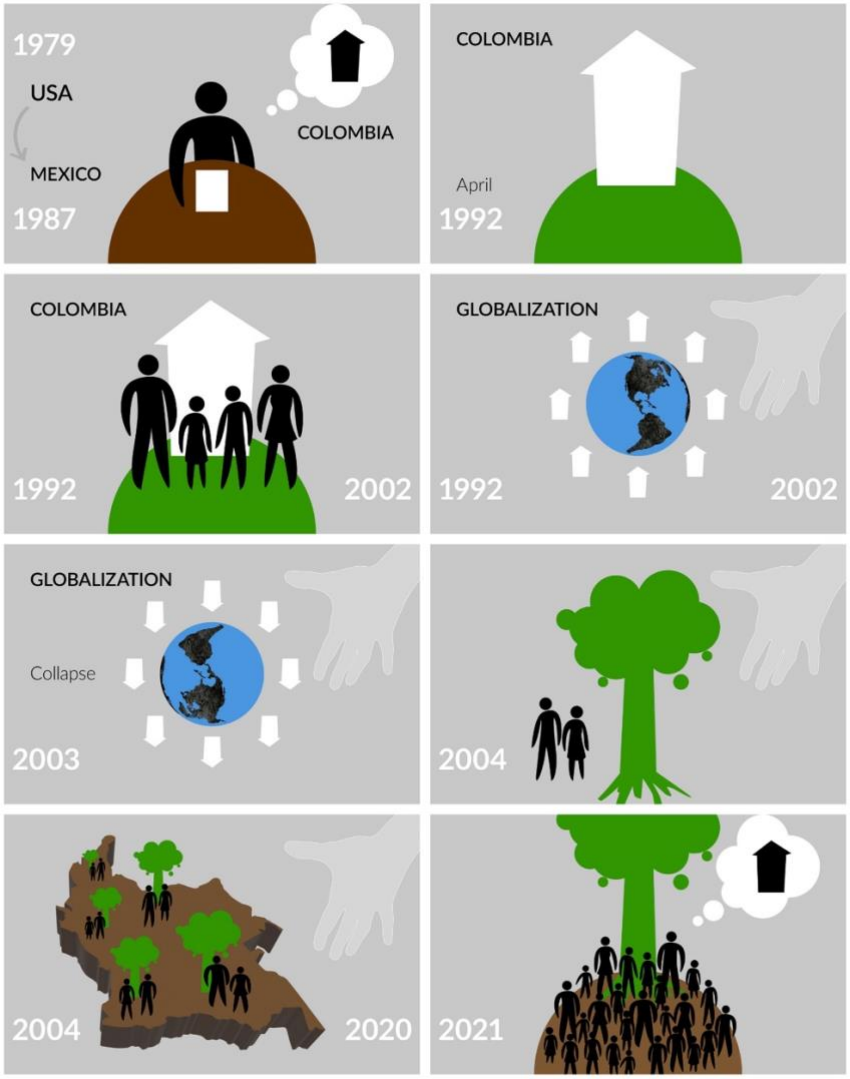

Figure 6: Vignette – ICI Colombia Narrative
(Source: Rheinbolt-Uribe 2023:370)

The eight-scene vignette works as both methodological output and community engagement tool because it transforms the 'deep listening' process into a visual narrative that honors the *sentipensante* logic of the two-eyed approach. By presenting the 'other side of the collapse narrative' through accessible scenes rather than academic analysis, the graphic enables the broader ICI-Colombia community to engage with research findings in a format that respects both their oral tradition strengths and the systematic insights of Western research methodology. The visual format ensures that the voices of those who 'experienced it first-hand' reach beyond academic gatekeepers to create the potential of genuine community dialogue about transformation and resilience.

The data revealed a critical 2021 juncture: whether the congregation would pursue a regressive path toward past governance structures (house symbol = USA-based

control) or advance with local autonomy (soil and trees = local governance). Rheinbolt-Uribe's (2023:242) missiological evaluation accurately predicted participant resistance to institutional regression. This prediction materialized by 2025, with several participants departing the congregation. The vignette successfully captured participant clarity regarding the USA-based denomination's systemic dysfunction, revealing their collective understanding of it as an irreparably compromised institutional framework.

The research population in Chapter 5 gained knowledge through training, equipping, and empowering sessions, which included a manual and workbook to enhance learning and capacity building. These sessions featured open discussions and effective communication, promoting community engagement, shared experiences, and mutual growth, ultimately ensuring that knowledge is accessible, applicable, and sustained within the community context, in line with the central tenet of *transformative postcolonial Indigenous research paradigms.*

Despite a shared commitment to community-centred knowledge dissemination, the researchers report divergent outcomes. Rheinbolt-Uribe observes that, to date, knowledge has largely remained concentrated with the main gatekeeper (the president of the church board), limiting broader community access. In contrast, Freeks spotlights the transformative impact of LIFEPLAN®, both within the original community and through the transfer of this knowledge to neighbouring communities. Testimonials such as "*LIFEPLAN® changed my life*" and "*LIFEPLAN® has changed my family*," frequently expressed during assessment interviews, indicate the programme's profound influence and far-reaching effects.

5. Distinctive Findings Enabled by the Two-Eyed Approach: A Summary of Practical Outcomes

Without the Indigenous eye informed by African scholarship and spiritual practices, standard Western methodology would have missed the ethnopoetic expressions emerging from the interviews, relational accountability insights rooted in African womanism, communal spiritual resources, and the deep cultural negotiations that sustained both the Colombian congregation and South African youth communities. The inclusion of prayer and spiritual discernment in the research process was essential for accessing these unseen dimensions. Without the Western eye, pure Indigenous methodology would have lacked the systematic analysis and quantitative validation necessary for broader academic credibility. The integration of these perspectives through African scholarly frameworks, enhanced by spiritual practices, enabled what the authors term "cultural negotiation" and "ethical relationality", producing transformative outcomes evidenced in community testimonials such as "LIFEPLAN® changed my life" and "LIFEPLAN® has changed my family".

5.1 Grounding in African and Global South Scholarship

A foundational strength of both chapters is their deliberate grounding in African scholarship, as evidenced in Table 1 in the Row 9: Two Main Authors Cited. Chapter 4 prominently cites Bagele Chilisa, a Motswana scholar from Botswana, 15 times alongside South African missiologist David Bosch 8 times. Chapter 5 extensively draws on South African scholarship, with Fazel E. Freeks cited 30 times and collaborations with South African George A. Lotter, while South African J.A. Van Rooy appears 6 times. Chapter 5's evaluation of the LIFEPLAN® programme is a priority as it was developed in South Africa by South African scholars not imported from the United States or Europe as in common practice. This African epistemological foundation ensures that the two-eyed approach is not simply an overlay of Western and Indigenous perspectives but is authentically rooted in African scholarly traditions that inherently understand the integration of multiple knowledge systems.

Global South scholarship is highlighted in Chapter 4 as the *sentipensante* logic is borrowed from the Colombian Orlando Fals-Borda as well as the use of his Participatory Research Method (PAR). The 7-point praxis matrix is from South African J. N. J. (Klippies) Kritzinger. The approach resonates with South Asian Vinay Samuel's (Sugden 2021:xii) context-based theology, a Global South focus on 'theology of mission as transformation,' which defines transformation as enabling 'God's vision of society to be actualized in all relationships, social, economic and spiritual'."

5.2 Spiritual Integration as Core Methodology

Due to spirituality being a part of indigenous research, Rheinbolt-Uribe included prayer rituals during interviews and applied maternal-thinking logic, foregrounding the unseen dimensions of *missio Dei*. This is crucial because Chapter 4 adopts a 7-step praxis matrix that places spirituality at the heart of the research process.

5.3 Methodological Discoveries Through Spiritual Integration

The explicit application of the two-eyed approach in Chapter 4 revealed findings that would have been invisible through traditional Western methodologies alone. Most significantly, the integration of Indigenous methodologies with Western critical realism, enhanced by spiritual practices, uncovered an "ethnopoetic rhythm" in participants' narratives. This spiritual integration enabled the discovery of spontaneous poetic expressions such as: "In the midst of the collapse, I was firm / In the midst of the emptiness, I was full / In the midst of the despair, I was at peace". This finding, emerging from the study's *sentipensante* logic that integrates thinking and feeling, would have been completely overlooked by standard Western content analysis that excludes spiritual dimensions.

5. 5 Spiritual and Relational Insights Through African-Informed Integration

The two-eyed approach, grounded in African scholarship and enhanced by spiritual practices, enabled access to "unseen realities". Chilisa's concept of "thinking-with-the-womb" parallels African epistemologies that emphasize motherhood as foundational to communal solidarity. The critical realism "tree metaphor" illustrated how reality encompasses both visible empirical dimensions and invisible spiritual realities, allowing researchers to document spiritual resources for community resilience that secular Western methodologies would systematically exclude. This spiritually-informed framework enabled quantitative validation through sentiment analysis using Speakai.co, demonstrating how African relational and spiritual frameworks can enhance rather than contradict Western analytical tools.

5.6 Holistic Missional Discoveries and Stories of Hope from Chapter 5

Chapter 5's implicit application of the two-eyed approach, deeply rooted in South African theological scholarship, revealed critical gaps in youth ministry programming that neither purely Western program evaluation nor traditional approaches alone could have identified. The study discovered that while LIFEPLAN® achieved positive social and psychological outcomes, it failed significantly in spiritual formation, with participants reporting "limited engagement with prayer, Scripture, and church life". This finding was substantiated by detailed quantitative analysis revealing concerning spiritual disconnection: 21.6% of participants perceived God as impersonal and indifferent to their lives, 25.3% reported not deriving personal strength from God, 6.0% lacked a personally significant relationship with God, and notably, 50.3% continued to venerate and seek blessings from ancestor spirits (Badimo), while 35.1% consulted traditional healers regarding their lives and futures. This finding emerged specifically from integrating Western program assessment methodologies with African communal values and Christian theological frameworks developed by South African scholars, highlighting the essential role of spiritual integration in holistic mission.

Chapter 5 underlines stories of hope by showcasing individuals and communities that have fostered transformation despite adversity (section 5.7). In São Paulo, Abel, a child from a favela, experiences renewed hope through the ministry of Sonia Costa (sub-section 5.7.1). Similarly, P.J. Buys' outreach in KwaNdebele offers mentoring and training for vulnerable youth (sub-section 5.7.3). In Christiana, Anna Samane leads a community initiative to provide food, shelter, and developmental opportunities for youth (sub-section 5.7.4). These narratives illustrate the power of holistic mission in action.

5.7 Cultural Negotiation and Contextual Solutions

The African scholarly foundation, enhanced by spiritual sensitivity, enabled sophisticated cultural negotiation around tensions between African Traditional Religion and Christianity, particularly regarding ancestral veneration. The two-eyed approach quantified this tension, revealing that 50.3% of LIFEPLAN® participants continued to venerate ancestor spirits (Badimo) and 35.1% consulted traditional

healers, despite 96.0% expressing belief in God's love and 87.2% reporting a personally significant relationship with God. This integration revealed the need for "missional fatherhood" as a response to father absenteeism, a solution that emerged specifically from bridging Indigenous African family structures with biblical theology as understood through African scholarship. The spiritual dimension was crucial in addressing syncretism and offering culturally grounded yet theologically informed solutions that honor both African worldviews and Christian faith.

5.8 Community-Centred Knowledge Dissemination Through Two-Eyed Integration

The African-grounded, spiritually-informed two-eyed approach fundamentally transformed how research findings were returned to communities. Without the Indigenous eye informed by Chilisa's (2020) transformative postcolonial Indigenous research paradigms, standard Western academic dissemination would have missed the ethical imperative to conduct research with communities and share findings in accessible ways aligned with participatory action research principles. Rheinbolt-Uribe's creation of an arts-based narrative (Figure 6) for community members who do not speak English exemplifies how Indigenous methodological commitments shaped practical outcomes. Without the Western eye, pure Indigenous approaches would have lacked the systematic documentation necessary for broader scholarly impact. The integration enabled meaningful outcomes: while knowledge transfer in the Colombian context remained concentrated with gatekeepers, the South African LIFEPLAN® programme achieved transformative community impact with testimonials such as "LIFEPLAN® changed my life" and successful knowledge transfer to neighbouring communities. This approach ensured research served both academic purposes and fostered "community engagement, shared experiences, and mutual growth" while honoring methodological rigor and relational accountability.

5.9 Evidence of Transformative Impact Through South-South Dialogue

The practical value of this African-grounded, spiritually informed two-eye approach is evidenced by concrete community transformations and the effective transfer of knowledge to neighboring communities. These outcomes are not merely theoretical insights but actionable discoveries that bridge epistemological divides while remaining firmly rooted in African scholarship and Global South contexts.

The cross-continental dialogue between Colombian and South African contexts, mediated through African epistemological frameworks and enriched by spiritual integration, contributes to Indigenous, decolonial, and tribal theologies within South–South engagements.

By adopting a two-eye perspective, this study actively contributes to decolonising theology, challenging traditional power dynamics and promoting self-determination within missiological empirical research. It amplifies grassroots voices, prioritises cultural negotiation, and recognises the inherent value of diverse perspectives

6. Conclusion

The pairing of Chapters 4 and 5 exemplifies the versatility of the two-eye approach across methodological and practical domains, directly answering how Indigenous-Western epistemological integration enhances missiological research and practice in Global South contexts. Drawing on principles of duoethnography, this research engages in a dialogical, reflexive process that allows the respective chapters to "speak to each other" across diverse cultural and theological contexts, bringing relational accountability, mutual vulnerability, and co-constructed meaning to the fore. The duoethnographic design creates a vital unified perspective of both maternal and paternal aspects of transformative mission, with one eye on Rheinbolt-Uribe's maternal-thinking framework that enables access to "unseen realities" through prayer and African community-centred womanism, and another eye focusing on Freeks' missional fatherhood perspective. This methodological innovation demonstrates that the two-eye approach enhances missiological research by enabling outcome-oriented methodologies that achieve both academic rigor and community transformation.

Grounded in the recognition that "The Bible is not a Western book" and that Indigenous worldviews are epistemologically closer to the ancient cultures that produced the Scriptures, this cross-continental dialogue between Colombian and South African contexts builds upon Bosch's call for 'self-theologising' and contributes to the broader project of decolonising theology. The research yields rich findings through ethnopoetic discoveries and strategic use of AI-assisted digital tools that enable methodological innovations neither purely Indigenous nor Western approaches could achieve alone. By promoting cultural negotiation and ethical relationality, this duoethnographic engagement contributes to Indigenous, decolonial, and tribal theologies, ensuring both methodological rigor and spiritually resonant outcomes that represent a priority in South-South academic and ecclesial discourse and praxis.

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