

**THE CHANGING FACE OF SOUTH AFRICA: THE
CHALLENGE OF MULTICULTURALISM IN THE LOCAL
CHURCHES AND THE EARLY CHURCH**

BY

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DECEMBER 2006

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Submitted in partial fulfillment for the requirements of the

Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

School of Religion and Culture

In the Faculty of Humanities

at the

University of KwaZulu-Natal

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Date of submission : December 2006

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DECLARATION

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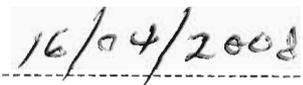
Hereby declare that the dissertation/ thesis entitled:

**THE CHANGING FACE OF SOUTH AFRICA: THE
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LOCAL CHURCHES AND THE EARLY CHURCH**

Is the result of my own investigation and research and that it has not been submitted in part or in full for any other degree or to any other University



SIGNATURE



DATE

DEDICATION

This dissertation/ thesis is specially dedicated to my most wonderful, caring and beautiful wife HANGWANI RACHAEL MPHAPHULI for her special sacrificial support, prayers and patience not only during this study but also the previous once. I was away from her for many hours and days but her support and understanding never grew weak. She has been the pillar of strength throughout all my studies and in particular this one. This is also dedicated to our twins HULISANI PRINCE (son) and NYIMANI PRINCESS (daughter) our most precious gifts from the LORD our JEHOVAH JIREH our Provider, the One we both serve.

MPHAPHULI N.J

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study has been one of the most exciting and eye opening journey of research and discovery of my life as I went through one book to another, from one library to another and from one local church to another. However, such success was not one man endeavor: it was of a great team of people. I was the most visible while a whole lot of my companions were working with me from behind the scenes. Without their valuable assistance in the form of spiritual, material, financial, encouragement and guidance, the compilation of this dissertation/ thesis would not have materialized.

Thereby, I would like to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to the following individual and/or groups:

To my supervisor: Dr. ITUMELENG S. MEKOA for his guidance, support, encouragement and contractive criticism in the long walk of this research and compilation of the material.

To my parents: NNDWAAMATO GEORGE and MMBULAHENI NYAMUKAMADI for all their words of encouragement from the first day I told them of my intentions to embark on this study until the very end.

To my friends: PHIL and LINDA MAXWELL for their friendship during the dark and evil years of apartheid and their courage to offer me the first ever opportunity to preach in their "multiracial" local church.

To my friends: LLOYD and LIBBI MARTIN for their friendship the first ever invitation to teach on cross-culture in their "multiracial" local church. It was from that time that the desire to research on this topic developed until I decided to formalize it.

To all members of HARVEST CHURCH INTERNATIONAL at MATIDZA VILLAGE: for their unwavering support and prayers during my three years of this research when I

was away from them for many weeks and to AILWEI CALVIN and MUHANGANEI GRACE (I regret that she went to be with the Lord before this thesis was published) RANENYENI my fellow elders (and god-parents) for carrying the burden of shepherding the flock of God during this time, especially when I was away.

To KEIR and CALLIE TAYLER: my friends and partners in ministry for their faith in me and contributions to this research by means of encouragement and making arrangements for all workshops in order for me to meet and fulfill requirements of this research.

To RICHARD and JILL LAWSON (Durban, and the first workshop), CRAIG and SUZANNE ELLIOT (Johannesburg, second workshop) and RIGBY and SUE WALLACE (Cape Town, and last workshop) and all the ELDERS and MEMBERS of their local churches for making it possible for me to put together this research document, which I believe will go a long way in helping those with a heart to fulfill the GREAT COMMISSION. I thank them for hosting the workshops and taking upon themselves the burden of providing workshop materials (stationary, sound system, venue, etc) and the refreshments for all participants. Some even went to the extent of covering my transport cost and also proving me with accommodation.

To all the LEADERS and MEMBERS of different denominations and local churches that participated during the workshops.

To ALL my FELLOW-WORKERS in South Africa and outside the borders of this country in fulfilling the GREAT COMMISSION of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, for their contributions made directly or indirectly to the realization of this tool for the glory of the LORD, LOCAL CHURCHES here in SOUTH AFRICA and the whole WORLD in large.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIC	- African Indigenous Churches
AME	- African Methodist Episcopal
ANC	- African National Congress
APLA	- Azanian People's Liberation Army
BC	- Before Christ
CD	- Compact Disc
DRC	- Dutch Reformed Church
DVD	- Digital Versatile Disc
LMS	- London Missionary Society
MCM	- Marine and Coastal Management
NIV	- New International Version
RSV	- Revised Standard Version
SABC	- South Africa Broadcasting Cooperation
SACBC	- Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference
SACP	- South African Communist Party
STASSA	- Statistics South Africa
TBN	- Trinity Broadcasting Network
PAC	- Pan African Congress
VOC	- Dutch East Indian Company

CHAPTER 1

THE CHANGING FACE OF SOUTH AFRICA: THE CHALLENGE OF MULTICULTURALISM IN THE LOCAL CHURCHES AND THE EARLY CHURCH

INTRODUCTION: MAPPING THE LANDSCAPE

1.1 Background and Information of the Study

South Africa shall never be the same again. In February 1990 when the former President F.W De Klerk made a speech in parliament and announced the unbanning of the liberation movements, such as the African National Congress (ANC), Pan African Congress (PAC), South African Communist Party (SACP) and the release of their leaders, such as Nelson Mandela (the first President of the democratic South Africa) and other political leaders, South Africa embarked on a journey of no return. These changes are reflected in almost all segments of our country in varying degrees and cannot be ignored. Places that used to be reserved, for one particular race, are now for all people of South Africa. Neighborhoods, institutions of lower and higher learning, offices of government and private sectors and different sporting codes, to mention but a few have undergone and continue to undergo significant changes. The Church in South Africa is no exception and cannot thus remain unchanged, no matter how honorable her history is. For the church to change for the better she needs to unashamedly look back at her conduct during the apartheid years with critical self-analysis. Charles Villa-Vincencio in reference to how the church was trapped in Apartheid, observed that,

All social structures are to a greater or lesser extent, captive to their history. Yet when we cling to self-offering and legitimating myths concerning structures, refusing to become self-critical in our historical consciousness, it is unlikely that we will be able to control our present or creatively shape our future. The most critical reassessment of historical identity in the light of emerging new evidence concerning our past is therefore a prerequisite for social renewal (Villa-Vincencio 1988:1).

When missionaries set foot on South African soil it was the beginning of social struggle and domination. This was because the missionaries arrived at a later stage to support the colonialists and consequently the political council, which controlled the affairs and conduct of the colonialist also controlled the missionary activities. In the case of the Dutch East Indian Company (VOC), which arrived at the Cape in 1652 led by Jan Van Riebeeck, the ministers of religion were officials of the company holding the status of junior merchants. They were the chaplains of the company members and their families. As a consequence missionary endeavors, and the resulting churches, soon became part and parcel of the imperialist dream to colonize and dominate the inhabitants of the land.

Understanding this history of church cooperation with the apartheid government in South Africa helps to explain why many apartheid statutes formulated and passed as laws of this country were sanctioned by the church. This is made clear by Loubser in the quote of H.B. Fontham, used by Federal Missions and Welfare Council of the Dutch Reformed Church in 1924 to support their memorandum submitted to the cabinet in the favour of the "principle of racial apartheid and of racial purity."

A fact that has often been noted is the poor physique and bad health: especially in the first cross of the offspring of many ...racial admixtures ... Bad teeth are common, even in quite young people. Physical disharmonies occur... Such disabilities lead to a relatively short life. Mental disharmony often accompanies the physical and is shown in violent outbursts of temper, vanity and sexual instability (Loubser 1987:55).

These derogatory and unfounded remarks referred to the mixing of the Black and White races of South Africa and enjoyed the full support of the church. The collaboration of the missionaries and the colonialists and more recently the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa with the Nationalist Party government has left a heritage of a divided church in South Africa. Before the 1994 era, most churches, rather, denominations were divided along the colour line. In the same denomination one would find separation between the Black, Coloured, Indian and the White sections, with the latter regarded as the main church which was registered with government department. This division in the church was influenced by the Group Areas Act of the apartheid government. Many excuses are

still used today under a different guise. As observed by Villa-Vicencio in his book *“Trapped in Apartheid.”*

The encounter between White settlers and the Black inhabitants of the land initiated an enduring struggle for domination. It was, however, with the replacement of the Dutch by the British as the occupying force in the Cape that the conflict between Black and White spread beyond the existing borders of the colony. It was a process within which the church soon becomes integrally involved, a conflict which still remains to be resolved with the church continuing to play an ambiguous role (Villa-Vicencio 1988:2).

Since the dawn of a democratic South Africa there has been a shift from racist influences to the quest for a new identity by all South African people in local churches. There is a need to correct the ugly negatives of the past, that is racial and cultural divisions, and bring forth a more inclusive rainbow nation and new multicultural local churches. It is imperative for the church, through her visible manifestation of the local churches in communities to start to reconstitute and to redefine who we are as the people of God or the body of believers in South Africa. **It is in reconstituting the church and redefining ourselves that we shall be able to face the changes that are challenging the church today.** Multiculturalism in the local churches is the biggest challenge facing the Church in South Africa today. In the years past, the church in South Africa’s approach, to almost everything, has been Eurocentric. However, the church cannot afford to move in reaction to this and apply another bias by making all decisions relating to the church on the basis of an Afrocentric view. In navigating between these equally dangerous approaches, the church needs to become multicultural where all cultures represented in South Africa are equally embraced. This is the challenge facing local churches where people or believers of different cultures come together to worship their God.

1.2 The Research Problem/ Problem Formulation

The challenge of multiculturalism in local churches in South Africa remains a serious one even in the post-apartheid era. Excuses are still offered to people of different races who want to become members of particular local churches, especially in cities and towns, which centre on the issue of language and, in particular, English. If language is not a

large enough obstacle, culture also becomes a problem as other race's cultures will be so marginalized that they start to feel unwelcome in the local church, no matter how long they remain. Mindset learn helped to make the problem highlighted in this research clearer when they wrote that.

The importance of English skills has become so exaggerated in some professions that it outweighs practically everything in assessing a person's competency. Competency in using English can also act as a gatekeeper, depriving some people of access ...
Language is an intimate and accurate way of expressing culture. As English becomes the dominant language, other languages, along with their cultures become sidelined (Mindset learn 2006: 4).

In other local churches leaders and members go to the extent of creating a second service for people who cannot speak the dominant language. In some quarters the problem arose because some members unreasonably expected everybody to understand and speak a particular language fluently in meetings or during church services, or either to change to or master one particular culture at the expense of all other cultures present in the local church. As a result the local churches become a "melting pot" where people lose their own culture and buy into a dominant and controlling culture, in order to qualify as members. The book of the Acts of the Apostles shows us that in the Early Church, local churches, which were composed of believers of different social, racial and cultural groups, found their expression in one united church, in spite of these challenges. Only if the church can be viewed as a "salad bowl" and not a melting pot will the church in South Africa be able to rise-up and meet the challenges of multiculturalism. The local churches in South Africa, in particular, those in urban environs in the former White reserved suburbs where Black people are moving in large numbers, do not create space for other cultural groups to express themselves in worshipping God - except in European or Western culture. Cultural diversity should be an acceptable point of departure for the South African local churches in order to fulfill the Great Commission- to preach the gospel message to all people of all languages and of all colours. And for the church to continue to be an agent of change and transformation in our country, multiculturalism is the only viable route.

1.3 Aims and Research Objectives of the Study

The following aims and objectives are identified for the study:

1. To analyze the general changes taking place in South African social life, given that it affects the church:
2. To explore the challenges faced by the early church with regard to the phenomenon of multiculturalism in order to relate and interpret it within the South African situation:
3. To explain the historical background of the church and racism in South Africa:
4. To analyze and interpret the challenge of multiculturalism in the local churches with regard to the changes taking place in South Africa:
5. Finally, to make input and suggestions on how local churches in South Africa and around the world can initiate, implement and sustain multiculturalism in their own context.

1.4 Assumption

The assumption of this thesis is that very little effort, if any, has been made with regard to the challenge facing the local churches in South Africa, with special reference to the issue of multiculturalism, particularly in the post-apartheid era. As a result many church members are still exposed to segregation and a struggle of cultural domination, resulting in some people resenting Christianity. Some members demand that other members of the local church who are from different cultures embrace the dominant culture in the local church, a foreign culture to them, to qualify for membership.

This study in multiculturalism in South African local churches and the Early Church will help in defining, interpreting, and promoting tolerance and adoption of cultural diversity. This study will help to change old mindsets and create new understandings in members of the culturally diverse local churches both in South Africa and in our global village where people of different cultures cross paths more than ever before in human history. True Christianity will blossom and continue to grow in multicultural, diverse communities of the world, like South Africa.

It is the belief of this study that in the case of multiculturalism, South Africa can again

play an exemplary role as was the case with the miraculously peaceful transition from the apartheid government to a democratically constituted government. In the same way, the Church in South Africa can transition from monoculture domination to multiculturalism.

1.5 Research Methodology (Qualitative Method)

The research method selected will aim to:

- a) Articulate, assess and evaluate the findings in the literature covering the areas of change in South Africa, multiculturalism, the local churches and the early church:
- b) Visit and attend three to five multicultural representative local churches in South Africa, in the three major cities (Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg) in order to observe if the leadership who administers the Sunday worship services is equipped for the challenge of multiculturalism:
- c) Observe how members of these local churches respond and behave in the multicultural local church context:
- d) Organize multicultural workshops for the leaders and members of local churches in the three cities mentioned above to initiate debates and listen to the views of believers from diverse cultural background about the challenge of multiculturalism in the post-apartheid South Africa:
- e) Request participants at the end of every workshop to complete a semi-structured questionnaire. This will attempt to test if South African Christians understand multiculturalism, are ready for it and whether they promote, practice and embrace multiculturalism in their local churches.

The aim therefore of this study method is to come up with a social analysis of multiculturalism in the local churches of the democratic South African. The end results of the study will be the development of an agenda for the local churches in South Africa to meet the challenge of multiculturalism as happened in the Early Church and finally for

the church in South Africa to continue to play a vital role in dismantling the legacy of the apartheid regime in the Christian church.

1.6 Critical Research Questions to be answered by this Study

- 1.6.1 What have contemporary scholars written in relation to the issue of multiculturalism?
- 1.6.2 How did the Early Church face and deal with the challenge of multiculturalism?
- 1.6.3 What is documented in the history of the Church in South Africa with respect to racism?
- 1.6.4 How can the challenge of multiculturalism in the local churches with regard to the changes taking place in South Africa be analyzed and interpreted?
- 1.6.5 How can the preaching of the gospel be contextualised for the benefit of all members from different cultures and races so that relationships in the local church can be improved and sustained?

1.7 The Relevance or Rationale of the Study

The study is a response to the changing face of South Africa from the White minority domination to the democratic government of the people, voted into power by all its citizens, both Black and White. These changes granted the previously disadvantaged Africans an opportunity to reside and associate with who-so-ever they wish. This freedom of association brought about a challenge to multiculturalism in the local churches as people sought their spiritual homes in locations near their residential areas. The new South Africa has ushered in a challenge for church leaders and members to worship God and preach His Word in multicultural diverse local congregations. The challenge is therefore, to practice Christianity in a local church in such a way as to meet the needs of culturally different people. In this time of cultural diversity, in every sphere of life in South Africa, many people are faced with frustration and discouragement because of the continued marginalization or suppression of their cultures and the church.

which should be a champion and agent of change in our societies and the country as a whole, is no exception. There is thus a great need for a strategic plan to enable integration and leverage to the benefit of all cultures being available in every local church in the new South Africa.

The study will seek and attempt to come up with strategies and proposals relevant for the new and changing South Africa with regard to multiculturalism in local churches. Most local churches in South Africa are constituted of people of one or similar cultures, especially one racial group. Now that the challenge has been presented, we cannot continue to protect and propagate homogenous local churches. The church in South Africa has to respond now while there is still time to do so, so that it does not react when it is already too late. It is also an objective of this study to provoke South African local churches to be relevant to their communities. If the church does not become relevant, Christianity may cease to be one of the major religions in South Africa. If, however, the churches rise to this challenge, the church in South Africa will continue to play a meaningful role in unifying the beautiful people of South Africa, the rainbow nation. As the church contributed to the dismantling of Apartheid, today, the church has to contribute to the development and reconciliation of our society: to bring people of different cultures and colours together in one united church to worship and fulfill the mission given by our Lord Jesus Christ in the Gospel of Matthew chapter 28.

This thesis will attempt to come up with a theological and biblical position, relevant to the South African context, so that local churches can face the challenge of cultural diversity and multiculturalism. For the church to minister effectively, she needs to go back to the Bible and develop a theology which answers the pressing need of her society. This would not only be relevant to the South African local churches, but to all believers because they are all children of the same God all over the world and believers are building one and the same Church of the same God, but only in different geographical areas. Other countries would be able to use this as their model and to draw from our experience as a result of this study.

1.8 Definition of Key Concepts

Church

The term Church comes from the Greek word "Ekklesia." Ekklesia is made up of two other words: "Ek," which means "out of" and "Kaleo," which means "to call." Thus, the word Ekklesia (Church) means "the called out ones" from different cultural backgrounds and races (Conner 1989: 21). The church is one universal body of believers. In this context, when the word Church is written with an uppercase "C" reference is being made to the universal body of Christ. When it is written with lowercase "c" it has reference to the local church, thus, the church in a specific geographical place.

Early Church

This term has reference to the Church of the first century. That is the Church in the early days of her existence (McLeod ed. 1986: 266) during and under the leadership of the original apostles of Jesus as we read or is recorded in the book of the Acts of the Apostles (Acts1: 20 – 26).

Gentiles

This term was used by Hebrews (Jews) to refer to all the people who had not received or not practicing the law of Moses (International Bible Dictionary 1977: 168). Sometimes the word 'Greek' is used instead of Gentile.

Jew

A Jew is a member of the Semitic people who are descended from the ancient Israelites. In specific terms it has to be a person or a member of the ancient tribe of Judah (Unger 1957: 588). In the olden days one has to be a person whose religion is Judaism although now it is no longer the case. A Jew can be a member of any other religion of his/her own choice.

Scriptures

It has reference to the sacred and or authoritative Christian writings, thus, both the Old and the New Testaments. In most instances the singular term, Scripture would refer to

the Old Testament passages which have been quoted or alluded to in the New Testament (Unger 1957:983).

Challenge

It refers to an open invitation or summon, to the South African local churches to do something positive in a democratic country about our ugly and painful past of segregation. The challenge is for the local churches to take part in a contest. It also refers to the Church in South Africa to call into question all the local churches which wish to retain their homogeneous status in the new and the democratic South Africa. Finally it refers to the demands for changes in the outlook of all local churches (McLeod ed. 1986: 139).

Missionary

Is a member of a missionary movement sent by his/her organization in a foreign country for a short or long period of time to do a religious and social work (Mathews and Smith 1921: 286). The campaign or work undertaken by missionaries is referred to as a 'mission'.

New South Africa

It refers to the period from 1994 when all South Africans, both Black and White, for the first time in the history of their country cast their votes to choose a government of their choice. It also refers to a South Africa where a person is not judged or discriminated upon on the basis of the colour of the skin, race or culture. Instead it points to a country where one has freedom of movement, association and expression without fear of victimization by the state, any group of people or an individual. It is a country where all its citizens are treated equally before the law.

Farmer

A White person who owns, operates, or manages a farm (McLeod ed. 1986: 306) in apartheid South Africa, as well as a person who had privileges to own, operate and manage commercial and fertile portions of land in the old South Africa.

Capitalism

Is an economic system based on the private ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange (McLeod ed. 1986: 124). It is also called 'free enterprise' or 'private enterprise' whereby one person or a group of a few elite control the wealth of the country. It is a system whereby opportunity favours the few or the "privileged." Where this system is in operation, it is usual that the rich get richer while the poor who get poorer are said to be lazy.

Chief

Is a ruler of an African traditional community. A chief is a traditional authority that observes a system of a customary law (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996: 123). He or she is the head or leader of the village or tribe or clan. He or she has the authority to evict or grant permission to anyone to occupy or make use of the land. He or she is the supreme owner of the land on which his or her subjects live, plough for food, hunt and look after their cattle. He or she was seen by his or her subjects as a father/ mother, protector, provider and judge over them.

Pentecost

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the apostles and the hundred twenty that had gathered in the upper room in Jerusalem as Jesus commanded them to wait before they went out to preach the Gospel as is recorded in the book of Acts 2.

Settlers

It refers to persons who settle in a new distant country from their homeland but continue to maintain ties (McLeod ed. 1986:782). In this context it specifically refers to the White colonists on their arrival in South Africa from 1652 in the Cape.

Diaspora

The term means dispersion or scattering (Mathews and Smith 1921: 131) .in this context it applies specifically to the scattering of African Black people throughout the world due to slavery. It is the collective term for African communities outside the continent of Africa. The term also refers to the African people spread around the world while

continuing to regard the African continent as their home.

Nationalism

It refers to Black people's efforts and devotion to the interests of their own nation. Herein it specifically refers to the patriotic feelings, the desire, commitment and plans for a national independence by the Black people in South Africa.

African

This term in its restricted meaning refers to the people of Africa, having to do with Africa, its people, their languages, or their ways of life. It refers to persons born or living in Africa, especially a person belonging to one of the indigenous tribes of Africa, a Black person.

Language

It is human speech and the basis of man's uniqueness over the rest of nature. It is the very essence and distinguishing character of culture. It also refers to human speech as used by different cultural groups of people, tribes or nations as the manner in which they express themselves. Language is a tool and a vehicle (Kofi 2005: 142) of culture but not an end in itself.

Hellenist Jews

The term refers to the Jews who were scattered amongst the nations around the world and so started to adopt other languages, customs, cultures and the ideals especially those of the Greeks (Unger 1957: 467). This happened after the conquest by Alexander the Great in the 300's B.C.

Hebraic Jews

The term refers to the Jews that remained in their homeland after others were taken to captivity or exile (Acts 6:1). These were the people that kept the Hebrew language, customs their culture alive as compared to the Hellenists.

African Indigenous Churches

The term refers to the churches, denominations or local churches that were initiated in Africa by African people themselves. These churches were not started by Europeans and

Americans or other people from outside of Africa (Makhubu 1988: 1 – 2). These are churches started to meet the spiritual needs of African people. African spirituality is seen in the manner that African people worship God through singing, communicating or preaching the Word of God and ministering to each other, especially in times of sickness, death of the loved ones, need, and so on.

Acts

This is one of the books of the Christian Bible in the New Testament. It is the Acts of the Apostles. The book of Acts covers a period of some 30 years, from the birth of the church on the Day of Pentecost to the close of Paul's imprisonment at Rome. It describes the spread of Christianity around the northern Mediterranean through to present day Syria, Turkey and Greece and to the heart of the Roman Empire. The 'acts' related are mainly those of the apostle Peter and Paul. (The book may as well be called the 'acts of the Holy Spirit). It is under direction of the Holy Spirit that the newborn church burst through the national frontiers of Israel to become an international worldwide movement (Alexander 1983:549).

Apartheid

This was an ideology of racial division of White, Black, Coloured and Indian people of South Africa. One strong argument for apartheid was that it would provide Blacks with an opportunity for self-expression. It was almost generally agreed that Blacks would not be able to fulfill themselves in a European society, and that they would, for a very long time at least, have to play second fiddle within the White society. Thus it was seen as a deed of compassion to grant Blacks full citizenship and cultural rights in their own environment (Loubser 1987: XV).

Apartheid was a way of total White domination over the majority population of South Africa.

ANC (African National Congress)

This was a liberation movement formed in the year 1912. Then it was known as the South

African Native Congress. It was in 1923 that the organization changed its name to ANC, dropping out the derogatory term 'native' in favour of the more acceptable term 'African' (Hope and Young 1981: 37). The apartheid government in 1960 banned the ANC but it was unbanned in 1990 February 10. In 1994 the ANC contested and won the first general election for a democratic government of South Africa.

Black

This is the term used to refer to a member of a dark-skinned race (McLeod ed. 1986: 82) in this context it is used with special reference to the indigenous people of African descent living in the continent of Africa and the Diaspora in Europe, America and other places outside the continent.

Christianity

This is a religion which is an outgrowth of the life, death, burial and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It centers on his personality and consists of the teaching and way of life made possible by Christ. (Mathews and Smith ed. 1921: 91).

Colonialism

This is the maintenance of political, social, economic power, and cultural domination over people by a foreign power for an extended period of time. It further refers to the policy and practice of power in extending control over other people or areas (McLeod ed. 1986: 167).

Contextualisation

Is an attempt to communicate the message, the Person, the works, the words, and the will of God in a way that is faithful to God's revelation, especially as it is put forth in the teaching of the Holy Scriptures, and is meaningful to respondents in their respective cultural and existential context.

Culture

"The culture is the total sum of all that has spontaneously arisen for the advancement of

life and expression of spiritual, moral life – all social intercourses ... (Niebuhr 1951: 31).” It is a design by which people order their lives, interpret their experience, and evaluate the behaviour of others. Culture is knowledge and values that are passed on from generation to generation in a social group. Culture has an effect on the way people think; it can also have influence on behaviour. However, unlike the genetic characteristics of humankind, it is passed on through social rather than biological means.

Cultural Diversity

This refers to people of different cultural backgrounds, each with his/her unique and different cultural trends and aspects like their own language, values, custom, food, religion and dress code, found or functioning in the same setting. Each cultural group respects and recognizes the cultures of other groups around them. Different members of the same community may give different versions of what is sanctioned by their group; while actual observation will reveal broad differences in behaviour that reflect the variety of accepted sanctions. We may all have our own cultures, but we also recognize and respect the cultures of those around us; for our cultures **are all** diverse from one another (Herskovits 1963:500).

Dutch East Indian Company

This is the company under which Jan van Riebeck arrived in South Africa in 1652. The Dutch political period stretches from 1652 to 1795. During this period the church was subjected to the authority of the company and co-operated with the power politics of the Dutch East Indian Company. The idea of social segregation can be observed as early as 1655 when van Riebeck contested the claims of the native Strandlopers in the Table Bay area (Loubser 1987:4).

Dutch Reformed Church (DRC)

This is the church brought to South Africa with Jan van Riebeck in 1652, with his fellows, the members of the Dutch East Indian Company, including ministers of the gospel. The membership in the early 1980’s according to Loubser comprises 60% of the Afrikaner population and 38% of all other White population of the country. The DRC was the primary supporting denomination of the Nationalist party and the apartheid

government of South Africa.

Great Commission

This term refers to the command of Jesus to the original apostles, the eleven, and later to the whole Christian church. The Great Commission is to go to all the nations of the world and make disciples. “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything. I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always to the very end of the age (Matthew 28:19-20).”

Imperialism

This refers to the policies and practices of extending Europe and America’s rule over African countries with specific reference to South Africa (McLeod ed. 1986: 424). It can take a number of forms, political or colonialism, economic control and exploitation and subjugation of the indigenous people.

Local Church

The local church is an organized group of believers in a given locality, gathered to the person of Jesus Christ, which exists for the purpose of worship, the administration of the sacraments, the advancement of the preaching of the gospel in a given specific geographical place, and yet recognizing their unity in spirit with all other believers in their localities as well as world-wide (Conner 1989: 57).

Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism is the plurality of cultures. It is recognition of the equal value of different cultures, is the affirmation and unconditional acceptance of different cultures. Broadly conceived multiculturalism is critical of and resistant to the necessarily reductive imperatives of monoculture assimilation. Multiculturalism is used in a descriptive fashion to reference the undeniable variety of cultures inter – and internationally (Goldberg 1994:7).

Thomson describes multiculturalism in three ways: firstly, it has something to do with

culture: secondly, it points to a plurality of cultures; and thirdly, it refers to a specific manner of responding to that plurality, hence the suffix 'ism' which signifies a normative doctrine (Thomson, 1997).

PAC (Pan African Congress)

This is one of the major liberation movements in the South African politics. The PAC was formed out of the ANC under the leadership of Mangaliso Robert Sobukwe, a teacher and Methodist minister of the Gospel of Christ Jesus in 1959 (Hope and Young 1981: 41). Their liberation army was called APLA (the Azanian People's Liberation Army). Their philosophy, which promises all people of African decent living on the continent of Africa and around the globe, is called Pan Africanism. It is an idea, which tries to create a bond between Africans in Africa and those in the Diaspora.

Racism

This refers to a theory that holds that people belonging to one race are biologically and culturally superior to others not of the same race. This problem has existed at least since the time of Aristotle. Each group, if it thinks about the matter at all, invariably reaches the conclusion that it is superior, and finds evidence of a sort to support its claims. Some writers have attributed this superiority of their people to favorable geographical influences, but others are inclined to biological explanation (Berry and Tischler 1978: 48-49).

SACP (South African Communist Party)

This is one of the tripartite alliances, between the ANC, SACP and COSATU (Congress of South Africa Trade Union). The South African Communist Party was formed in 1921 (Hope and Young 1981: 39).

Segregation

This is the act, process, or state of being set apart. It is a form of isolation that places limits or restrictions on contact, communication and social relations. It is a form of partial ostracism, superimposed on a minority or majority by the dominant group. It also involved unequal treatment and it is a condition forced on one group by another usually

the dominant group. However, segregation is not always the outcome of either coercion or discrimination. Sometimes in many instances it is voluntary.

Whites

This term is used to describe members of the Caucasian race or people of European decent (McLeod ed 1986: 989). These are people with 'light' skin. In here it refers to people (whites) as they regard themselves as the superior race during apartheid era.

1.9 Proposed Dissertation Outline

CHAPTER ONE: Introduction: Mapping the Landscape

This chapter deals with the background and information of the study, the research problem or problem formulation, aims and research objectives of the study, assumption, research methodology, critical research questions, the relevance or rationale of the study, definition of the key concepts, proposed dissertation outline and concludes with a literature review.

CHAPTER TWO: The Challenge of Multiculturalism in the Early Church.

This chapter explores the challenges faced by the Early Church with regard to the phenomenon of multiculturalism in the first century. According to the Bible the issue of multiculturalism is not a new challenge of the 21st century, it is as old as the church, and this is recorded in Acts 6:1-7. The Grecian Jews complained against the Hebraic Jews because their windows were being overlooked or left out in the daily distribution of food. The apostles called together the disciples to resolve this cultural tension. In the book of Galatians we will look at how Paul deals with Peter in relation to the multiculturalism pretence. It will also explore the first Gentile church in Antioch. This church had a multicultural membership and leadership.

CHAPTER THREE: The Historical Background of the Church and Racism in

South Africa (18th – 20th Century)

This chapter examines and analyses the arrival of missionaries in Africa, in particular South Africa. The missionaries' contribution, that is their functions and activities in the Church, towards the development of racism will be researched and documented in this chapter. The nature and the effects of racism such as dividing the Church and the whole country of South Africa will be critically analyzed in this chapter. The rise of African indigenous churches will also be discussed in here.

CHAPTER FOUR: Understanding the Nature of Culture According to Various Scholarly Perspectives: A Case Study

Chapter four focuses at what different scholars say about culture and how they define it. It continues to look at how culture is misunderstood especially in the Church context. It is in this chapter where multiculturalism will be defined as it will be applied in this thesis, with special reference to the local churches in South Africa.

CHAPTER FIVE: The Challenge of Multiculturalism in the Local Churches of South Africa.

This chapter will analyze and interpret the challenge of multiculturalism in the local churches with regard to the changes taking place in South Africa, as a democratic country. It will deal with issues pertaining to language, leadership, community, contextualisation and equality in relation to cultural diversity in the local churches.

CHAPTER SIX: Presentation of Data and Analysis

This chapter presents and interprets the findings of the whole research, as was provided by participants during the workshops, through the questionnaires. It will also conclude by suggesting the way forward for multiculturalism in the local churches in a democratic South Africa and the Christian world at large and finally it provides the bibliography.

CHAPTER SEVEN: Summary and Recommendations

Chapter seven present the conclusion of the whole thesis in the form of a summary. As the last chapter of this thesis it also suggests some recommendations as to the way forward in the local churches of South Africa. These recommendations are drawn from what is learnt during the research period.

1.10 Literature Review

The coming of the European and North American missionaries changed the successful and rich history of the church in Africa. The church has since become divided, passive, irrelevant and stagnant. The missionaries were ignorant and careless of the African ideals, aspirations, culture and heritage. They tended to consider themselves and their cultures to be superior to Africans and their cultures. From the time White people set foot on African soil they were involved with the racial and cultural situation and a struggle for survival by dominating their African counterparts. Their teachings were nothing but the product of European and American cultures. Veldsman explains this when he say that missionary theology had been shaped by the culture and history and conditions in the countries they had come from, and in many ways very, very different from the original theology of Africa, Egypt and Ethiopia. Most of these western missionaries came to Africa in the 19th century and in the previous centuries their own culture had undergone several transformations that made it very difficult indeed for them to relate to the cultures they found among the people of Africa.

The missionaries were influenced by their culture to have a particular mental picture of what the church ought to look like. Academic training was provided by the missionaries in various ways, and the theology they taught was based on the image they had of the church as it had developed in their own culture, in their countries. Their theology was taught in seminaries, bible schools, theological colleges and eventually in universities (Veldsman 2000:38-39).

With this kind of background, the White population felt they were a superior race to the

Black population. The problem of the physiological and pathological difference among racial groups has been greatly overshadowed by the debate on the question of superiority and inferiority. The problem has existed at least since the time of Aristotle. Each group, if it thinks about the matter at all, invariably reaches the conclusion that it is superior, and finds evidence of sort to support its claim (Berry and Tischler 1978:48-49).

Berry and Tischler continue to say that, some people have attributed the superiority of their people to favorable geographical influences, but others incline to a biological explanation (Berry and Tischler 1978:49). The latter seem to have been often used by Whites missionaries against Africans. Colour started to play a vital role in the disunity of the church in South Africa from the early beginning. In the 1700's the Whites probably already saw themselves as a group distinctive from the rest. They called themselves "Christians" in contrast to people of colour (Loubser 1987:5). In 1780 governor van Plettenberg reported that it would require more than human effort to convince the colonists to accept the "caffirs" as fellow human beings and fellow Christians. The name, which according to the governor, the colonists used to express their feelings toward the Xhosas, was "heathen" (Loubser 1987:5). This simply shows the division that was starting to emerge in the church in South Africa from the arrival of White people. To be a Christian one had to be White and to be a heathen simply means to be black.

Since one cannot change the colour of his or her skin, for the Black people to be a Christian would mean for them to forsake their culture and heritage and embrace those of a White man. This should be done without any question, because asking questions would be equal to rebellion. This was so because White people felt that Black people were not racially pure and clean although one could not also classify them as animals. Loubser reports that at the end of the eighteenth century race prejudice was firmly established everywhere in South Africa (Loubser 1987:6). Segregation became the order of the day everywhere, in politics and even in the Church. This went on to damage Black people's self image, to the point that some of them could not resist accepting the status of inferiority given them by White people, who at the same time claimed to be Christians. Charles Taylor made this point clear by saying that,

White society has for generations projected a demeaning image of Black people, which some of them have been unable to resist adopting. Their own self-depreciation, in this view, became one of the most potent instruments of their own oppression. Their first task ought to be to purge themselves of this imposed and destructive identity.

Taylor continues to say that recently, a similar point has been made in relation to indigenous and colonized people in general. It is held that since 1492, Europeans have projected an image of such people as somehow inferior, "uncivilized", and through the force of conquest, have often been able to impose this image on the conquered (Taylor 1992:75-76).

No group of people can oppress another group of people forever: the oppressed will one day rise to demand, and not to ask for, their freedom. For God has created man not to be dominated by another, but to dominate all other things. All men are created to subdue and rule all things such as animals and plants. The Bible makes this clear in the book of Genesis, the book of the beginning.

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him: male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground--everything that has the breath of life in it--I give every green plant for food." And it was so. (Genesis 1: 26-30).

Whenever and wherever man violates this command of God, the Creator, and start to dominate another man, rather than the fish of the sea, the birds of the air and every creature that moves on the ground, He creates a need in the life of the dominated, to seek freedom. Taylor explains this need by saying,

A number of strands in contemporary politics turn on the need, sometimes the demand, for recognition. The need, it can be argued, is one of the driving forces behind nationalist movement in politics. And the demand comes to the fore in a number of ways in to day's politics, on behalf of minority or "subaltern" groups, in some forms of feminism, and in what is today called the politics of "multiculturalism" (Taylor 1992:75).

Multiculturalism is the existence, recognition and functioning of more than one culture in the same place. It is the plurality of cultures. Joppke and Lukes gives a brief history of multiculturalism in Canada and Australia by saying,

Multiculturalism first appeared in Canada and Australia in the early 1970's. After belatedly abandoning their 'White only' immigration policies, these young immigration societies called an official multiculturalism to the rescue in order to juggle the incompatible claim of defeated European immigrant groups, and their old European cores. Interestingly, official multiculturalism was instituted in post-colonial societies that lacked independent nation founding myths and clear breaks with their colonial past, an *Americaine*, thus conceiving of themselves as multiple cultures coexisting under the roof of a neutral state. This could not be so in the United States, the next state of multiculturalism's tour de monde where a strong sense of political nationhood and centripetal melting – pot ideology, could only clash with multiculturalism's ethnicizing and centrifugal thrust. Accordingly, only in the United State did multiculturalism adopt the oppositional, anti-institutional stance that it would retain in its further march towards Western Europe (Joppke and Lukes 1999:3).

McLaren continues to define multiculturalism by mentioning the four positions held within the debate over multiculturalism as conservative multiculturalism, liberal multiculturalism, left-liberal multiculturalism and critical multiculturalism.

a) Conservative multiculturalism

Conservative multiculturalism can be traced to colonial views of African-Americans as slaves, servants, and entertainers, views which were embedded in the self-serving congratulatory and profoundly imperialist attitude of Europe and North America.

Such an attitude depicted Africa as deprived of the saving graces of Western civilization. It can also be located in evolutionary theories, which supported United State Manifest Destiny, imperial largesse, and Christian imperialism. It can further be seen as a direct result of the legacy doctrines of White supremacy while biologized Africans are classed as "creatures" by equating them with the earliest stages of human development. Africans were likened by whites to savage beasts or merry-hearted singing and dancing children.

b) Liberal Multiculturalism

Liberal Multiculturalism argues that a natural equality exists among whites, African-Americans, Latinos, Asians, and other racial populations. This perspective is based on the intellectual "sameness" among the races, on their cognitive equivalence or the rationality imminent in all races that permits them to compete equally in a capitalist society. However, from the point of view of liberal multiculturalism, equality is absent in the United States (as much as in South Africa) society, not because of Black or Latino cultural deprivation, but because social and educational opportunities do not exist which permit everyone to compete equally in the capitalist marketplace (which obviously affects the church). Unlike their critical counterpart, liberal multiculturalists believe that existing cultural, social, and economic constraints can be modified or reformed in order for relative equality to be realized. This view often collapses into an ethnocentric and oppressively universalistic humanism in which the legitimating norms, which govern the substance of citizenship, are identified most strongly with Anglo-American cultural-political communities.

c) Left-Liberal Multiculturalism

Left-Liberal Multiculturalism emphasizes cultural differences and suggests that the stress on the equality of races smothers those important cultural differences between races that are responsible for different behaviours, values, attitudes, cognitive styles, and social practices. Left-Liberal Multiculturalism feels that the mainstream

approaches to multiculturalism occlude characteristics and differences related to race, class, gender, and sexuality. The Left-Liberal position tends to exoticize “otherness” in a nativistic retreat that locates difference in a primeval past of cultural authenticity. Those who work within this perspective have a tendency to essentialise cultural differences, however, and ignore the historical and cultural “situatedness” of difference. Difference is understood as a form of signification removed from social and historical constants. That is, there is a tendency to ignore difference as a social and historical construction that is constitutive of the power to repeat meanings. It is often assumed that there exists an authentic “female” or “African-American” or “Latino” experience or way of being in the world. Left-Liberal multiculturalism treats difference as an “essence” that exists independently of history, cultural and power.

d) Critical multiculturalism

Critical multiculturalism is from the perspective of a resistance, poststructuralist approach to meaning, and emphasizing the role that language and representation play in the construction of meaning and identity. From the perspective of what McLaren calls “critical multiculturalism”, representatives of race, class, and gender are understood as the result of larger social struggles over signs and meanings and in this way emphasises not simply textual play or metaphorical displacement as a form of resistance (as in the case of left-liberal multiculturalism), but stresses the central task of transforming the social, cultural, and institutional relations in which meanings are generated. Resistance (also called critical) multiculturalism also refuses to see culture as non-conflict, harmonious, and consensual. Democracy is understood from this perspective as busy – it’s not seamless, smooth or always a harmonious political and cultural state of affairs. Resistance multiculturalism does not see diversity itself as a goal, but rather argues that diversity must be affirmed within politics of cultural criticism and a commitment to social justice. It must be attentive to the notion of “difference”. Difference is always a product of history, culture, power, and ideology. Difference occurs between and among groups and must be understood in terms of the

specificity of their production. Critical multiculturalism interrogates the construction of difference and identity in relation to radical politics. It is positioned against the neo-imperial romance with mono ethnicity grounded in a shared or "common" experience of "America" that is associated with conservative and liberal strands of multiculturalism (McLaren 1993:47-53).

Multiculturalism without transformative political, social, relational and cultural agenda can be just another form of accommodation of the larger social order, even in the church. For the transformation to take place there will be a great demand for commitment and perseverance. This is so because multiculturalism comes with its own sets of problems and challenges. The Church in South Africa must be prepared to face these challenges. Some of the problems and challenges that the Church in South Africa will have to face as she embarks on this journey of multiculturalism will be the following:

1.10.1 Cultural Drift

Cultural drift is the process that takes a long period of time to slowly bring in changes or erode some usual way of life in a particular culture. According to Varathan it is a phenomenon for people to drift or lose some of their cultural values and practices through enculturation (Varathan 2003: 21). "Cultural drift is the process whereby "minor alterations slowly change the character and form of a way of life, but where the continuity of the event is apparent (cf. Luzbatek 1988: 296)." Varathan further gave an example of people of Indian origin who are now living in South Africa. According to him the Indian people in South Africa have lost some of their cultural values through multiculturalism, and have adapted many 'western' ways of life. "This is manifested in the language, dress, and some of the foods eaten and the way it is cooked (Varathan 2003:21)."

People of Indian origin are drifting not only towards the 'western' way of life as Varathan says. We must remember that the Indians that Varathan is referring to are

in Africa, in context South Africa. In other words, Indians in Africa are drifting towards the African culture. In terms of the South African situation, both Indians and Europeans are drifting towards the African culture. The African people are also drifting towards both the Indian and the European cultures. In multiculturalism is never the situation of the winner takes all. It is a place of borrowing and/or lending. To use his words it "a potential borrowing-lending situation (Luzbetak 1988: 341)." If Indians are living in Africa and among the African people and are not drifting towards each other but only towards the western culture, therefore, both of them have no culture. And by so saying, we will be giving the western culture a supreme status above the African and the Indian cultures.

1.10.2 Cultural Loss

Cultural loss is an act or instance of losing (McLeod ed. 1986: 501) of a culture by a particular group of people or community of people. Cultural "loss consists in the dislodgement of a traditional pattern ... This type of cultural change often takes place as a kind of chain reaction: one element in a culture disappears and many things associated with it disappears as well (Luzbetak 1988: 298)." Varathan concurs with Luzbetak but he took the discussion further when he wrote that.

Most often, we tend to think of change as an accumulation of innovations; new things being added to those already there. We do so because this seems so much a part of the way we live. A little reflection, however, leads to the realization that frequently the acceptance of a new innovation leads to the loss of an older one (Varathan 2003:23).

However, multiculturalism would not mean one group losing its culture in the sense of being dominated by another group, the majority or the minority. It would mean losing in a 'creative sense' the ability of coming up with something new that embraces part of the involved cultures without one dominating the other.

Varathan further makes his point by quoting Haviland: he said, "For example, the

Indians of northeastern North America learned the art of making pottery, which then came into widespread use in the region. By the time Europeans arrived on the scene, this seemingly useful trait had, been lost among some of them, and containers were made of cane and birch bark instead. Actually, pottery is heavier and more fragile than baskets and birch bark containers, a serious drawn back for people who move about from one campsite to another and must carry their belongings themselves. Basketry and birch bark were better adapted to their way of life than pottery (cf. Varathan 2003: 23).” Both Varathan and Haviland see the Indians of North America as having lost their art of making pottery, which was at one stage widespread throughout that region. They agree that it was replaced by baskets and birch bark containers. Varathan and Haviland say that the pottery is heavier and breakable. However they fail to realize that the art of pottery was never lost. It has been used ever since and it is still used in the modern world. It may not have been good or ideal to carry around because of the weight and its breakability. It is however, still used in today’s world in both rural and urban areas. The Europeans are actually the people who seem to be using clay articles more often in the form of dishes and cups. In other words, both clay containers and baskets, and birch bark containers were never lost from either group, the Indians and the Europeans. Therefore, multiculturalism has actually benefited each cultural group. The Indians of North America may have lost the original way of making their clay, heavier containers, but their clay containers are still around and used in a beneficial way, both by Europeans and North Americans themselves.

1.10.3 Acculturation

“Acculturation is cultural changes that occur as result of prolonged contact between societies (Varathan 2003:24).” This is further echoed by Haviland, as referenced by Varathan when he says, “Acculturation results when groups of individuals who have different cultures come into intensive firsthand contact with subsequent massive changes in the original cultural patterns of one or both groups. It’s numerous variables that include degrees of cultural difference, circumstance, intensity,

frequency, and amiability of contact, relative status of the agents of contact, who is dominant and who is submissive, and whether the nature of the flow is reciprocal or non-reciprocal (Varathan 2003: 24).”

As it is said, ‘no man is an island’ which simply means that no person lives a whole life by himself. One way or another he/she influences others. It is parents or teachers, friends or enemies, religion or culture. We influence other people and they also influence us, our culture influences other cultures and they in turn influence ours, this may be either positive or negative. So is acculturation. People of different cultures when they come together they effect change on each other’s life and culture. Varathan continues to quote Haviland to elaborate on what may happen during acculturation by quoting the six terms used by anthropologist.

- a) Substitution – it is when an old cultural practice is replaced by a new one that fulfills its function in a community and that involves a minimal structural change. “Substitution may be complete or partial. As a rule, it is partial (Luzbetak 1988: 296).”
- b) Syncretism – is the outcome of the mixing of the old and the new cultural traits to form a new system, possibly resulting in considerable cultural change. For example, the mine language called ‘Fanakalo’ it is a mixture of a number of languages.
- c) Addition – it when new traits or complexes are added to the existing cultural structure which may or may not result in major changes. “Is the introduction of additional elements into the culture without a corresponding displacement (Luzbetak 1988: 298).”
- d) Deculturation – it is also called Revolution. It is a change suddenly precipitated with more or less force that results in affecting a bigger portion of the old culture of which a substantial part of a culture may be lost (Luzbetak 1988: 295).
- e) Origination – new traits to meet the needs of the changing situation.
- f) Rejection – in which changes may be so rapid that a large number of persons cannot accept them, resulting in total rejection, rebellion, or revitalization

movements. "It is the tendency of a society to resist change in a wide area of life (Luzbetak 1988: 294)." (cf. Varathan 2003: 25).

1.10.4 Forcible Change

Cultures change more easily and faster when there is a desire and will for change from the people themselves. When force is applied people tend to resist change. For example, the apartheid government tried to force that Afrikaans become the national language in South Africa. The result of their force was the Soweto uprising that almost set the county on fire. The students did not like Afrikaans, hence, the revolt. "A society that expects and favors change will change more readily than that one that considers change undesirable, impossible, unthinkable, or evil (Luzbetak 1988: 332)."

Forcible change is another phenomenon with regards to multiculturalism. Quite logically, instances of the acceptance of change are higher when the elements of change results from a need within the society. This way represents a society's striving to adapt economically to the world-wide technological revolution, even though the ramifications of the change may be felt throughout the society. The changing roles of women in Africa, or, for that matter in the United States, may be considered an example of such a change. However, changes are often imposed from outside a culture, usually by colonialism and conquest. Once primary ties of culture, social relationships, and activities are broken and meaningless activity is imposed by force, individuals and groups characteristically react with fantasy, withdrawal, and escape (Varathan, 2003:26).

The innovators of change must make sure that they bring more if not all people to a place where they see the good and the benefit of change. In this way change will be faster, easier and smooth than when it is forced.

1.10.5 Offensive Cultural Practices

The biggest challenge in South Africa is lack of understanding and tolerance of each other's culture. People easily attach their own meaning to another group of people actions or deeds without enquiring from the people concerned. Instead many read book written by authors who themselves perhaps did not have a clue of the concerned

culture. One of the most sensitive and always misunderstood cultural practices is the slaughtering of animals (cattle, sheep or goats) in the suburbs formally reserved for the White population only.

Another problem and challenge that we see in the 'new South Africa' is where one's cultural practices becoming offensive to another. With many people of 'colour' moving into affluent suburbs like Sandton, Umhlanga Rocks has some form of multicultural problems and challenges. For example, Hindus celebrate a festival called 'Diwali' (festival of lights) once a year. This festival is celebrated by lighting of fireworks and firecrackers, which is quite noisy. This scares pets and other animals. As a consequence of living among people of other cultures who may not like the noise of firecrackers, a problem is created. Sometimes one's culture may be entwined in their religious believes. The use of religious poles (jhunda) in front yards of homes among Hindus could be offensive to people of other cultures. Some may complain that the bamboo poles and flags spoil the appearance of their suburb. Another example of multicultural problems in the 'new South Africa' is the slaughtering of animals in ancestral worship among certain groups of people in the **African culture**. **This may be offensive** to people of other cultures, who may complain that animals must be slaughtered in an abattoir. Multiculturalism in schools and churches in the 'new South Africa' has also its own challenges and problems (Varathan 2003:27).

What Varathan has explained above is the main challenge of the new democratic South Africa, the challenge of one's culture or cultural practices becoming an offense to another cultural group. It would be better perhaps to simply call these "challenges" rather than "problems" as Varathan calls them. These challenges are found in the neighborhoods, in business offices or boardrooms, in almost all the sporting codes (as we often hear on the news about perceived racial issues in rugby), in educational institutions, from pre-primary to the university level, educators have to deal with learners of different cultures, in churches the pastor has to help by comforting, counseling, solemnizing marriages, sometimes racial mix-marriage, conduct funerals of people from different cultures. These different people of different cultures exist alongside each other. This is multiculturalism. This study is therefore a contribution to this debate and the urgent and demanding need for multiculturalism in the local churches of South Africa. Looking

back to the past state of the church in South Africa, there is no one who can deny that there is a need for transformation in the church in South Africa. Such action will be an attempt to bring about patience, tolerance and recognition of other people's culture, no matter how they differ from our own. Through the practice of multiculturalism, with its challenges, equity, justice and equality will be ensured not only in the church but also in society in general. The embracing of other people's cultures in the church especially the local churches, because that is where members of different cultures come together daily rather than, their denominational headquarters or ecumenical conference that meet once in a while, requires openness, willingness and commitment to understand others and to change one's presuppositions and ingrained prejudice. We do not need to be like each other but to understand each other. The call of multiculturalism has nothing to do with 'sameness' but with 'oneness'. In other words it is about the togetherness of the people of God. This will require a major paradigm shift from church leaders, pastors of local churches as well as denominational leaders, and church members as well, without whom the leadership cannot achieve multiculturalism.

The church has to accept all people of different cultures as God's children. There is no excuse for the church to be mono-culture. Haslem made a insightful comment when he said that, for Christians the most fundamental and subversive value is that all people are of equal worth, for all are children of the same God, in the same human family – difficult though it is to believe at times. That means that we must continually be seeking rightness and justice in human relationships, both individual and corporate (Haslem 2000:125). If all people are of equal value and are all children of one and the same God, the church has a challenge to treat them with dignity and offer them the same treatment in spite of their different cultures. This would need the leaders of the church in South Africa, as well as the members, to be equipped and prepared for the challenge of multiculturalism, hence the need for this research. This is necessary because we share a past which discouraged the toleration or acceptance of our differences. These differences were used to divide us, but now we can learn to see them as a means of complementing one another and seeing one another as God's children – in spite of or even because of our differences.

The fact that we are all of equal worth means that we share some similarities within our different cultures. Kraft agrees when he says that beneath the vast array of differences between human cultures lies an equally impressive substratum of basic human similarity. The Scriptures as well as the behavioral sciences assume this similarity (Kraft 1979:81). We may have different cultures but we all have the same basic needs because we are all children of the same God. The differences of our cultures are just the results of different groups of people, at different places and at different times trying to meet the same basic needs. There is a need in the church today to change and start to see all people regardless of the colour of their skin and culture as children of the same Father, God the creator of us all. Such a paradigm shift must be approached positively, even though it has often proved confusing to Christians strongly influenced by the preceding evolutionary tradition that saw western culture as the end product of a long development towards 'the perfect culture'. Seeing the aborigines and the Hottentots as possessors of traditions just as long as our own, rather than as example of 'stunted growth' in a process that was intended to make them like us, enables us to better appreciate God's concern for and fairness to all people, not simply Westerns. Such a view, further, helps us to recognize that Christianity is considerably more than merely the 'tribal religion' of western culture -- as many of our critics contend (Kraft 1979:82).

If we do not make the necessary adjustment in the local churches now, Christianity will be looked as a "White man's religion", since almost everything in the church today is interpreted and measured by the western way of understanding. Perhaps the fact that any form of discrimination contravenes South Africa's constitution is another catalyst to position the church to truly impact the society with the gospel. The church in South Africa, particularly at local level should see the coming of people of different colours and cultures as God given opportunity to demonstrate His love for all people, an opportunity, the church cannot afford to miss. McAfee Brown calls this special time "the kairos". The theological word kairos (like so many other theological words) is simply the transliteration of a Greek word for "time" a very special kind of time. It is usually

contrasted with another transliterated Greek word for time, "chronos", from which we derive several familiar English words such as "chronology" and "chronological". Chronos stands for ordinary time, "clock-time", the succession of moments by means of which we divide our lives into seconds, minutes, hours, days, months, years, decades, centuries, eons. It is a tidy word, when we ask, "What time is it?" we can be assured of clear-cut answers: "like twenty-one minutes past eleven," or "Just time for the six o'clock news," or "He ran the hundred yard dash in 9.6 seconds" (McAfee Brown 1990:2-3).

Church leaders and their members, especially so, in South Africa need to recognise this special time provided by God. This is not the "chronos" but the "kairos" of God for his people, the Church. The church cannot afford to sleep through this time. Multicultural churches are going to be the answer during this time provided by God for us. The church should take advantage of this time, the kairos. We cannot afford to have churches divided today simply because of cultural reasons. Monoculture local churches were only fit for the apartheid period, the chronos.

Things are not so tidy when we examine kairos. The word is used in the Bible to refer to a "right" time, a "special" time, when momentous things are happening or about to happen, in response to which we must make decisions that are likely to have far-reaching consequences. A kairos, then, is a time of opportunity demanding a response: God offers us a new set of possibilities and we have to accept or decline (McAfee Brown 1990:3).

Many churches would agree that this is a right time and a special time -- If the church responds to a kairos in a positive way, regardless of the pains of adjustment that needs to be done, great things are going to happen. Never before in the history of South Africa have we witnessed people of different cultures living in the same neighborhood, working in the same office, playing the same sport, going to the same school, attending the same church as we are experiencing in this century. This can only be a God-given special time. It is for the church to respond by embracing this time of opportunities. This is the

opportunity to learn from other cultures as they learn from us. It is an opportunity for local churches to grow by drawing members across colour line and culture. This opportunity is for the churches to be for and of all nations, colour, language, and culture. This is the time to prove to the world that we are what Desmond Tutu once called us, the "rainbow nation". Multiculturalism and cultural diversity offers the local churches of South Africa great opportunities to learn and to grow at the same time.

1.11. Conclusion

There is no doubt that South Africa has embarked on a journey of no return. It is true that the unbanning of the liberation movements by the former state president De Klerk has brought far reaching changes in this country. These changes have not left the local churches untouched. Since the Church played an active role in promoting and protecting the apartheid regime she is one of the affected by the scrapping of racial discrimination laws. Since the dawn of democracy there has been the quest for a new identity in and by the local church. Local churches are to redefine themselves and their cultural approach. Multiculturalism has become an urgent need and a challenge at the same time in the local churches of South Africa. It would seem that this is less traveled journey as far as in the context of local churches. Very little effort has been made if any with regard to multiculturalism in the local churches in South Africa, hence the importance of this research.

This will lead to the investigation of the Early Church and the issue of the challenge of multiculturalism in the first century.

CHAPTER 2

THE CHALLENGE OF MULTICULTURALISM IN THE EARLY CHURCH

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter we will focus on the Early Church in relation to the issue of multiculturalism. For this purpose we will look at the multicultural membership composition of the Early Church, the interactions of the members of the Church with their different cultures, the problems that arose in this diversity of cultures and how leaders such as Paul, Peter and James, dealt with the problem.

In this chapter we realise that the challenge of multiculturalism or cultural diversity is not a new thing. Although diversity may seem new to the Church in the democratic South Africa, this challenge has actually been in the Church since its birth. For the past twenty centuries, the Church has been grappling with the challenge of multiculturalism and the church in the new democratic South Africa is no exception.

2.2 Membership Composition

Both Jews and Gentiles (Greeks) featured prominently in the life of the Early Church. Paul and Peter were the main characters of the Early Church. It is a general understanding today in Christian circles that Paul was an apostle to the Gentiles and Peter an apostle to the Jews. However, this did not prevent Peter or Paul from ministering to the Jews and the Gentiles respectively. The two men's accounts are recorded in the book of the Acts of the Apostles, or rather, more correctly "the Acts of the Holy Spirit". As Alexander said:

The book of Acts covers a period of some 30 years, from the birth of the Church on the day of Pentecost to the close of Paul's imprisonment at Rome. It describes the spread of Christianity

around the Northern Mediterranean - through present day Syria, Turkey and Greece, to the heart of the Roman Empire. The acts related are mainly those of the apostles Peter and Paul. Though the book might well be called the acts of the Holy Spirit. It is under his direction, that the new born Church bursts through the national frontiers of Israel to become an international world-wide movement (Alexander 1983: 549).

What Alexander says is true "... the Church burst through the national frontiers of Israel to become an international world-wide movement." This becomes clear when we read that Paul preached to the Jews rather than focusing on the Gentiles only, so as to dispel any notion that the good news of the gospel was exclusively for the Gentiles. The same happened with Peter – his ministry spilled over to the Gentiles instead of focusing exclusively on the Jews. The Early church was becoming the Church for all nations.

The account of Paul and Peter's multicultural ministering is recorded in the book of Acts. Instead of Paul going to the Gentiles, we read of him going to the synagogues, places which were frequented exclusively by the Jews. In Acts chapter seventeen we read that,

When they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. As his custom was, Paul went to the Synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. "This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ", he said. Some of the Jew were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and not a few prominent women (Acts 17: 1-4).

Again in the same Chapter we read of Paul and his companions going to yet another Jewish Synagogue in Berea.

As soon as it was night, the brothers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. On arriving there, they went to the Jewish synagogue. Many of the Jews believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek woman and many Greek men (Acts 17:10 and 12).

In Acts Chapter ten and eleven, Luke recorded the account of Peter, the apostle to the Jewish people crossing over to the Gentile nationals. Peter was sent by the Spirit of God

to go to the Gentiles, for the Bible says,

While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Simon three men are looking for you. So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them (Acts 10: 19).

Here we see that the Spirit of God was sending Peter, and this time not to the Jewish people but to the Gentiles. This clearly indicates that the Spirit of God was never concerned with only one group of people but with all of His people. The same Spirit today is still concerned with people of all nationalities and all different cultures. This is clearly mentioned in chapter 10 verse 1 of the book of Acts.

At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment (Acts 10: 1).

Peter was aware that the Spirit was sending him to the Gentile people, who, by the law of the Jews, he should not be permitted to associate with. But God, through His Spirit, had shown Peter the new community he was busy building, the Church – a community of both Jews and Gentiles. No wonder Peter said to Cornelius and his relatives and close friends,

You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with a Gentile or visit him. But God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean. So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection (Acts 10: 28-29).

After a lengthy explanation by Cornelius as to why he sent messengers for Peter to come to him, his family, his relatives and his close friends, even though they were not of Jewish descent, Peter seemed to have deep understanding and conviction of what God was beginning to do. That is, God is busy building a Church without favouritism based on neither national origin or culture or colour of the skin. But, that God is building a Church composed of both Jews and Gentiles. In his words Peter said,

I now realize how true it is that God does not show favouritism but accepts men from every nation who fear Him and do what is right (Acts 10: 34).

This news reached the ears of the apostles and the Jewish brethren in Jerusalem, that

some Gentiles had received the good news and were being filled with the Holy Spirit. Some of them did not like what happened to the household of Cornelius. These were people who were holding on to the law that separates people on the bases of their nationality. They were missing the fact that the day of Pentecost was a new beginning, the birth of a Church – a Church that was going to be composed of people from different cultures and backgrounds. It was because they did not understand or believe what God was doing in the infant Church that they criticised Peter, although in fact they were criticising what God was doing. Criticising what God is doing is in essence criticising God. In this case Luke says that,

The apostles and the brothers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him and said, "You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them" (Acts 11: 1-3).

Peter, who had had a visitation by God in a vision, had at this time come to a point of total conviction and realisation of what God was doing among the Gentiles hence was unconcerned about the criticisms. Besides the vision, Peter had seen for himself what God had done among the Gentiles when He gave them the gift of the Holy Spirit just as He had given on the day of Pentecost to the Jews. Peter had come to a point of no doubt that God, Himself was doing all these amazing works which cut across cultural boundaries and if the believers did not realize this they had a limited understanding of God. Then Peter said to them,

So if God gave them the same gift as He gave us, who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could oppose God? When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, "So then, God has granted even the Gentiles repentance unto life" (Acts 11: 17-18).

Peter made his brothers, the Jews, aware that the qualification for inclusion into the Church of God is different from the requirement to being part of Judaism. By law, one would qualify to be a worshipper of God by being born a Jew or through circumcision. Peter turned their attention from the Law of Moses' circumcision, to the law of faith in God. He said to them, "...He (God) gave them (the Gentiles) the same gift (Holy Spirit)

as He gave us (some Jews), who believed (not by birth right or circumcision) in the Lord Jesus Christ. The point he was making here which is crystal clear, that is, becoming a member of the Church of Christ, has nothing to do with being a Jew by birth or circumcision but through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ the Messiah.

2.3 The Purpose of Studying the Early Church in Acts

To fulfill the study purpose of this thesis it is important to look at the value the Early Church adds to today's church, in South African. The full life story of the Early Church is clearly recorded in the book of Acts of the Apostles. Marshall said, in relation to the book of Acts,

What a reader gets out of a book and how he assesses its quality are determined to a considerable extent by the expectations with which he approaches it. These expectations may be based partly on the expressed purpose of the author and partly on the presuppositions with which the reader approaches it.

It is probable that the average reader approaches the Acts of the Apostles as the history book of the early church. He reads it in order to discover what happened in the first years of the church's existence. He will certainly find a story that answers such expectations (Marshall 1998:17).

Marshall makes a valid point when he said that most of the readers of the book of Acts approach it as a history book of the early church. This is certainly true in this context because the study examines Acts in order to discover and learn some lessons about what happened in that time in the church. In this study our focus will be in relation to the issue of multicultural diversity and how it was dealt with.

Acts is extremely important to the Church today because Luke, its author, unlike other authors like Mark who only recorded the life history of Jesus, wrote about the story of the life of Jesus and the life history of the Early Church and these have formed the foundational narrative of the Church for the future, of which we are a part. In his first book, the gospel according to Saint Luke, Luke covers the beginning of the gospel and

the establishment of salvation in the ministry of Jesus. He then finishes by writing the proclamation of salvation by the Early Church in the second volume, namely the book of Acts. Insight to realise the purpose of the book of Acts can be developed in many ways.

2.3.1 Evangelism

O'Neill insists that the main purpose of the book of Acts is evangelistic, and he makes the specific suggestion that the intended audience also consisted of educating the Romans (O'Neill 1970: 176). This is an interesting suggestion. This proves to the Church of Jesus Christ at large, represented in and around the world that Acts has a message for the Church. This also suggests that the message is still applicable and relevant to us. O'Neill continues to argue that the book of Acts is the confirmation of the Gospel.

...in the Gospel Luke was presenting the saving activity of Jesus and showing its reality. Then in Acts Luke shows how the Church proclaimed and confirmed this salvation. What Acts does in effect is to show how the salvation which was manifested by Jesus during his earthly life in a limited area of country and for a brief period becomes a reality for an increasing number of people over a wide geographical area and during an extended period of time. As a result of this, Luke - Acts could be regarded as an evangelistic work, which proclaims salvation to its readers (O'Neill 1970: 177-178).

If Acts is for evangelistic work as O'Neill argues, it means it is for all people everywhere. Its purpose has relevance for all different groups of people and is not limited to any particular era or culture. Its message can therefore be proclaimed to people of all different cultural groups, because the Gospel of Jesus Christ is to be preached and should reach all nations.

2.3.2 Both for Jews and Gentiles

The second key purpose in Acts is that it shows how the Gospel was meant for Jews as well as for the Gentiles. To make this point clear DuPont said,

Part of the demonstration lies in Luke's claim that what took place in the Early Church was in accordance with prophecy. Luke's purpose was to show not only that the rise of the Church and the

spread of salvation to the Gentiles fulfilled the prophecies in the Old Testament and the promises of Jesus (see Luke 24:47; Acts 1:4, 20; 2:16-21; 3:24; 10:43; 13:40, 47; 15:15-18; 28:25-28) (DuPont 1974: 343 - 344).

This point makes it clear that the Gospel, from its beginning, was never meant for only one group of people. DuPont shows us that Luke indicated this by referring his readers to the prophecies of both Old Testament and New Testament. Jesus crowned the prophecies by giving the promise in this regard in the book of Acts, when he said to his disciples, then designated "the apostles".

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).

Jesus' promise was inclusive of all people of the earth both Jews and Gentiles. Had he only mentioned Jerusalem and Judea it could possibly have been only exclusive for the Jews. But the moment He mentioned Samaria and the ends of the earth, He included everyone. Therefore it would be right to conclude that Acts was written to show us that the Gospel is for all people of all cultures everywhere at any given time. It is therefore right to study and apply the message of Doctor Luke from the book of Acts in the context of multiculturalism. It goes without saying that the present Church of the 21st century can draw important lessons from the book of Acts especially when we consider our racially segregated past where we did not have the chance to live or practice Christianity in a multicultural setting.

2.3.3 Political Apologetic

Commenting about this Marshall insightfully says,

... The primary purpose of Acts was to provide some kind of political apologetic for Christianity. It has sometimes been argued that the aim of Acts was to show that Christians were innocent of the political charges that were brought against them, and that in fact the Roman officials who examined such cases were agreed that the Christians had not in any way offended against the laws of the Roman Empire. It has even been suggested that Acts was written to supply the evidence needed for Paul's defense when he appeared before the Emperor Nero (Marshall 1998: 21).

Varathan agrees with Marshall that the book of Acts' primary purpose was to prove that Christians were innocent of the political charges that were brought against them. He drives this point home by explaining Paul's defense in Rome and before two of the governors, Felix and Festus. In his own words Varathan says.

Acts 24 records that Paul was accused of being a trouble-maker by Tertullus. Paul then defended himself before Felix the Roman governor, against the accusation, that he was no troublemaker as remarked, but a peace-loving citizen. He confessed that he believed in the way of salvation, which they referred to as a sect; that he followed a system of serving the God of his ancestors, and believed in the Jewish law and everything written in the books of prophecy; and that he believed in the resurrection of both the righteous and the ungodly. Because of this he always tried to maintain a clear conscience before God and men. He defended that it was not him that started a riot, but those men who saw him in the temple when he went to offer the sacrifices and pay his vows.

And again in Acts 25: 7-8: Paul defended himself before Festus of the same accusations against him. Paul denied the charges: 'I am not guilty. I have not opposed the Jewish laws or desecrated the temple or rebelled against the Roman government' (Varathan 2003: 139).

Varathan used some interesting words to explain this point when he said: "Paul argues against the accusations and says that he was not a troublemaker as the governor was led to believe, but a peace-loving citizen." Varathan adds that Paul "confessed that he believed in the way of salvation, which they (the Roman government) referred to as a sect". He continues to make this important statement, hence, Paul always tried to "maintain a clear conscience before God and man." In the same manner one does not want to be just politically correct and thereby maintain a clear conscience before man, but also wants to keep a clear conscience before God in order to please Him who sent us to spread His gospel of truth to the whole world. In other words, the Church should not seek 'political correctness' in order to be line with the politics of the time. Sometimes the Church will have to flow against the main stream and speak against the tune of politics. However, where man or the politics of the time are in God's will, the Church should also not be silent but commend the government of the day.

2.3.4 An Account of Christian Beginning in order to Strengthen Faith

If Luke's purpose in writing was to strengthen Theophilus who was already a believer in Jesus, by presenting him with the orderly account of the beginnings of Christianity, how much more the Church needs this account today. This account of early Christianity, which strengthened Theophilus in the first century, a period of the apostles which was so close to Jesus' ministry, it must obviously be even more useful and desperately needed by the Church today especially if one considers that we are now twenty-one centuries down the line. There are now even greater possibilities that one has moved away from the Christian beginnings. It is always good to reflect back, on the beginning of things and its purposes in order not to lose track, hence the study of the early Church in the book of Acts, for today's church.

At this point we must take seriously what Luke himself tells us about his purpose in the prologue to his work. He specifically addresses himself to 'Theophilus', who, according to the most plausible understanding of Luke 1:1-4, was a Christian, and who can be regarded as typical of Luke's readers. Luke's explicit purpose was to confirm his faith by providing him with an orderly account of the things, which he had learned in the course of his Christian instruction. A skeptic might have tried to persuade Theophilus that his faith was based on nothing more than 'cunningly devised myths': Luke's reply was to present him with an account of the beginnings of Christianity based on what had been handed down 'by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word' (Lk.1: 2). If the gospel gave the facts about the ministry of Jesus, Acts demonstrated how the preaching of Jesus as the Christ corroborated and confirmed the facts recorded in the gospel: when the good news was preached, the Spirit made the word effective and brought the readers into the experience of salvation. On this view of things, the book of Acts was intended as an account of Christian beginnings in order to strengthen faith and give assurance that its foundation is firm. Obviously, the book written with this aim has an evangelistic purpose, but the scope of Luke - Acts stretches beyond material that is purely evangelistic (Marshall 1998: 21).

2.3.5 Showing how the Church, Composed of Jews and Gentiles, Survived and grew.

This point becomes the main purpose of the book of Acts in this context because this is where the great commission given by Jesus in Matthew 28:19-20 comes to fulfillment and also because this is where the focus of this research is. The issue of multiculturalism as the Jews and Gentiles start to mix and worship together becomes pertinent here. Without the Gentiles the Early Church cannot be classified as the true Church of Jesus Christ the Messiah. Commenting about this point Marshall says.

Although the gospel records the commission given by Jesus that his disciples should take the gospel to all nations, at first the Church was composed of Jews and carried out its evangelism among the Jews. Contrary to a widespread popular belief, Luke makes no mention of Gentiles being present on the day of Pentecost other than Jewish proselytes (2:10). But within a few years the Church found itself preaching the gospel to Samaritans, uncircumcised God-fearers and finally to pagan Gentiles. This progression is seen as divinely willed and prophesied; it was a turn of events that come about apart from any conscious planning by the Church. The Church had to come to terms with this fact (Marshall 1998: 29).

To add to this point Brown, in his book called *Revolution in the Church*, said that.

When He (Jesus) said in Matthew 16:18, 'I will build my church, and the gates of Hades (hell) will not overcome it,' He was not speaking to His Jewish disciples about a new religious body and a new religion. To the contrary, the Greek word 'eklesia' translated 'church' in our English Bibles, simply meant 'congregation, assembly of believers'. The Jewish translators of the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible made more than two hundred years before Christ) used this word to render the Hebrew words Qahal and Edah, both meaning "congregation, community, assembly". And since Jesus/Jeshua spoke to his disciples in either Hebrew or Aramaic He would have made reference to building His qahal/edah or qehala'/kenishta - standard words for already - known concepts.

What was new in the declaration of Jesus - radically new - was that this community would be His community ("I will build my congregation"), consisting of redeemed Jews and Gentiles, all with equal access to God, with all equal rights, all cleansed in Messiah's blood, all empowered by the Spirit, all sent to change the world. What a congregation! No wonder the gates of hell cannot prevail

against it (Brown 2002: 177 - 178).

It has been God's will from the beginning for the Gentiles to be part of His flock and His blessings. Together the believing Jews and believing Gentiles make up the true Church of God. They together are the people of God. They together reflect the complete body of Christ, the Messiah.

2.4 The Value of the Early Church in Acts

There are some permanent values for the Church today in the twenty first century, in learning about the early Church in the book of the Acts of the Holy Spirit. These are things that were of value then and are still of importance for the church of today, if only we take them into consideration and apply them. Without knowledge of these recognized values, the study of the early church will be a useless effort. After looking at the purposes of the book of the Acts of the Apostles we shall now briefly look at the values of the early church.

In his commentary of the book of Acts, Marshall gives five values for studying the early Church in the book of Acts.

2.4.1 A Pastoral Concern

In writing the story of the Early Church, Luke is seen as a writer with a pastoral concern. He writes in order to help and succour the Church. He demonstrates once and for all that Church history is not a cold academic discipline but can be the means of encouraging the people of God. For example, instances showing how people should look after each other in the church. There is also a wonderful demonstration of community life style in the early church.

2.4.2 The Essential Task of the Church is Mission

Luke, the author, the physician and the evangelist makes it clear that, in his view, the essential task of the Church is mission. We hear him saying remarkably little about the inner life of the Church and he concentrated most of his attention on this aspect of the church's task. For Luke, the mission of the church is evangelism, the proclamation of the

good news of Jesus and a challenge for repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

2.4.3 No Racial Discrimination

In his writing about the life story of the Early Church, Luke demonstrates that in the eyes of God there can be no racial discrimination within the church. The Church is called to witness to people, and salvation is offered to all people of different colours and cultures on the same terms.

2.4.4 The Place of the Spirit.

Luke stressed the place of the Spirit in guiding and empowering the Church for its mission, in the early and current church. Mission is no mere human achievement, but the Holy Spirit working through those who are willing to take the gospel of Christ beyond their comfort zones. The Holy Spirit distributes the gifts as He wills to those in the church for the fulfillment of his purposes as He directs. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are given for the purpose of mission and not for the private identification of the church or its individual members to attract attention.

2.4.5 The Church as Raised up and Directed by God

In all the values for today's Church mentioned above, Luke sees the Church as raised up and directed by God so that it will achieve His intended purposes. In this sense Luke can be said to believe in a *theologia gloriae*. He believes in the ultimate triumph of the gospel. At the same time, however, he is well aware that the triumph of the gospel is achieved only through suffering and martyrdom, in this sense he most emphatically believes in a *theologia crucis* (Marshall 1998: 49-50).

2.5 Cultural Interactions and Challenges

Paul Varathan said that "One of the first signs of cultural tensions in a bi-cultural society in the early church is recorded in Acts chapter 6: the widows of the Hellenists were 'left out' in the daily ministering of food: the apostles come together to solve the problem (Varathan2003: 91)."

Thus far we read nothing to suggest any cultural interactions and challenges in the early church. The first we read of such a case is in chapter six. It is interesting to note that cultural tensions are not racial tensions, although racial tensions may lead to cultural tension. In this particular case of the early Church in Acts chapter six, we see that the two groups involved are Jews, the Hebraic Jews and Hellenists Jews. Each of these groups was raised in a different cultural background. The Hebraic are those Jews that spent all their time in their land whereas the Hellenists are the Jews who spent a considerable time away from their homeland in exile and some extent have “adopted the Greek customs and culture (Unger 1957: 467).” Because of this the two groups had developed two different cultures although they are of the same race. It would be safe, therefore to assume that the Hellenists complained of their widows being overlooked in the daily distribution of food just because the distribution was done in a way that did not meet their cultural needs and expectations. It would seem wrong to interpret the Hellenists’ complaint simplistically that their widows were “overlooked” or refused their due portion of food. When one considers how the congregation cared for each other in the Early Church, it is difficult to believe this line of argument, which would obviously be evil before God and man. This complaint would need to be understood and interpreted from a Hellenists’ cultural point of view. Seeing that the leadership of the early church at that stage was entirely composed of Hebraic Jews only, it could be that the way they looked after their widows was different from the way the Hellenists used to look after their widows in exile. With this understanding, the Apostles, who themselves were Hebraic Jews since they never went to the Diaspora, were following the Hebraic cultural way in the daily distribution of food – a way that did not satisfy the Hellenists.

Luke indicates how the problem within the Early Church came to a head partly as the result of its increasing members. The one thing we must remember when reading this chapter of Acts, is that this situation is taking place before the Gentiles started coming to the Early Church. This happened between the Jews themselves, that is, the Hebrews or Hebraic Jews and the Hellenists or the Grecian Jews. In his book, titled “*Palestinian and Hellenist Christianity*”, Marshall says,

The terms Hebrews and Hellenists (9:29, 10:20) are obviously to

be defined as contrasts. After much discussion there is a growing consensus that the Hebrews were Jews who spoke a Semitic language but also knew some Greek. It can be safely assumed that nearly every Jew knew at least a little Greek, since it was the lingua franca of the eastern Mediterranean world. The Semitic language, which they spoke, was most probably Aramaic rather than Hebrew itself by contrast, the Hellenist were Jews who spoke Greek and knew little or no Aramaic. These groups would tend to worship as Jews in their own languages, and this practice would carry over when they become Christians. The former group would be principally of Palestinian origin while the latter would be principally Jews of Dispersion who had come to settle in Jerusalem. The latter group was more open to syncretistic influence than the former, but it should be emphasized that they had a strong sense of their Jewishness; Hellenist Jews were strongly attached to the temple. The complaint which the Hellenist made concerned the lack of attention of their widows in the provision made by the Church for the poor (Marshall 1973:125 - 126).

Varathan agrees with what Marshall says coming out very clearly in support of the idea that the problem in Acts chapter six was one of culture and not the place of origin or race. These two latter issues could have contributed to the whole problem but cultural differences and lack of understanding of each other seem to be the root cause of the issue.

What exactly was the identity of these two groups? It has usually been supposed that they were distinguished from each other by a mixture of geographical and language. That is the Hellenistai (Hellenists) came from the diaspora, and had come back and settled in Palestine and spoke the Greek language. This is an inadequate explanation, however. Since Paul called himself Hebraios (a Hebrew of Hebrews), in spite of the fact that he came from Tarsus and spoke Greek, the distinction, therefore must go beyond origin and language to culture. In this case the Hellenistai not only spoke Greek but also thought and believed like Greeks, while the Hebraioi not only spoke Aramaic but also they were deeply immersed in Hebrew culture. There had always, of course, been rivalry between these two groups in Jewish culture: the tragedy is that it was and is still perpetuated within the new community of Jesus, who by his death had abolished such distinctions of race, colour, language and culture (Varathan 2003: 91).

This problem however led the early Church to deal with more than just the surface of

cultural issues. This became necessary, because the twelve, as Luke refers to them, did not react but responded to the challenge. They responded to the criticism, which was basically directed against themselves, by recognizing and admitting that the combined tasks of teaching the Word of God and the distribution of food to the poor and the ministry of prayer was too much for them. In fact it seems that they realized that they were not able to faithfully fulfill either of these tasks properly. They would do justice to one at the expense of the other. And that would not be right since all of these ministries are important for the continuation of the church's life. Now that the twelve's care for the poor had come under serious criticism for the first time in the life of the Early Church, they themselves realized that they were not devoting enough time to the specific task of the ministry of prayer and of the Word of God which they were called by Christ to fulfill. The complaint of the Hellenist Christians about the Hebraic Christians that their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution of food was taken positively by the Apostles, so that it helped to benefit the Apostles and the whole Church. Then seven men were appointed, as a result, to take on a new level of leadership in the church, deacons. The seven men chosen were to be distinguished by a number of qualifications. But we must also bear in mind that the Apostles who were Hebraic gave the opportunity for the Hellenists to come into leadership positions that had only been occupied by the Hebraic. Here we see the first multicultural leadership in the early church. It would be safe here for one to assume that if every problem was looked at positively there would be some positive results at the end. Furthermore, when two or more cultures come to worship together irrespective of their differences, there would, of course, be some challenges, but the challenges, if looked positively by the leaders, would at the end yield good results. Such results may not be experienced in churches composed of members of the same culture. Perhaps that is why the early Church was strong and vibrant because it accommodated people of different cultures, and the leaders did not ignore people's complaints but listen and responded positively. It is suggested that the seven men appointed came from the Greek-speaking group that had raised the complaint. It is interesting that the seven men who were appointed to solve the problem were Hellenist Jews. Thus Stephen and Phillip, two of the seven appointed did great and wonderful works. But this is only after the leadership dealt with the problem positively for positive

results. Stott says, in commenting about the same issue.

The issue was however, more than cultural tension. The apostles discerned a deeper problem that was threatening to occupy all their time and so inhibit them from the work, which Christ had specifically entrusted to them, namely preaching and teaching. The problem, however, was solved with the appointing of the seven deacons (cf. Varathan 2003: 91 - 92).

Another issue of cultural interactions and cultural challenge is found in Acts chapter eight. In this chapter we read of the scattering of believers from Jerusalem to the open mission field of the Gentiles. As the disciples moved to new areas for the fear of the Jews, they found themselves entering places ready to respond to the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is confirmed by the ease in which the Samaritan people responded to the good news of the gospel preached to them by Phillip. The preaching of Phillip was followed by signs and wonders as promised by Jesus in Mark 16:17-18. Such signs and wonders were last seen and recorded under the ministry of Jesus, and this resulted in such a powerful response to the call for salvation and baptism. Two things are remarkable in the story of Phillip preaching to the Samaritan people and their overwhelming response. First, it is the courage and boldness of Phillip to preach to the outside people, so to say or the Gentiles. Perhaps it is because Phillip himself was one of the Hellenist Jews, people who came to settle in Jerusalem from the Diaspora, where they used to interact with the Gentiles freely. Secondly, it is the overwhelming response of the Samaritan people. We have never heard of such a response among the Jewish people themselves, not even on the day of Pentecost nor after that.

Stott explains this situation:

It is hard for us to conceive the boldness of the step Phillip took in preaching the gospel to Samaritans. For the hostility between Jews and Samaritan had lasted a thousand years. It began with the break-up of the monarchy in the tenth century BC when ten tribes defected: making Samaria their capital, and only two tribes remained loyal to Jerusalem. It became steadily worse when Samaria was captured by Assyria in 772 BC, thousands of its inhabitants were deported, and the country was repopulated by foreigners. In the sixth century BC when the Jews return to their land, they refused to help the Samaritans in the rebuilding of the

temple. Not till the fourth century BC, however, did the Samaritan schism harden, with the building of their rival temple on Mount Gerizim and their repudiation of all Old Testament scriptures except the Pentateuch.

The Jews as hybrids in both race and religion, as both heretics and schismatic, despised the Samaritans. John summed up the situation in his statement that 'Jews do not associate with Samaritans' (John 4:9). Jesus sympathy for them, however, is already apparent in Luke's Gospel (Luke 9: 52 - 56). Now in Acts 8, Luke is obviously excited by the evangelization of the Samaritans and their incorporation in the Messianic community (Stott 1990: 174 - 148).

Behind the telling of this story we clearly see the overcoming of the enmity and hostility between the Jews and the Samaritans through their common faith in Jesus. It is in this sense that the story may be seen as a great and bold step from the early Church towards the problem of separation by trying to bring Jews and Gentiles together, to one God in one united church. There is an important lesson which we can learn from this story of Phillip preaching the good news in Samaria, especially in dealing with the challenge of multiculturalism. In spite of the fact that Phillip ended up in Samaria out of fear of retribution from the Jews in Jerusalem, we can still learn some lessons from his interactions with people of different culture. You see if we are not prepared to step out in faith, God will push us out to fulfill His will. God will never allow His plans for the Church to be frustrated by our prejudices or conservatism. What we learn from Phillip is his courage and boldness to preach to people he would not think to associate with before that particular time and also that it seems to have been arranged by God. We need more people in our days who will step out, in faith, courage and boldness to cross all the lines of division, the visible and the invisible ones. If the Church today lacks courageous, just and fair-minded people like Phillip, our generation will be poorly served and the extraordinary purposes of God might, be frustrated.

Another story of the early church's interaction with multiculturalism is that of the conversion of the Ethiopian royal official. This is a more interesting story because in this case the early Church was not just interacting with another culture from the East, but for the first time we hear of the Jewish culture interacting with an African culture. The

Ethiopian official was from the continent of Africa from the county of Ethiopia. In this encounter of Phillip and the important man from Africa, there was special divine intervention and guidance. The kind of interventions and guidance that did not take place anywhere in the early church even when Phillip was preaching in Samaria. The Holy Spirit was at work from the moment this event is introduced by Luke to the very end of the story. Marshall explains:

Phillip also figures in a second story which is again concerned with the missionary expansion of the church. Where the preceding story was concerned with Samaria and a mass movement, here there is a single convert, who comes from the far South. In the former story, there was no special divine guidance leading to the evangelistic venture, but here at every stage the Spirit can be seen overseeing what happens. The story is concerned with the conversion of a gentile, whether he was a proselyte is not certain since, however, the man returned to his own, distant country, the episode evidently aroused no immediate problems for a Church that had not yet clarified its attitude to Gentile converts. The issue raised comes to a head only at a later stage as a series of events forces the Church to recognize and come to terms with what was going on. The story is included here both because it is about Phillip and because it forms part of the gradual progress of the Church towards the Gentiles. Historically it shows that the Hellenist, rather than Peter, took the lead in bringing the gospel to the Gentiles. The actual conversion is interesting, since the Ethiopian is led to faith by the realization that the prophetic scriptures are fulfilled in Jesus. Phillip is able to act without any need for his efforts to be supplemented by the apostles (Marshall 1998: 160 - 161).

There are few things that both Phillip and the early church learnt from this account, of which the Church of today can also draw some good lessons. Firstly, that the Holy Spirit is not only interested in crowds, a particular culture or race for the Holy Spirit caused Phillip to leave a big crowd in Samaria for one man, an African and of a different race and culture who was at the back of the desert. Perhaps this encounter demonstrates that evangelism is not just a matter of crowds but is of people coming to serve and worship God, even if it is one person.

Secondly, that evangelism is not the work of man but of the Holy Spirit. This is even more true when it comes to evangelism in a multicultural context. In this account of

Phillip and the Ethiopian, we see that the Holy Spirit Himself which takes the initiative and directs all the way not Phillip nor the apostles, who were personally commissioned by the Lord Jesus Christ to take the gospel to all nations.

Thirdly, that when the neglected, the despised and the oppressed rise up to present their complaint and are heard positively, they become the ones that understand cross-cultural evangelism better. In this story of the early Church we see the Hellenist Jews (Phillip and Stephen) opening the door for the Gentiles into the church.

Fourthly, that the same courage evidenced by Philip and others in confronting their fellow brothers (the Apostles) and sisters, when they were neglecting their widows in the daily distribution of food, is now being used to evangelise and serve the Gentiles.

As described above, a key interaction between Jews and Gentiles in the early Church occurred when Peter ministered in Cornelius' home as recorded in Acts chapters 10 - 11. For brevity the account of Peter and Cornelius shall be dealt with in a summary form here.

In this story, it again becomes clear that it was God's divine purpose to include both Jews and Gentiles in the Church. This however could not come easily since the Jews, including Peter and some the apostles, had turned the election of Abraham and his Jewish offspring into favouritism. They were behaving as if God is only for the Jews and can only be prayed to and be worshipped by the Jews.

In writing Acts, Luke records this account of Peter and Cornelius twice. Perhaps that is to highlight the importance of this account for the readers.

Commenting about this account Marshall says:

The sheer length of this story and the way in which it is in effect told twice over indicate the very great importance which Luke attached to it in the context of Acts as a whole. It deals with the decisive issue in the history of the early Church namely the recognition that the gospel is for the Gentiles as well as the Jews, and it makes clear that this was no merely human decision but that it was the result of God's clear guidance. The obstacle to the

mission to the Gentiles was that it would bring law-abiding Jews into contact with people who were reckoned unclean, and with their food, which was also unclean. It is this obstacle, which is overcome by the vision of Peter: no theological basis for the reciting of the law is given however, at this stage. Later on the question whether Gentiles converts should be circumcised and required to conform to the Law of Moses in other ways was to be a sharp cause of contention, but, as Luke recognizes, this issue did not arise until the practice of admitting Gentiles to the Church had begun (Marshall 1998: 181).

According to Marshall, the issue of multiculturalism comes before the issue of circumcision. Circumcision only becomes a matter of contention after the Gentiles had been admitted into the life of the Early Church. But the issue of multiculturalism was a serious contention even before the Gentiles come into the church. Therefore it would be right to conclude that the issue of multi-cultural worship was the biggest and the first challenge of the Early Church leading to other cultural challenges over issues like food, language, circumcision and many others.

Regardless of the Jews' prejudice, racial pride, and hatred against the Gentiles, the stories recorded by Luke in the book of the Acts of the Holy Spirit proves beyond any reasonable doubt that God had one purpose in mind that cannot be frustrated by any person, - one united Church, a Church of both Gentiles and Jews worshipping together in unity. This would be a truly multi-racial and multicultural, a new community of God.

In his words Stott says:

It is difficult for us to grasp the impossible gulf which yawned in those days between the Jews on one hand and the Gentiles (including the God-fearers) on the other. Not that the Old Testament itself countenanced such a divide. On the contrary, alongside its oracles against the hostile nations, it affirmed that God had a purpose for them. By choosing and blessing one family, he intended to bless all families of the earth. So the psalmists and prophets foretold the day when God's Messiah would show his light, all would flow to the Lord's house, and God would pour out his spirit on all humankind.

The tragedy was that Israel twisted the doctrine of election into one of favouritism, became filled with racial pride and hatred, despised Gentiles as dogs and developed traditions, which kept them apart.

No orthodox Jew would ever enter the home of a Gentile even a God-fearer, or invite such into his home. On the contrary, all familiar intercourse with Gentiles was forbidden and no pious Jews would of course have sat down at the table of a Gentile.

This then was the entrenched prejudice, which had to be overcome before Gentiles could be admitted into Christian community on equal terms with Jews, and before the Church could become a truly multi-racial, multicultural society. Acts 8 records the special steps God took to prevent the perpetuation of the Jewish-Samaritan schism in the church. How would he prevent a Jewish-Gentile schism? Luke regards this episode as being so important that he narrates it twice, first in his own words (Acts 10), and then in Peter's when the latter explained to the Jerusalem Church what had happened (11:1-18) (Stott 1990: 185-186).

In these two chapters of Acts 10 and 11 we see a new turn in the preaching of the gospel. It is a remarkable story in which the Apostles for the first time brought the Good News of the gospel to the Gentiles whereas in all previous accounts it was others, such as Stephen or Phillip, who were preaching to the Gentiles. Here we see Peter having the distinction of being the first apostle to preach and invite the Gentiles into the life of the Early Church. It is interesting to note that those who had been regarded as strangers and foreigners now had become fellow-citizens, saints in the household of God. This was such a mystery to Peter and all the other apostles gathered in Jerusalem. Speaking about this mystery Paul, an apostle to the Gentiles said,

For this reason I, Paul the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles - surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit of God's holy apostles and prophets. This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and shares together in the promise in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 3: 1 - 6).

This is a true mystery. Peter argued with God rather than accept as "clean" all people made by God. God was preparing Peter to ensure he would be willing to go to Cornelius' household, a place of strangers and foreigners. This incident cost Peter his reputation

amongst the Jews in Jerusalem. He was criticised for going into a Gentile's house and eating with them. About this account Luke says,

The apostles and the brothers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticised him and said: "You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them" (Acts 11: 1-3).

This account should be our major concern, so that we carefully observe all the circumstances surrounding the beginning of this great work, that is the greatest mystery of them all, that is, Christ preached to the Gentiles.

The response of the Gentiles when they heard the message of the gospel of the Christ, being preached was overwhelming. Their hearts seem to be more open towards God and the gospel than even those of the Jews themselves. One can say this without fear of misinterpreting the Scriptures, for the Bible says that God searches and even understands the motives of the hearts of men for God knows our hearts. God does things for different people at different times these are determined by what He sees in our hearts. This becomes clear when one thinks of the two accounts in the book of Acts. In comparing the two narrations- Acts 10: 44 - 48 and Acts 2: 37 -- 41- certain conclusions can be reached in relation to multiculturalism.

In Acts 10, Luke in recording the event says,

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter said, "Can anyone keep these people from being baptised with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have". So he ordered that they be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ (verses 44-48).

Here are the lessons we can draw from this portion of Scriptures:

Firstly, that the speaker of the gospel message here was Peter, one of the twelve original apostles, and the first to take the gospel message cross-culturally, to the Gentiles just after

God dealt with Peter's racial prejudices.

Secondly, that the hearers of the message are gentiles, foreigners and outsiders according to the Jews. And that by so doing God confirms his purpose of a Church of all nations by giving the gift of the Holy Spirit even before such 'outsiders' were water baptised. The point here is that, water baptism is an act of one man to another or, in other words, an act conducted by men, but the gift of the Holy Spirit is the act of God to man or conducted by God Himself. In other words, God changed the order of things for the Gentiles not because of their faith level but because He wanted to prove a point to the Jews who were refusing to allow them to enter the Church. The Jews knew that it was water baptism first after repentance and then the gift of the Holy Spirit would be given. To the Gentiles the order was changed. They were first given the gift of the Holy Spirit before they were baptised in water. This is remarkable.

Thirdly, that the context was of a Jewish preacher, preaching to the Gentiles a message of the gospel of Jesus Christ. In other words, this was a multi-racial and culturally diverse meeting a true reflection of the Church of God here on earth.

Fourthly, that it is the same author narrating twice the same incident. If it were two authors reporting one and the same story then it would be like the case of the four gospels where the authors of the four gospels sometimes give a different emphasis or view of the same account or event. Bible scholars have now agreed to call them, the gospel according to Matthew, the gospel according to Mark, the gospel according to Luke and the gospel according to John. In this case it's Luke who recorded both stories. The point here is that we should believe both accounts as indicating that God revealed Himself in different ways because of the openness of the hearts of the hearers. So this was a true reflection of His purpose of the Church that included both Jews and Gentiles.

Now, having considered chapter 10, let us look at the story in chapter 2 of the same book of Acts:

When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" Peter replied, "Repent and be baptised every one of you, in the name of

Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off - for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

With many other words he warned them, and he pleaded with them. “Save yourself from this corrupt generation”. Those who accepted his message were baptised and about three thousand were added to their number that day (Acts 2: 37-41).

There are things that we also learn from the reading of this portion of Scriptures in relation to the issue of the gospel message being taken to the people of other cultural backgrounds (the Gentiles) rather than to the Jewish people only in the case of the early church. Following the four points we considered in chapter ten, we observe the following in chapter two:

Firstly, that the speaker of the gospel message of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, is still Peter as it was the case in the former chapter. Here he speaks without any sense of guilt or fear of opposition because he was speaking to the Jewish people, the very people he believes Jesus died for, for their salvation. In other words, Peter was preaching the gospel message in His own comfort zone.

Secondly, that the hearers of the message of the gospel of Jesus preached by Peter the Jew, are also Jewish. But what we do not find or read in this chapter is the significant divine interventions like we read of in the former story. We do read of course, that the hearers of the message were cut to the heart and that three thousand people were added to the number of those who were saved. One would argue that the fact that they were cut to the heart is a human response towards salvation, in the sense that Peter preached and they responded positively thereafter and this was not necessarily a divine intervention. This is especially pertinent when one compares this to the former account whereby God filled them with the Holy Spirit, is purely a divine action. Three thousand people being added that day is a huge number of people when one considers the fact that many of us come from local churches consisting of far less than that figure.

Chapter 10 speaks about “all who heard the message” and in chapter 2 we read of “those who accepted his message”. What this would mean is that, in the former case ‘all’ is one

hundred percent of the people who had gathered in Cornelius' house and heard Peter preaching, received the message, and one hundred percent received the gift of the Holy Spirit and one hundred percent were baptised in water. Whereas in the latter case it is clear that not 'all' received Peter's preaching and not 'all' were baptised in water, but only 'those who accepted his message were baptised'. Now, the word 'those' indicates that there were those hearers, some Jews, who did not accept the message. And in his writing of the second account, Luke does not indicate whether there were some who received the gift of the Holy Spirit on that day. This is something not discussed in chapter 10.

Thirdly, that the context is that of a Jewish preacher, preaching to the Jewish people who had gathered on the day of Pentecost. In other words, the meeting was what Mohabir calls a "homogenous" meeting. The significance of the term "homogenous", cross-cultural evangelism is that he was concentrating on a group of people of similar background and culture (Mohabir 1992: 67). This does not express the kind of Church that God has in mind when Jesus spoke to His disciples both in Matthew 28:19-20 and Acts 1:8. One is therefore not surprised when one reads only of ordinary things happening in this Church, namely pure human acts in comparison with the divine acts of God in the other accounts.

Fourthly, that the same author, Luke, narrates this story as he did the first one. This should make readers of these two accounts believe that these stories have some good lessons for those of us interested in multicultural studies especially in the Church.

2.6 Antioch, the first Gentiles' Church

Commenting on the formation and the development of the Antioch Church, the first local Church of the Gentiles in the life of the early church, Marshall says:

While these developments were taking place in the mission area of the Jewish Church, the Hellenist Jewish Christians who had been forced to leave Jerusalem at the time of Stephen's death had scattered northwards as far as the great metropolis of Antioch. They spread the gospel as they went, but it was only at Antioch that they began to speak to non-Jews and win many converts. The

Church began to grow rapidly. The news prompted the Church in Jerusalem to send a delegate to see what was happening. The appointed visitor, Barnabas, had no doubts about the value of the work that was being done, and actively joined in, summoning Paul from Tarsus to help in the work. The Church's evangelism made such an impact that the local people dubbed its members 'Christ-people'. The members of the Church were conscious of their ties with Jerusalem, and when they heard a prophecy of forthcoming famine they sent a gift of money to aid the church.

There can be no doubt that the formation of the Church at Antioch was an event of great significance in the expansion of the Church and its mission to the Gentiles. It can be confidently assumed that the Gentile converts were not required to be circumcised or keep the law, and they probably formed a sizable group in the church, although there is no firm evidence that they formed the majority (Marshall 1998: 198 - 199).

Harrison shares these same sentiments about the Church in Antioch. He said that Acts Chapter 11 marks a new stage in the extension of the Church from a Jewish fellowship in Jerusalem to a universal community. Previously, Luke relates the inclusion of the Samaritans in the Church and the conversion of the Gentile Cornelius, together with his family, relatives and close friends. Now he describes the beginning of the first independent Gentile local Church in Antioch, which was to become the base Church for the Gentile mission in Asia and Europe. At that particular time the preaching of the gospel was still limited to the Jewish community, for the early Church was very slow in realizing the universal character of the Gospel mission (cf. Harrison 1969: 1144).

The planting of the Church in Antioch was of great importance for the mission of the church, especially to the Gentiles. This Church served as an open window for the Gentiles to receive the gospel without being forced to adopt some of the Jewish cultural practices.

2.6.1 The Formation of the Antioch Church: Acts 11: 19 - 26.

Luke's introduction to this section takes us back to five or six years of the Early Church's existence, as some scholars suggest of Acts 8: 1- 5, which describes how the death of Stephen led to a wave of opposition to the Church by the Jews and as a result, the scattering of many Christians, only known as disciples. Luke says that,

On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him. But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison. Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ there (Acts 8: 1- 5).

Commenting about the disciples who were scattered, Marshall makes a valid point as to why they chose to go to the specific towns and cities they went into.

In all probability these were Jews who had links with the Dispersion, and it was natural for them to go more to areas outside Judea, including the three places named. Phoenicia (modern Lebanon) was the area that stretched along the coast in a narrow strip from Mount Carmel for a distance of about 150 miles (242 km) its main towns were Ptolemais, Tyre, Zarephath and Sidon and hear later of Christian groups in three of these places (21: 3, 7: 27: 3). Cyprus, which has already been mentioned as the home of Barnabas (4:36) had a Jewish element in its population, at least since the second century BC, it was to be the first place evangelized by Barnabas and Paul when they later went out as missionaries together (13: 4- 12). This means that there were Christians in Cyprus before the arrival of Barnabas and Paul, a fact which is not in tension with Luke's account in 13:4- 12 even if he does not mention it there. The third place mentioned is the most important for the future development of the story. Antioch, the capital city of the Roman province of Syria, had grown rapidly to become the third largest city in the Empire (After Rome and Alexandria) with a population estimated at around 500,000. It was founded by Seleucus I and named in honour of his father Antiochus (the same name was later attached to some sixteen cities (Marshall 1998: 200-2001).

In relation to the Church at Antioch, the scattering of disciples worked out for good, for both Gentiles and Jews. Thus, what was intended to destroy the Church was turned into God's plan, for the good of the church's future. The Jews (7:1-3) including Saul, Paul's Jewish name (8:1, 3) designed to scatter and destroy them, but Christ in His divine infinite plan, scattered and used them.

The scattered Jews in their new homes at first preached the gospel of Jesus only to their fellow Jews. Even in exile they told the believers that salvation was only meant for the

Jews. Even though the Jews lived in the Gentile part of the world, they still could not believe that they could both worship the same God. They just could not visualise a multicultural Church of Jesus Christ. The decisive change was initiated by some of them who came from Cyprus and Cyrene who began to preach the good news of Jesus to the Greeks in Antioch. This was the beginning of a successful period of evangelism among the Gentile societies, which led to the expansion of the Christian community.

How these Jews took this bold step and start preaching the good news of the gospel is not clear. However, it is assumed that the matter can be explained quite simply by noting that the likelihood of Gentiles being associated with the synagogues was far higher in the Dispersion of the Jews at this particular time and the Church was able to deal with the issue of the Gentiles' place in evangelism and in the life of the Church much more frequently and directly than in Judea itself. If some of the people who preached the gospel to these Gentiles were proselytes themselves, this would make their bold step all the more natural (Marshall 1998: 201).

The sending of Barnabas from the Church in Jerusalem to the Church in Antioch was the formalization of this infant Church. The Jerusalem Church's leadership was beginning to show a change of heart towards the Gentiles. Two things could have contributed to this gesture of sympathy by the Jerusalem Church and its entire leadership.

Firstly, it could be the testimony of Peter after he returned to Jerusalem from Cornelius' house (11:1-18). Peter had explained everything to them (the leaders and the entire Church) precisely as it had happened during his visit to the Gentile Cornelius' house. He finished his argument by saying "So if God gave them the same gift as he gave us, who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could oppose God?"

When the leaders and the Church in Jerusalem heard Peter's explanation, they had no further objections; instead they praised God, saying, "So then, God has granted even the Gentiles repentance unto life".

Secondly, that people who preached the gospel to the Gentiles at Antioch were Jews and had been in Jerusalem before they were scattered to the Gentiles cities (8:1). However,

Barnabas' decision to go to Antioch and see what was happening turned out to be the best decision he could have made, especially when one considers the role he had played in the Early Church in relation to what he was expected to do in the Church at Antioch. Remember that the Church in Jerusalem was still homogeneous, i.e. the members were still purely Jewish whereas the Church at Antioch was heterogeneous, being a combination of Jews and Gentiles. One could rightly assume that Barnabas qualified for the job at Antioch for the following reasons:

1. He came from the Dispersion and he would have had some good interactions with the Gentiles. He spent a good number of years in a multicultural setting therefore he would have had some multicultural skills.
2. He played an important role in the early Church as a link between the disciples in times of crises. When Paul tried to join the disciples in Jerusalem, they were all afraid of him. But Barnabas believed in his new changed life and introduced him to the apostles and he was welcomed thereafter (Acts 9: 26 - 28). Therefore, he would be the right person to link the Jews and the Gentiles. That is, the church in Jerusalem and the one in Antioch. Some Bible scholars also believe that he acted as a link between Hebraic Jews and the Hellenists Jews, in time of their problem in Acts chapter six.
3. He was a generous giver - Luke records that he sold a field he owned and put the money from the sale at the apostle's feet. Then the apostles administered the money in helping the poor. In this regard he would be the right person to go to a new Gentile Church because he would not withhold anything from them. He would teach and help the new converts as Paul did in the Church at Ephesus. Paul, in speaking to the elders of the Church in Ephesus says, "You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you..." and again he said, "For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God (Acts 20, 20 and 27 respectively)". This is the kind of man that would be needed for a tender Church such as this one.
4. In terms of character, he was an encourager. His original name was Joseph but

he had been given a new name by the apostles, which reflected his character. The name 'Barnabas' means "a son of encouragement (4: 36)" which would mean a person who gives encouragement to others. Therefore he would be the right person to be sent to the Antioch Church to encourage and strengthen the new Gentile believers. He would not get there and preach condemnation by the law of Moses, namely in matters pertaining to circumcision, clean and unclean foods, the observing of the Sabbath day and many more discouraging rules of men, but he would preach the gospel message of grace, which reaches all mankind without showing any racial or cultural segregation.

5. He was a good man. He is the only man that Luke described as 'a good man' in the whole book of the Acts of the Apostles (11: 24). We read of others like Stephen, who was described as being of faith and full of Holy Spirit (6: 5). But Barnabas was full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and he was also a good man. So there was something outstanding about him. We do not read of him performing miracles of healing the sick or raising the dead as we do of Peter, John, and Paul. However, we do not read of them being described as good men either. The cross-cultural setting of the Antioch Church would need a man like him. No one else would qualify for this job amongst the people who were gathered in Jerusalem, including all the apostles, except a good man. The cross-cultural situation like that of the Antioch Church would not just need a person full of faith and of the Holy Spirit but also a good man like Barnabas.
6. He was a man of great insight. He could see a diamond in the mud. The fact that he had the spiritual insight to recognise that God's plan was being fulfilled at Antioch was of significance for the growth of the Church not only at Antioch, but also the entire Church around the world. He further recognised the rich potential of the situation for the advancement of the gospel of Christ, and saw the need for additional help in evangelizing and the teaching of the good news. He therefore, went to look for his old friend Paul, upon whom he recognised the anointing of God. Saul was in Tarsus at the time and when he found him, he persuaded him to come and join him at Antioch. So, for the whole year

Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught a great number of disciples.

7. The number of the disciples also increased rapidly during this time so also was the impact of the church (Acts 11: 25-26). Which man would be better than Barnabas, who was able to recognise what God was doing among the people of different cultures? Here was a leader who was able to recognise and even prefer others to himself.

2.6.2 The Leadership and the Membership Composition of the Church in Antioch: Acts 13: 1- 3.

The leadership and membership of the local Church in Antioch was not racially nor culturally biased. In relation to this study in particular on multiculturalism as a challenge facing the local churches in South Africa, it is important to highlight the issue of leadership. Leadership seems to have been a critical point also in the success story of the Church at Antioch.

The story begins with a description of how the Church in Antioch was served or led by a group of prophets and teachers - five names are listed. The multicultural population of this vast ancient city was reflected in both the leadership and the membership of this local church. "which consisted of five resident prophets and teachers (Acts 13:1-5). Luke explains neither how he understands the distinction between these ministries, nor whether all five men exercised both ministries or, (as some have suggested), that the first three were prophets and the last two teachers (Varathan 2003:116)."

The order of the names of these leaders, have raised arguments among New Testament Bible scholars. In his argument, Marshall said that Barnabas was first as he was the leader of the five and was from the Jerusalem Church and may have been regarded as the most important of the group or perhaps a Christian of longest standing. He further refers to the book of 1st Corinthians 16:15 as the way in which the first converts might have become the leaders of the church (Marshall 1998: 214). Whereas the author/s of *Matthews Henry's Commentary* says that Barnabas was first named, probably because he was the eldest, and to make their point clear, they further say that Saul was last, probably

because he was the youngest (1995:2118).

The second man on the list is Simeon or Symeon, a man bearing a Jewish name and therefore in all probability was a Jew. His other name, Niger, is Latin and means dark - complexioned in view of the way he is mentioned just as a Cyrenian. It has been thought that he too came from Cyrene and is to be identified with the Simon who carried the cross of Jesus (Luke 23:26) (Marshall 1998:213 - 214). *Matthew Henry's commentary* also says that the second is Simeon, or Simon, who for the sake of distinction was called Niger. Simon must have been Black as was the colour of his hair and was surnamed "the Black Prince" (1995:2118).

On the other hand, Scott says that Simeon is a Hebrew name and he was also called Niger meaning 'Black', who was presumably a black African man, and just conceivably none other than Simon of Cyrene who carried the cross for Jesus and who must have become a believer thereafter, since his sons Alexander and Rufus were well known to the Christian community (Scott 1990: 216).

The third, person or leader on the list is Lucius from Cyrene, who was presumably one of the founder members of the Church of Antioch (Acts 11: 20). Marshall continues to say that it has been conjectured that Lucius should be identified with Luke himself, an identification that has been made by at least one early scholar (Marshall 1998: 214). *Matthew Henry's commentary* says that Lucius of Cyrene was the same as the one that Luke wrote about in the book of the Acts of the Apostles. Originally a Cyrenian, he was educated in Cyrenian College synagogue at Jerusalem and there he first heard and received the Gospel (1995:2118). Scott says that Lucius of Cyrene definitely came from North Africa, but the conjecture of some early Church fathers that Luke was referring to himself, when speaking about Lucius is impossible, since he carefully preserves his anonymity throughout this book (Scott 1990: 216).

Almost all the commentators seem to agree that Lucius comes from Cyrene, which is well and good but they differ as to who this man was. Is he a White Jew or Black Jew, coming from Diaspora or is he an African? Only Scott has made a definite statement by claiming that Lucius definitely came from North Africa. He even disputed the fact that

he is the same as Luke. This path of argument maybe untrue and seems to avoid identifying Lucius with the African Continent and as an African. One assumes this because it is clear that Luke was a Jew and had a white coloured skin. It seems to be a trend among authors of a Western background to avoid anything in the Bible that has to do with Africa and the dark African skin. It seems correct here to conclude that Lucius of Cyrene was an African by origin especially if one traces where he comes from on the world map. The *New International Version* of the Bible by Zondervan says that Cyrene was the chief city in Libya and North Africa, in other words it was the capital of Libya. It was situated halfway between Alexandria and Carthage, Alexandria being the Capital of Egypt and the second biggest city of ancient world only after Rome (1985:1654).

The fourth leader we have on the list is Manean, a Jewish name meaning a 'comforter'. He was an associate of Herod Antipas. The "term member of court" could refer to a boy of the same age brought up as a companion of a prince or, more generally, to a courtier or friend of a ruler. Whatever the precise meaning, it could be that Manean was Luke's source of information for material about Herod Antipas, which is not found in the other Gospels (Marshall 1998: 215). Scott agrees with Marshall about who Manean is. He said that Manean in Greek is called the 'syntrophos' of Herod the Great. The word may mean that Manean was brought up with him in a general way, or more particularly that he was the 'foster-brother' or 'intimate friend'. In either case, since Luke knew so much about Herod's court and family life, Manean may well have been his informant (Stott 1990: 216).

Matthews Henry's Commentary notes that "Manean" in Hebrew is "Menahem". It continues to portray him as a person of quality, for he was brought up with Herod the tetrarch. This would mean that he was either nursed with him with the same milk or taught at the same school, or was a pupil of the same tutor, or rather one that was his constant colleague and companion. In every part of Herod's education Manean was his comrade and close companion, who gave him a preferment at court, and yet for Christ's sake Manean abandoned such preferential respect. Had he continued to maintain the relationship with Herod, with whom he was brought up, he might have had Blastus's place, and been his Chamberlain, but he chose to rather be a fellow-sufferer with the

saints than a fellow-prosecutor with the tetrarch (1995:2118).

Almost all the authors are in agreement about Manean as to who he was, differing only in the amount of detailed information given, and there are no points of disagreement, which leaves us with a reliable description.

The fifth leader on the list of the Church of Antioch, the first Gentile Church, is Saul. Saul was his Jewish name. Saul or Paul comes from Tarsus in Cilicia.

The five leaders therefore symbolised the ethnic cultural diversity of the cosmopolitan city of Antioch. If this is true, it is interesting that as one goes through different materials commenting on these five men, there is not much disagreement about Barnabas, Paul and Manean as to who they are and their racial backgrounds. But when it comes to the other two Simeon or Niger and Lucius of Cyrene there is much more contention and disagreement. If the latter were Jews as were the former three, there must be doubt that the Antioch Church was the first Gentile local Church of early Christianity. If we continue to believe that it was indeed the first Gentile Church this was not in relationship to the leadership but only of the ordinary members. Therefore Jewish leaders were making decisions that affected both Jews and Gentile members. This would result in the Church of Antioch being biased in decision making, like the Church in Jerusalem, something we do not read of in the Church of Antioch. But it is clear that it was a Church for both Jews and Gentiles. If that were the case, we need to be bold in accepting the probability that the latter two leaders were Black people and Africans by origin. Perhaps one need to comment here that there is nothing wrong with the Bible referring to Africa as a Continent and to Africans, as Black people. There seem to be some hesitancy among Bible scholars, readers and believers, both Blacks and Whites, to interpret that Egypt was in Africa. There seem also to be reluctance from the same groups to affirm that Jesus spent a good part of his childhood in Africa, a period of about ten to twelve years. Egypt is always seen as a place of slavery and bondage by both leaders and followers of Christian community, and nothing more. The Bible however seems to indicate that Egypt is a place of safety, peace, and civilization. The greatest human civilization in human history which left a permanent mark on all civilizations that

followed there after took place in Egypt, that is in the African continent. (Mbeki 2006: 23). Most of the renowned Greek scholars were influenced or learnt from Egyptian scholars.

The Greek Hippocrates, regarded as the father of medicine, studied in the temple of Memphis in Egypt where he learned from the library of a great Egyptian physician, Imhoptes, whom the Greek called Askelepios (Mbeki 2006: 23).

Mbeki continues to expose many inventions by the Africans in the context of the Egyptians – such as production of what is today known the Smith Papyrus, which is a treatise on bone surgery. They invented mathematics which they divided into arithmetic, algebra and geometry. They passed this wonderful knowledge on to the Greeks. By observing the behaviour of the Nile River they developed the ancient calendar. They also engage themselves in engineering, construction, ship-building and architecture. Most of the Greeks such as Plato, Pythagoras, Eudoxes, Hippocrates and many others became famous when they applied this Egyptian or African knowledge.

The great Egyptian civilization was not the only one in Africa, as Mbeki articulated it when he said that,

The great Egyptian civilization was followed some millennia later, by the civilizations of Nubia, Aksum, Mapungubwe, Ghana, Mali and Great Zimbabwe.

The Malian civilization reached its pinnacle when Timbuktu became the intellectual and trading hub between the 14th and 16th centuries. Timbuktu was a confluence of ideas, language, and culture (Mbeki 2006: 23).

If Africa has contributed so much to world civilization why is it that her history is not known and she is always referred to as a dark, backward and Europe-dependant continent? The 19th century Europeans was consumed by racism and the firm belief that they were superior beings to Africans. They could not contemplate the possibilities that Blacks could have been responsible for such outstanding and great civilization. Because of racism they then begin to ascribe that civilization to everyone except to the Black African.

It became important to the racists, then and since, to deny to Africans any capacity to build a great civilization (Mbeki 2006: 23).

President Mbeki continues his point about European racism and their attempts to deny Africans any capacity to build such great civilizations by quoting one of the late 20th century European historians, Hugh Trevor-Roper, who was influenced by Europe's racism and superiority mentality, notions which still divide the Church today in the 21st century and in South Africa when he wrote that,

Perhaps in the future, there will be some African history to teach. But at the present there is none: there is only the history of the Europeans in Africa.

The rest is darkness and darkness is not a subject of history. We cannot therefore afford to assume ourselves with the unrewarding gyrations of barbarous tribes in picturesque but irrelevant corners of the globe (cf. Mbeki 2006: 23).

The Bible has many good things to say about Africa and in this context Egypt. It is only that its readers have been trained or they chose not to see the **good said about Egypt**. For example, when Herod wanted to kill the baby Jesus, God asked Joseph and Mary to escape to Egypt. When it was no longer safe for Joseph to live amongst his blood brothers, because they were jealous of his dreams, God let him escape to a place where they welcomed strangers and he lived with them in peace, and that place is in Egypt. And when there was famine in Canaan, Israel (Jacob) and his children escaped to a place where the people were so generous with both food and accommodation, again that place is Egypt. They went to the richest continent in terms of food and minerals, the African continent. Right now there is general agreement and admission around the globe that the richest continent on the face of the earth is the African continent (Asante 2006: 23). It is possible to believe that during their stay in Egypt, the Israelites learnt civilization. They learnt skills like brick making, the art of writing, and food processing. And many more good things can be said about Egypt from the Scriptures.

Jacob, his wives and children went into Egypt as a family and left as a nation. The nation of Israel was formed in Egypt. The African people were so generous that they allowed the family to grow into a nation among them and on their land. This is clear proof that

Africans have always been a xenophilia. (love of strangers or people). Xenophobia, the fear of strangers, was never an African people's problem. In fact, if this was the case both the Israel of old and the European would never have gone to Egypt and Cape Town, respectively, and be greeted with such overwhelming hospitality.

Africans have always been a xenophilia, love of strangers, people. This has probably been one of our weaknesses when it comes to Europeans who mistook our generosity for childlikeness, innocence (Asante 2006: 23).

One also needs to make it clear that places such as Libya, Ethiopia, Cyrene and many more countries mentioned in the Holy Scriptures, the inspired Word of God (2 Timothy 3: 16) are African countries. Furthermore, people like Simon (Luke 23:26), the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8: 27), Jethro, Moses' father-in-law and of course his wife Ziporah (Exodus 18:1-3) and many more Bible characters were Black people of an African Origin.

If we agree with this latter argument, therefore, the Antioch Church was a true first Gentile Church, both in leadership and membership and a true reflection of its society. It was a true Church of God: God's election of Abraham was so that all people on earth would be blessed through him (Genesis 12:1-3). His election of Israel as a nation, race and a cultural group was that all nations, races and cultural groups would be blessed through it. Abraham and Israel's choice was never because of God's favoritism for them, against all other people and nations.

2.7 The Early Church and the Leaders' Solution to the Challenge of Multiculturalism

The romantic reading or study of the early Church is very deceiving. It makes us simply focus on the miracles performed by the apostles, the great numbers of new converts who were added to the church, the fact that they ate together and no one among them had a need that was not met by the brethren and the powerful prayer meetings they used to have. This gives us an incorrect picture, because it seems to us that everything was right and there was no problem and that there was perfect unity in the early church. Achteimeier balances this perspective when he says,

Unless we are aware of the problems the early Church faced concerning its unity, we will inevitably romanticize that period and either give up in despair at the course taken by subsequent developments in the history of the church, or else assume in a naive way that all it takes to recover that lost, original unity is a little good will and some pleasant negotiations. Unless we are clearly aware that such a romantic view of an original unity does not stand up under historical scrutiny, all contemporary attempts to achieve unity will be unrealistic about the problem facing the quest (Achtmeier 1987: 2).

Achtmeier drives the point home by showing us that the Church in its early life, during the apostolic period also faced some serious challenging problems by saying that,

The evidence in the New Testament is clear: The church, from its beginning faced problems of division and disunity, with the result that such unity still remains a goal to be achieved in the life of the visible body of Christ. Only a clear hard-eyed view of the kind of problems that have beset the Christian community to move forward, under the guidance of God's Spirit, to that unity to which it is called (Achtmeier 1987: 2).

Looking at the early **Church this** way will help us to develop a realistic view of the church, both of then and now. This will also help us in the way we interpret the Scriptures and how we understand them. It is only when we admit that there was a problem in the early church that we will be able to identify it. The same principle will also apply to the present day church. The presence of the problem in the Church is not necessarily an indication or symptoms of weakness or unspirituality, but a sign of being real and mature.

2.7.1 The Problem in the Early Church

The whole problem in the Early Church centered on the relationship between the Jewish Christians and the Gentile Christians. This issue threatened the possibilities of the Jewish and Gentile Christians coming together in unity to worship one and the same God. The problem was of course from the Jewish brethren who seemed to be more culturally and racially inclined. One reason was the fact that they were Gentiles. This seems to be a racial matter since it is based on whom the person is and what their origin was, which obviously has to do with the persons' race and not whom they believe. Peter made it

clear when he said to Cornelius and his friends. "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with Gentiles (Acts 10:28)" and in Acts 11 we read of those who were scattered following the death of Stephen traveling to a number of places. "telling the message only to the Jews". (verse 19). The basis of the problem in the two above mentioned scriptures is that Gentile Christians were discriminated against, not because of what they did not know, what they ate, or what their practices were, but because they were of Gentile origin. Their sin was being born of non-Jewish parents. The second issue had to do with the cultural differences. This pertains to what they do or practice and what they ate, as it was different from that of the Jews (Acts 11: 1-3, and Acts 15).

One of the New Testament scholars, Bruce, in commenting about the problem in the Early Church, says that, the Jerusalem Church council dealt with two questions: Must Gentile Christians be circumcised and undertake to keep the Mosaic Law? And what conditions should Gentile Christians comply with, if Jewish Christians are to enjoy a comfortable relationship with them? He continues to say that the latter issue would not have been raised had the first question been answered in the affirmative (Bruce 1969: 288).

Bruce agrees with Achtemeier, who echoes the same problem of what kind of relationship should exist between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians. He sees this problem as the biggest threat to the early Christian community.

Among the threats to the unity of the early Christian community, one of the earliest, and surely one of the most decisive, concerned the relationship between Christians of Jewish and Christians of Gentile birth. It is a problem that is evident, if only in implied form, in much of the New Testament but nowhere is it so obvious as in Paul's letter to the churches in Galatia, and in the book of Acts. In these two documents, which along with possible references in other New Testament writings constitute our only sources of historical information about this issue, the problem poses itself frequently in terms of the relationship between Paul and the Christian authorities in Jerusalem (Achtemeier 1987: 4).

Indeed, this was the biggest threat ever faced by the Early Church and still is the biggest

threat of the 21st century, the problem of interracial and cross-cultural relations. Whenever there is such a relationship problem in the church, if it is not dealt with correctly or timeously, the end result is disunity. Why is the racial and cultural relationship problem viewed as the biggest threat of the church at any time? Part of the answer, however is that, church life is based on relationships, relationships between people and God, and between people. However, our study is more concerned here with the latter dimension of relationships, namely the relationship between people. In this context, the issue concerns the relationship between people who are Christians and serving or worshipping one and the same God, but coming from different backgrounds and cultures. That is, unity and relationship in cultural diversity.

If Christian relationships are under threat and cannot be worked out there can be no Church. Because church life is based on strong and committed Christian relationship, it is much more than merely functioning together. In other words, within the Church, all functions must proceed out of relationship. Church members have to develop a good albeit not perfect relationship before they can work together. If Christians work together without relationship, in other words without unity, people outside the Church will not know that we belong to Christ. Jesus said to his disciples, "A new command I give you, love one another, as I have loved you, so you must love one another (John 13:34)." In the following verse, Jesus made it clear to his disciples the way that they must accept and love according to 'a new command' that is his. This new command is a command concerning a relationship. Jesus was saying to the disciples that by this love or good relationship, all men, young and old, Jews and Gentiles would know that they are His disciples. All men will know Jesus disciples if they love one another (John 13:35)".

With this, it is clear to us that the Early Church had a serious problem. The seriousness of the problem is highlighted in the sense that it had the potential to destroy the church or simply cause it to stagnate. In view of this, it is clear that there was a concern about the relationship of the Christian community. There can be no healthy and united Christian community without sound relationships being worked out between Jews and Gentiles, Whites and Blacks from divergent backgrounds and cultures. Concerning the permanent division of the Christian community, with special reference to the Early Church,

On the other hand, there was the division of the Christian community into Jewish and Gentile parts with the subsequent danger that, should that division become permanent, any pretense that the church was able to unite in itself all peoples would be irrevocably lost. Despite the evident desire of both parties – those who found their leaders in Paul and missionaries like him and those who looked to Jerusalem for their Christian leadership – to find an acceptable *modus vivendi*, the root difficulty may well have been that each side was preoccupied with a different aspect of their relationship. The pre-occupation of the leadership of Jerusalem church may well have been with one aspect of the problem: remaining in contact with the non – Christian Jews, whatever that might require of Gentile converts. Paul's overriding concern, on the other hand may well have been with other aspect: the problem of a division within the church into mutually exclusive Jewish and Gentile parts if the demands imposed upon Gentile Christians by such continuing contact with non -- Christian Jews were to be theologically unacceptable (Achtmeier 1987:5).

Everyone concerned about the state of the Church's unity and the relationship of the brethren should be concerned about the recognition of all people as equal with a right to be treated equally in the Church in spite of their differences of colour and culture. Everyone from their different cultures should be accepted and recognized as legitimate members of the Christian community, or specifically of a local church concerned. And in no way should they be treated as inferiors in comparison with other members of the same community of different origin or lineage. The relationship problem in the Early Church becomes more clear in two books of the New Testament, the book of Galatians, Paul's letter to the churches in the region of Galatia and the book of Acts, the book written by Luke, narrating the end of Jesus' life on earth and the life history of the Early Church, hence, the acts of the apostles.

2.7.1.1 The Problem in Acts 15:1 - 35

Luke's account of the discussion regarding the relationship between the Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians forms the centre of the book of Acts and the Early Church both culturally and theologically. The relationship discussed here is in relation to the Law of Moses, specifically concerning circumcision and diet. We see here that once the early church's mission work had began to evangelize the Gentiles, and they had accepted the

message and become members of the church, the problem surfaced because these Gentiles had not previously been circumcised, since it was not a requirement in their general culture or religion. Once they become part of the Church's life, the problem for the conditions of their membership of the Church began to emerge. From the time of men from Cyprus and Cyrene to the time of Barnabas and Paul in Antioch, we do not hear of anything concerning circumcision and diet being mentioned as a condition for Gentile Christians to becoming members of the Church. It would seem right here to assume that those who planted this church and also the apostles, in particular, Barnabas and Paul did not see it necessary to require the Gentiles to keep the Law of Moses, particularly circumcision in order to identify with Jewish Christians and be accepted and recognized as equals in the church. Faith in Jesus Christ seems to have been the major requirement. However, this position was totally unacceptable to some Jewish Christians in Jerusalem. This could be the same group of people that criticized Peter for going into the house and eating with uncircumcised Gentiles in Acts 11:1 - 3.

Marshall argues that they opposed the acceptance of Gentiles as members of the Church for two reasons:

Firstly, they found it hard to believe that Gentiles could be saved and have become members of the people of God, the Church, without accepting the obligations of the Jewish law. If Gentiles would not identify with the Jews by circumcision, they found it hard to understand how God would accept the Gentiles without circumcision, since this had been God's requirement to all Jewish males, a symbol of God's covenant with His people. In other words, what evidence was there that the law, which represented the will of God for His covenant people, had been repealed? This point led to lively debate on the spot and subsequently a decision by the Church to send representatives to Jerusalem to discuss the matter with the apostles.

Secondly, there was also the question of how Jewish Christians, who continued to live by the Jewish law, could have fellowship at the table or eat from the same table with Gentile Christians who did not observe the Law of Moses and who were, as a result, considered unclean. This problem would be particularly highlighted when the members of the

Church meet to 'break bread'. This issue is not mentioned explicitly in this chapter, but from the book of Galatians chapter two, it is clear that it was also a lively debated issue, and that the decision reached at Jerusalem (Acts 12: 20) was also intended to deal with this issue (Marshall 1998: 242 – 243). In his account of the issue of the relationship between the Jewish and Gentile Christians, Marshall shows that only a group of a few Jewish Christians raised the concern about the Church. What encouraged Paul, Barnabas and those people from the Church at Antioch, who went up to Jerusalem as representatives, was the news about the conversion of the Gentile people which was both welcomed by the churches they visited on their way to and at Jerusalem (Acts 15: 3-4). The representatives were encouraged even though, at Jerusalem, they were met by a group of believers who used to belong to the party of the Pharisees, who demanded that the Gentile believers must be circumcised and required to obey the Law of Moses (Acts 15: 5). In spite of this opposition, they were encouraged, because the two foremost leaders of the Church, Peter and James, stood in support of the delegation from the Antioch Church against the issue of circumcision.

Firstly, Peter gave an explanation, referring to his own experience through which God had shown His readiness to accept the uncircumcised Gentiles into the Church as Jewish equals on the basis of their faith in Jesus Christ only and cleanness of their heart (Acts 15: 7 – 11). Peter was referring to his experiences at Joppa and in the house of Cornelius, the Gentile (Acts 10). Barnabas and Paul also confirmed the testimony that Peter had presented before the Church in Jerusalem and the apostles. They also explained how God had manifested Himself showing His approval of the Gentiles mission, their conversion and subsequently their inclusion as true and qualifying members of the Church. They also reported how God confirmed this with signs and wonders among Gentiles believers (Acts 15: 12).

Secondly, James, after listening to what Peter, Paul and Barnabas had to say about what God was doing among the Gentiles, spoke against forcing the Gentiles to be circumcised as a condition of their salvation.. James, who might have been expected to adopt a more conservative attitude because he had not left Jerusalem since the day of Pentecost to mix with the Gentile believers, took a positive stand on this issue. He rose up to indicate that

the entry of the Gentiles into the Church was in accordance with God's plan as revealed in the Scriptures by the holy prophets of God, and obeying that law was not necessary for salvation (Acts 15: 13 – 18). In his speech James was referring to what has been prophesied long ago by the prophet Amos (Amos 9:11 – 12).

2.7.1.2 The Problem – Galatians 2:1 - 16

Problems in relationships between the Gentiles and the Jewish Christians continued in the local churches in the region of Galatia. The problem was still the issue of whether the Gentiles should keep the Law of Moses or not, especially in regard to circumcision. The difference of this account from the last one in the book of Acts is that, that one was given by Luke and this account was given by Paul. Some people would like to compare the two accounts to see if they are reporting the same meeting or different meetings in Jerusalem. However, the purpose of this study is not to do that, but to look at the problem of relationship, that is, the challenge of multiculturalism addressed by the two books in the life of Early Christianity.

Cole in answering the question why the letter to the churches in Galatia was written: makes an interesting comment.

The simple answer to this question is that the letter was written because of some problems that had arisen in Galatia. Paul never wrote letters without good reason, or, if he did, none of such have survived. Normally, his letters were written either in reply to questions received from a Church (1 Corinthians 7:1), or to disquieting news that he has heard about the Church (1 Corinthians 1: 11), or both. Even a letter like Romans, which at first sight seems to be of a more casual nature, on closer examination proves to be not only an exposition of the gospel, but also a treatment of certain well-defined problems, of the existence of which at Rome Paul either knew or guessed (e.g. Rom. 14:1- 9) (Cole 1996: 25).

If there were some serious problems that had risen in the churches in the region of Galatia, according to what Cole said, then we ask: What were those serious problems? In commenting about those problems, the *Matthew Henry's Commentary* says that the account Paul gives of himself in Galatians chapter two, is that, from the very first preaching of the gospel and the planting of Christian churches, there was apprehension

because those Christians who had first been Jews and who had become Christians from Judaism retained a regard for ceremonial law, and continued to keep up the reputation of the law of Moses, but those who come from the Gentile background had neither regard or desire to keep the law of Moses for their salvation, but they took pure Christianity which was not mixed with the law as the natural religion, and resolved to adhere to that and that only (Cole 1995 : 2295). That it was a serious problem, we can tell from the abruptness with which Paul introduced the matter, that Paul does not follow his usual pattern of opening his letters to different churches with a section of tactful commendation of the particular local Church. (Galatians 1: 6: in contrast to 1 Corinthians 1: 1-9). The problem seems to have been some new line of teaching, a different gospel, from that of Paul probably introduced soon after Paul's departure (Galatians 1: 6) by unnamed persons or person (Galatians 1: 7, 9).

Paul dealt constructively with of multiculturalism, especially the practice of circumcision, and whether this was really necessary for the Gentile Christians. Paul's theology was that circumcision was the work of the law. This is to show that multiculturalism had its own challenges in the Early Church as it is in today's Church (Varathan 2003: 141). Whatever proponents of circumcision believed or claimed, Paul utterly denies this new teaching or gospel in verses 6 and 7 of the book of Galatians and says that it is only a distortion of Christ's true gospel. The new teaching or a different gospel certainly demanded of circumcision as a necessity for salvation. Whatever its proponents may have initially said, the acceptance of circumcision, involved in Paul's eyes, the obligation to keep the whole of the Law of Moses (Cole 1996: 25). Paul saw that the obligation to keep the whole law implied that salvation was to be attained by obedience to the law, as opposed to what Paul had initially preached to the Galatians, that they can be save simple by faith in Christ. That was what made it a "new teaching" or "different gospel". For Paul, this kind of move was an abandonment of Christian liberty in Christ by faith for the old slavery under the law from which they had just been set free. It is also a rejection of the gift of the spirit of freedom in which was fulfillment of the great promise made by God to Abraham, the father of all those who come to God by faith only.

All who rely on observing the law are under the curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do

everything written in the book of the Law". Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, "The righteous will live by faith" (Galatians 3:10-11)."

"You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized in Christ have clothed yourself with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham seed, and heirs according to the promise (Galatians 3: 26-29).

Commenting on these verses by Paul to the Galatians, Tasker explained that *hupo Kataran* (Greek) in English means to be 'under a curse'. That there are certain times that Paul, in the New Testament writings almost seems to give *orge* (Greek) 'wrath' and *Katara* (Greek) 'curse' independent existence. This is not a theological concept of hostile powers warring against God or of abstract forces. This is purely a Jewish form of expression, and in many cases, the reason for the apparent abstraction can be found in some passages from the Old Testament. Faith brings blessings, but the law of Moses produces a curse upon all who rely on observing it, because of the requirement that one must continue to meet its demands **faithfully (Deuteronomy 27: 26)**. Because it is practically impossible to be justified by the Law of Moses, therefore, there is another truth and a better one than the former, that God adds above this one-that the righteous shall live by faith (Tasker 1973: 95-96).

There was another problem in Galatians that may help us in understanding the writing of the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians. It is a passage dealing with the confrontation between Paul and Peter at Antioch (Galatians 2: 11-16). The problem here is no longer that of circumcision, but of food, or to put it in a better way, the problem was of Jews eating with Gentile Christians. The issue is still the same here, that of the relationship between the Gentile Christians and Jewish Christians in the Church, the challenges of multiculturalism.

At first, Peter and the other Jewish Christians there had eaten freely with the Gentile Christians at Antioch, whether the reference is to ordinary meals or to the Lord's Supper, or more probably to both. This would involve ignoring, at least, the Jewish ceremonial food laws, for these were certainly not being observed, by the Gentile Christians. However, when certain men came from James,

Peter, along with the other Jewish Christians, stopped eating with the Gentile Christians, for fear of the circumcision party (or possible just the circumcised), something which aroused both Paul's anger and his rebuke (Galatians 2: 14) Indeed, it is in this context that Paul uses the verb to Judaize in the slightly different sense of to live like Jews (2:14) with reference to Peter's present behaviour, in opposition to his previous propensity to live like a Gentile (Cole 1996: 28-29).

It will be right to assume that Peter and other Jewish Christians' did not eat with Gentile Christians when they saw some Jewish believers from Jerusalem because of hypocrisy in their hearts. By so behaving in a way which is contrary to his real belief, Peter aroused Paul's anger. Perhaps what bothered Paul was how could Peter ever have behaved like this after his personal experience of God's dealing and episode recorded in Acts 10 and 11? After all, this very issue of eating with Gentile Christians, and therefore presumably of eating ceremonially unclean food, had been the central point on that occasion to defend his part of eating with them, citing God's approval of Gentile Christians, by pouring out his Spirit on them and that God has told him that he should not call anything unclean that **He (God) has cleansed**.

After discussing the two challenging issues, circumcision and dietary laws, which affected the relationship of Gentiles and Jewish believers in the Early Church so badly, we now look at what caused the Jewish Christians to be strong on these issues (Acts 15:5). Cole makes a good point about the Jewish Christians strong view about these issues. He says,

The problem for the Jewish Christians can be seen from another angle. The Christian Church was still living in a very uneasy relationship with the temple and with Orthodox Judaism, not to mention with the extremist political groups within Israel. Obviously, the parent Church of Jerusalem would do everything in its power not to jeopardize this delicate relationship, endangered as it already was by false rumors of Paul's attitude to the law and circumcision (Acts 21:20-24), was it not more important to maintain this Christian relationship with the parent body of Judaism than to enjoy some so-called liberty? They may well have hoped that perhaps Israel would yet heed the gospel and turn to her Messiah: the awful, days of AD 70 with the consequential irreconcilable break between Christianity and the new monochrome" Judaism was yet to come.

We can see how tempting and even appealing: this line of argument might have been to the Galatians. We may be sure that this was one of the lines followed by the Judaizers of Galatia, and no doubt sincerely believed by them, but Paul would have none of it, as is clear both from the contents of this letter and his relationship with the Jerusalem apostles (1:6-2:24). To him therefore there must have been a far deeper theological principle involved, outweighing all these considerations: Compromise here, despite his flexibility elsewhere, was impossible (Cole 1996: 47-48).

This is a similar picture of the Church's state in South Africa before 1994. The Church was divided according to racial lines. Many denominations were divided into four sections, that is, the Black, Coloured, Indian and White sections even though they were of the same name, professing to practice the same doctrines and to belong to the same Church. The first three sections were referred to as the 'mission field' of the White section while the White section was regarded as the main or mother Church. Most of the White local churches would not admit members of other sections during their worship meetings, mainly because they were of different skin colour. The White Church in South Africa was married to the government of the day. The government, known throughout the whole world for its oppression and its discrimination against all other people, accepted the White community. The worst part of the South African history is the Church's role in the development and maintenance of the apartheid regime. The Church played a major role in the division of the people of this country. The missionary period is seen by many today as the beginning of Apartheid. This is so because the missionaries collaborated with the colonist in many ways. As a result of that, the Church in South Africa justified apartheid.

2.8 Conclusion

In this chapter we have learnt that the membership of the Early Church comprised of both Jews and Gentiles. Even though some of the leaders were specifically called to certain group of people, for example Paul an apostle to the Gentiles and Peter to the Jews (Gal 2: 6 – 10) they would still go and preach to all people regardless of their race and culture. In Acts 10 God challenge Peter to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. On the other hand we

read of Paul going to preach in the synagogues of the Jews (Acts 17: 10 – 12).

The first multicultural model local church in the in the New Testament is the Antioch church. Unlike the Jerusalem church, we learnt that the Antioch church leadership team was multicultural in its composition and reflective of its own community (Acts 13: 1 – 3).

The Early Church was not free from the challenges of multiculturalism as the church of today want to believe. Some people in the church of the first century did not want to associate with believers of different cultural groups than their own as said by Peter when he said. "You are all aware that it is against our law for Jew to associate with a Gentile or visit him." Peter continue to make a strong point out of his conviction when he said. "But God has shown me that I should not call any man impure or unclean (Acts 10: 28)." During the time of the persecution those that scattered went to a number of places telling the gospel message only to the Jews (Acts 11: 19) and many more examples. The multicultural problem in the Early Church is more clearly highlighted in Acts 15: 1 – 35 and Gal 2: 1 – 6.

In Acts 6 we learnt how they leaders of the Early Church actually dealt with this challenge. Through the delegated authority of the leaders people in the church chose and presented seven men who belonged to a different cultural group from the leadership of that time. We learnt that the integration of new leaders from the different cultural group from the initial leadership brought about growth in the church. As a result of this we read that. "So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly (Acts 6: 7)."

CHAPTER 3

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE CHURCH AND RACISM IN SOUTH AFRICA (18TH – 20TH Century)

3.1 Introduction

This chapter of the thesis will reflect on the history of the church in South Africa. In particular, it will focus on the Church's role in creating racial division amongst the people of this country, South Africa. The missionaries and the establishment of mission stations and their contribution to racism, which led to the emergence of African Indigenous Churches (AIC), will also be investigated. These were churches that were planted by black people and led by black leaders.

Although the first church erected on South African soil was built in Mossel Bay in 1501, by Portuguese Catholics, the origin of the church in South Africa can be traced to the first serious encounter between the indigenous people of the land, and the white people in 1652 when the Dutch East Indian Company established a refreshing station at the Cape of Good Hope, now the Western Cape Province. Here, ships en route to India for commercial purposes, called in to take on fresh water, vegetables and meat.

The Dutch settlers were mainly Calvinists. They were later joined by French Huguenot refugees in 1688 and thereafter, by German Protestants. The three groups also brought with them a spirit of dissent and a legacy of resentment against the dominant classes of Europe. They developed a common language and found themselves bound together by

similar ideals. They then called themselves Afrikaners, which means people of Africa (Villa–Vicencio 1988:2).

Before the Dutch people settled in South Africa, other European explorers visited this southern tip of Africa however, it was the Dutch, in the middle of the seventeenth century, who were the first white people to settle within the boundaries of modern South Africa and it was they who first brought Christianity to Southern Africa. Although they came not as missionaries but as the agents of commerce, they brought the Christian religion with them. The Christian history in South Africa therefore begins with them (Hinchcliff 1968:1). Here we look at some of the missionaries who made great contributions in the missionary work in South Africa.

3.2 J.T Van Der Kemp of the London Missionary Society

The Dutch were the first white people to settle on South African soil. They brought with them the Christian religion in 1652, but the actual missionary period only started in 1799. The first missionaries to South Africa were those from the London Missionary Society, which was founded in 1795 in Britain. Four missionaries of the London Missionary Society reached Cape Town in March 1799. They were Dr Johannes Theodorus Van Der Kemp, Johannes Kicherer, William Edwards and John Edmond. However, two of these men, Johannes Kicherer and William Edwards did not stay long in Cape Town, but proceeded to the North-West. The other two, Van Der Kemp and John Edmond went to the eastern part of the Cape Colony. Of the four men, Dr Johannes Theodorus Van Der Kemp, a Hollander deserves a special mention. He trained in medicine in the University of Edinburgh. He was also a philosopher, a theologian, a soldier, a courtier to the Prince of Orange and a master of sixteen languages. In his early life he had apparently been an unbeliever and a Christian life critic, but his interest in God and Christianity was quickened by the death of his wife and daughter in a boating accident. This tragic incident culminated in his conversion. After his conversion, he offered his services to the London Missionary Society and this resulted in him landing on South African soil at the Cape in 1799. While he and his companions were in Cape Town, they founded the first South African Missionary Society.

Van Der Kemp sought to evangelise the Xhosa people in the eastern part of the Cape Colony. These Xhosa people were under the leadership of Ngqika, an African chief on the eastern frontier. His first attempt to work among the African people as a missionary met with little success. White settlers had by this time made permanent contact with African people. The frontier was in the worst unsettled part of the country. Xhosa people raided white farms and punitive expeditions on the part of the colonists were continually exacerbating the tension between the two races. The Boers of the colony's eastern districts became more and more impatient of government control. They argued that whilst the administration was unable to protect them, it was determined to prevent them from protecting themselves. For these and other reasons, Van Der Kemp's sole harvest, after a year of missionary hard work, was a single convert (Hincheliff 1968:23)

His last missionary years were spent doing missionary work among the Khoikhoi people, at Bethelsdorp, near the modern city of Port Elizabeth (Davies and Shepherd 1954:XIV). This was after he abandoned Ngqika and his people and moved back into the colony to Graaf Reinet which was then a centre of Boer dissatisfaction and resentment. Here, Van Der Kemp, now assisted by another missionary called Read, began to work amongst the Khoikhoi people. At this stage he was still presumably popular amongst the settlers of Graaf Reinet, for he was invited to become their minister of religion. But the Khoikhoi had won his sympathy. He appealed to the government for support in the creation of a missionary institution, which would be helpful in the conversion of the Khoikhoi people. The institution would also provide a place of refuge for the poor miserable Khoikhoi squatters, and a means of identifying bands of Khoikhoi terrorists on the frontier. The institution was begun at Bethelsdorp.

Because of his association and sympathy for the Khoikhoi people, Van Der Kemp was reviled by the colonists. As a missionary, he tried to live by the message of the gospel, 'Love one another' (John 13: 34) by identifying himself with his flock - the Khoikhoi people. He ate and lived with his flock and to make matters, in the eyes of the colonists, he married a non-white Malagasy slave woman. Hincheliff says,

It is terribly difficult to make any proper assessment of

Vanderkemp's work at Bethelsdorp. Vanderkemp was so hated by the colonists that it is hardly possible to find unbiased evidence on which to base the assessment. He was certainly an eccentric, a visionary, and an ideologue. Such a man must be suspect on a rough dangerous frontier. Van Der Kemp wanted to provide landless Hottentots with a place of refuge. The colonists who wanted the Hottentots as farm labourers, denounced Bethelsdorp as a nest of idleness and vice. Van Der Kemp tried to identify himself with his flock, dressing, eating and living like them, and marrying a Malagany slave. He was accused of lowering himself and all other White men and even of dragging the Hottentots as though he were Rousseau's noble savage (Hincheliff 1968: 24).

Van Der Kemp died in 1812 having worked hard as a missionary and a minister of the gospel. It goes without saying that he was regarded as a darling by some, especially the Khoikhoi people, and an enemy and a betrayer by others, in particular the colonists who felt in his efforts to lift up the life of the Khoikhoi was actually lowering the colonists' standard of life.

Under Van Der Kemp's leadership the London Missionary Society missionaries had become the champions of the Khoikhoi (the Hottentots) community. The LMS focused most intensively on the Khoikhoi and their mixed-race descendants. They established clusters of stations in the Eastern Cape, in Transorangia, and in little and Great Namaqualand. The Khoikhoi and their descendants then became spiritual and material brokers between Europeans or missionaries and other Africans. Most missionaries worked and preached through the Khoikhoi intermediaries. This led to some Khoikhoi, probably the most used by missionaries, gaining such experience so that they were able to run their missions. Two such examples were Cupido Kakkerlak and Jan Hendrik. This later became a source of tension between the two Khoikhoi evangelists and certain white missionaries, who saw Africans as too inferior to run their own missions (Elbourne and Ross 1997: 35). Hincheliff says:

The LMS missionaries, who under Vanderkemp's leadership had become the champions of the Hottentots mission stations, gave the Hottentots an alternative to either be farm labour or vagrancy. It is possible that at one time, as high a proportion as one third of total Hottentots population were living on missions. The farmers came

to regard the missionaries as the villains who were responsible for the shortage of labour. The missionaries in their turn began to hear stories about the cruelties inflicted on the Hottentots by their employers. In 1812 after Vanderkemp's death a court in the Eastern Cape (which has gone down in South Africa history as the 'Black Circuit') heard a whole series of complaints. James Read, Van Der Kemp's colleague, was really responsible for pressing the charges. Farmers were appalled to find that they could be compelled to appear in court at the instance of mere Hottentots. The Hottentots themselves must have realized if they could not make the charges stick, their position would be far worse than it had ever been before. It is highly probable that both sides gave false evidence. Only a very few of the charges were proved. Missionaries were henceforward to be regarded as troublemakers and agitators (Hincheliff 1968:26).

White settlers were never happy with anyone from their own ranks or from the missionary societies who tried to improve the conditions of the indigenous people. Whoever tried to improve their conditions was regarded as an enemy. This was so because they saw black people as tools to be used to enrich and empower themselves economically and politically.

Commenting on the works of Van Der Kemp amongst the Khoikhoi, Elbourne and Ross said that.

Those Khoisan who were already partially acculturated and whose economic independence was largely eroded responded more readily to the agenda of the missionaries than did members of more intact societies. On mission stations such Khoisan could regain a measure of authority over their lives. The appeal of Christianity was doubtless bolstered by the strong opposition of the White settlers - who benefited from the equation between Christianity, a White skin, and economic and political dominance to the christianization of their Khoisan dependants. Khoisan particularly those born of sexually exploitive mixed-race unions, knew the settlers views and for many of them an alliance with Christian missions was a defiant move, rather than a simple acceptance of the religion of their masters. They had heard Van Der Kemp and other missionaries castigate 'Christian' Dutch settlers as true enemies of Christ. Christianity furnished the means for a claim to equal status and permitted some Khoisan converts to take over familiar protestant rhetoric of the pure remnant within the erring

church, and to claim that they, not the local farmers were the real Christians. Many of Khoikhoi descents, especially those in more desperate situations within the colony, came to believe that Christianity was in a sense for them, providing proof that their God had not forsaken them (Elbourne and Ross 1997:35-36).

Van Der Kemp played many roles besides being a missionary and a medical doctor. At times he would play the role of a mediator between the settlers and the Khoisan. Such was the time when he was recalled to the colony from amongst the Xhosa people, to find himself plunged into the midst of the third frontier War. He was, soon after his arrival, acting as a reluctant mediator between the British and the 'rebellious' farm-workers. They were protesting against the British for the recent loss of their land, stock, and their independence. He persuaded a number of protestors to make peace in exchange for amnesty. The promise to receive their land back soon proved to be void. In the midst of the struggles of the Khoisan to regain their wealth, land and their independence, Van Der Kemp and Read negotiated and received permission from the Governor of the colony, Dundas to establish a "Hottentots institution" at the Olgoa Bay.

Van Der Kemp and Read, as pre-millenarians, believed in common with several members of the London Missionary Society directorate, that the second coming of Christ was near. They held that God will always send signs of warnings to the guilty before punishing them. They also believed, as did many European protestant, that God acts and carries out His actions through nations and other collectivities and passes judgment on erring communities. Van Der Kemp even saw the third frontier war itself as being caused by God and as a sign of His vengeance, in 1802 predicted 'That the desolation will go further' and that God would make the indigenous people 'the instruments of his wrath' (Elbourne and Ross 1997:37).

The sad part of the history of the church in South Africa is that those who brought the gospel also brought or enforced their culture on the indigenous people. They wanted to change the people of this land to live their lifestyle. The Khoikhoi and the San people were two different groups of people, but they were all living a communal life style. They

were all nomadic. Most of the missionaries, in support of their masters, the farmers, wanted the Khoikhoi and the San to acquire an individualistic, capitalistic and independent community lifestyle. This, however, was not the case with men like Van Der Kemp who saw value in the way the people lived. He believed that they did not need to be changed from being Africans into Europeans in order to believe in God or to be Christians. Elbourne and Ross said that,

Throughout the first two decades of the century, settlers and missionaries competed to control the destiny of the Khoikhoi. Aristocratic Van Der Kemp showed little interest in changing Khoikhoi culture fundamentally "all civilization is from the Devil": he purportedly proclaimed most other missionaries wanted the Khoikhoi to acquire means to "settle" in an independent community to become "respectable" and to acquire the rudiments of individualistic capitalist culture. By contrast, labour-hungry local farmers and officials sought to remake the once nomadic Khoikhoi into landless farm labourers living permanently on White farms. They sought to intimidate mission stations into closing: they spread rumours that missionaries had nefarious designs against the Khoikhoi, and sought to bring mission Khoikhoi back under their control through a variety of legal and illegal techniques including often violence. Andries Jager recalled many years later that this was a time of sorrow and oppression under which I have often wished I was dead (God forgive me) to be eased of many burdens (Elbourne and Ross 1997:37).

The missionaries that came into South Africa were also divided in the approach of presenting the gospel to the people of this country. They came to preach and teach the gospel of one and the same God but with different intentions. Some came with pure intentions. Such examples are men like Van Der Kemp. Some came to 'civilize' the African people. This was so because they considered Africans to be uncivilized and Africa as a dark continent. For the latter to be a Christian, simply meant to acquire the European culture. Men like Van Der Kemp were hated for defending the cause of African people against the settlers. They were said to have lost focus of preaching the gospel by getting involved into politics. These kinds of comments will be said by both the missionaries and settlers. This resulted in a division, more especially, among the fellow missionaries. In their own words Elbourne and Ross said:

In the early 1800's, Van Der Kemp, his colleague James Read, and

other LMS missionaries struggled, with some success to obtain redress for crimes committed against the Khoikhoi. The investigation of criminal charges brought by the Khoisan against Graaf – Reinet farmers and more generally, the introduction of a circuit court were seen, probably correctly, as their doing. This campaign caused dissention in LMS ranks, as dissident missionaries such as the German Messer and Lass protested against what they saw as their colleague's focus on politics at the expense of good order and civilization, pointing to the Moravians' Genadendal as an example of truly beneficial mission station. At issue was a fundamental disagreement about the sort of Christianity to be practiced and propagated. The racial millenarianism of the first missionaries was being overtaken by a much more quiescent Christianity both in Europe and in South Africa (Elbourne and Ross 1997:37).

No wonder the Christian community in South Africa is so divided. Those that claim to have brought the gospel to this country were much divided over the essential issues. We inherited the divided Christianity. History shows that after the death of Van Der Kemp, the quarrel between the missionaries grew even worse and African people were treated worse than before.

3.3 Dr John Philip – “Defender and Liberator”

Eight years after the death of Van Der Kemp, in 1820 Doctor John Philip, the Scottish Independent minister was appointed and sent to South Africa. He was commissioned to take charge of the work and to clean up the faltering London Missionary Society mission work, particularly in the troubled Eastern Cape.

Philip was a strong man and had a clear vision of what he wanted to fulfill in South Africa. In describing him, Peter Hincheliff said that, he was physically tough, with a keen active mind and strong obstinate spirit. If Van Der Kemp was a disciple of Rousseau, Hincheliff sees Philip as disciple of Adam Smith. His leadership ability was shown by the fact that at the age of twenty he had become the workers' manager of a Dundee power mill. He also showed his social concern when, within a few months of his appointment to a managerial position, he resigned stating that he would not stand by while child labour, and particularly in appalling conditions, was practiced in his factories

(Hinchcliff 1968:25). He is also seen as:

A true son of the Scottish Enlightenment. He offered the Khoisan an identity somewhat different from that preferred by Van der Kemp's millenarian promises but one that offered converts the expectation of increased temporal power. He proposed that the Khoisan acculturate further and rapidly show that nineteenth-century Scots deemed the outward signs of 'civilization,' such as property accumulation, cleanliness and Western-style clothing and housing, a political tool to confound those cities who would deny them the individual rights. This contrast between Philip and Khoisan coincided with the drive of British government to liberalize the economy of the Cape Colony, so as to encourage trade, property accumulation, monetization, class distinction, and the virtues of thrift and hard work among the populace. This moralized modern economy was a development Philip sought to encourage, on a much smaller scale, among Christian converts (Elbourne and Ross 1997:38).

Philip did not land on South African soil as a leader without a vision. Looking at his life, there are two clear issues that he was primarily concerned with. Firstly, it was the continual unrest involving blacks or the indigenous people and white settlers in the frontiers. Secondly, it was the poor and oppressive conditions of the Khoisan within the Cape Colony. The British government's commissioners of the Eastern Inquiry were sent to observe and give a report on the governance of the Colony in 1822 and he hoped after they had observed the conditions, his persuasion would help them to recommend improvement in the legal status of the Khoisan. He organized for the commissioners to visit a number of mission stations around the Colony. In 1826 he then undertook a trip to London to plead for equal civil rights for all free people in the Colony, irrespective of the colour of their skin. His trip was a great success since this was after the abolition of the slave trade in 1807. This was a period in which the Khoisan people were faced with grave problems in their lives. Hinchcliff says,

These people really only had a choice between being farm labourers or vagrants. There was no other niche in Cape society, which they could occupy. Farm labour was not well paid. The work was hard and, though such work would give a man and his family some security and some reward in kind, the conditions did not appeal to a race whose immemorial custom was to live off the land. Nor was the legal status of the Hottentots population clear.

They were neither slaves nor citizens. Pass laws might be created to check vagrancy. Contracts of service might be registered to check the desertion (Hincheliff 1968:25).

In 1928, Philip won an order giving the Khoisan 'freedom and protection'. At the same time the government, through their representative the acting Governor of the Cape Colony, Richard Brurke, issued the notorious 'Ordinance 50', with which the name of Philip has always been linked, and granted substantially the same privileges to the Khoisan as the white population. Vagrancy was no longer punishable. The Khoikhoi could give their service at free-will or withhold it when they wanted without being charged. The Ordinance 50 meant that all free persons of colour were to have the same legal rights as White colonists (Hincheliff 1968:27).

The Khoisan, who had earlier been promised that they could participate freely and on equal terms in the economy reserved solely for the white population provided they become Christians and underwent fundamental cultural changes, were now offered new hope by Ordinance 50. The Ordinance 50 also allowed the Khoisan community to own land and abolished the pass law legislation.

Philip's primary concern for the poor, marginalized and oppressed Black people led to him being criticized, hated and charged with losing his missionary focus of converting the heathens. He was accused of interfering in the politics of the country only reserved for the politicians. Majeke says,

... others present him as a political mischief-maker who created trouble between the two natural allies, the Dutch and the British chiefly because of his liberal attitude towards the non-whites. They avert that he stood for "equality between White and Black" and abominate him accordingly. On the other hand there are those liberal apologists, like Macmillan, author of "Bantu, Boer, and Briton," who hail him as the "defender of the Hottentots," humanitarian and emancipationist, who with Wilberforce and Buxton, strove to abolish slavery. "The Wilberforce of Africa," he has been called, and there is less laudatory than its inventor supposed. Between those who damn him and those who praise what is the truth (Majeke 1952:13).

Philip's courage was drawn from his continual contact and support from mission headquarters in London as well as Wilberforce, Buxton and other representatives in the British Parliament. This superintendent of the London Missionary Society played a vital role in the political life of the Black people in the Cape Colony. At one stage in his career as the head of the mission in the Cape Colony, he wrote a letter to Buxton, one of his friends and a strong supporter of his vision. It was a letter written confidently and confidentially saying, "At present the Colonial Government does nothing as to relations with the independent native tribes without consulting me" (Majeke 1952:13).

The Missionary Movement in South Africa was very fortunate to be represented among others by a man such as Philip at such a time as this. He also knew how to facilitate team-work by delegating responsibility and some of his authority to others. He had his agents all over so that he was continually kept informed of what was happening all over the country. He was an open-minded man. He received official and non-official reports from mission stations from far a field. He corresponded not with missionaries only, but with a wide range of people, such as merchants and military men as well as with African chiefs, through their attendants, the missionaries. Through these contacts, Dr Philip was well informed of what was happening in the Cape Colony. He was well informed far more than the government officials of the Colony.

While the trek oxen were pulling Boer wagon further and further North, the indefatigable Dr Philip was making his frequent tours of the mission stations assuring the chiefs of his 'friendships' and promising them the 'protection' of the British crown (Majeke 1952:13).

Philip did not always have a good relationship with governors who, at that stage, were mostly military men. Lord Somerset, the Governor of the Colony at the time of Philip's arrival, was a conservative and a representative of the most backward element of British rule, the feudal aristocracy, who constituted his supporters in the British Parliament. Somerset did not like those freedoms claimed by the middle-class, which supported Philip. Philip kept direct contact with government representative and preached freedom of press, freedom of speech, freedom of association and many more. All those who

supported what Philip stood for, would make Somerset very angry and he hated to associate with anyone who propagated those. It was Lord Somerset's philosophy that Church and state should be married and work together, but it should be an Orthodox doctrine. He did not like the upstart liberals and non-conformists who formed part of the middle-class independence in the British Parliament. Philip was a liberal non-conformist and above that, he had the full support of the very people Somerset did not like to associate with, the industrialists in the British Parliament, the most progressive group of people. It goes without saying that the two leaders would not see eye to eye.

It began simply over a question of the independence of the LMS mission stations; Lord Somerset wasn't satisfied with the behavior of the LMS missionaries because they weren't carrying out to his satisfaction the job of being recruiting agents (Majeke 1952:14).

Majeke continued to say that,

Lord Somerset however, in whom was vested autocratic rule at the Cape, was always ready to play the despot: it displeased Philip when he appointed the Rev Brownlee as his own government missionary and his representative with chief Ngqika. He was still resentful of the fact that the governor had refused permission to the LMS missionaries to proceed into Namaqualand. The reasons seem to have been that his Lordship, himself a feudalist, adopted a conciliatory attitude toward the Dutch in these regions – he was certainly always generous in doling out farms to them from the confiscated lands of the amaXhosa – and on this occasion it pleased him to respect their hearty dislike of missionary interference with their serfs or slaves. Philip was incensed. There he was more involved than the question of allowing freedom of action to the missionary superintendent (Majeke 1952:14).

The fight between Dr Philip and Lord Somerset over his interference with the London Missionary Society missionaries took on larger proportions and became part of the struggle of the industrial liberals against the local absolute in the person of his Lordship, Somerset.

Philip brought in the most powerful supporters of liberalism to expose the mal-administration of the Governor of the Colony, Lord Somerset. On the other hand, the

Governor regardless of the fact that he was fully aware of their usefulness in the Colony tried to discredit the LMS missionaries before the home government, back in London. Philip was shrewd enough. He suddenly came up in defense of the rights of the impoverished and oppressed Khoikhoi and used this as a means to silence Lord Somerset. Most of Philip's evidence consisted of charges pressed by Read who was one of his colleagues. Read gave reports on how the Dutch farmers ill-treated the Khoikhoi people. He gave instances of unpaid and forced labour. He prepared a volume of memoranda to be tabled in the British Parliament by his supporter, none other than Buxton. His main attack on Lord Somerset's administration was on the slave economy of the Boers, and undesirability of a military government entrusted with civil administration. Part of what Philip wrote to the British Parliament read:

I saw I had in my hands not only the means of liberating the Hottentots from their cruel bondage." And again: "I have no doubt that papers I have sent home (to British government) will lead to recall of the first authorities of the Colony to a total change in its administration... I know that the Governor and the Colonel Bird (his secretary) are dreadfully alarmed... if they had listened in time they might have kept their places and the old system in a modified form. Now it is before the British Parliament (cf. Majeke 1952:16).

Majeke says.

For his part agitating for the 'Liberation' of the Khoikhoi – to which the 50th ordinance gave formal expression – Dr Philip continued to be hailed as their "defender and liberator." Now he himself makes perfectly clear the purpose behind this so-called liberation. This he did in "Researches in South Africa," a book which well deserved the approval of Wilberforce and his fellow industrialists in the British Parliament. The virtue of the superintendent of the London Missionary Society was the clarity with which he saw the issues involved in conquest, the particular tasks of the missionary and the methods to be employed. In the comprehensiveness of the general statements in his preface it is obvious that he is not confining himself to the question of the Khoikhoi only, but of a wider conquest in Africa. It was during the conquest of the Bantu that the missionaries were to find full scope for their activities. It is for a particular interest to us, therefore, to follow his analysis of the task (Majeke 1952:17).

3.4 William Shaw of the Wesleyan Methodism

William Shaw came to South Africa in the same year as Dr John Philip, in 1820. But the two belonged to different missionary organizations. Shaw was sent to South Africa by the missionary committee of the British Methodist Church, and he came as the General Superintendent of Wesleyan Methodism in the Cape. His main vision was to see the establishment of as many mission stations as possible, beyond the borders of British settlers to what he called the 'Kaffirs'. As a result, he built a chain of eight mission stations from Algoa Bay to Delagoa Bay, in fulfilment of his vision. He is still regarded as the father and the chief architect of Methodism in South Africa.

From the time Shaw arrived in South Africa in the Cape as the Chaplain to the party of British settlers, his mind and eyes were set beyond the Colonial boundaries. He wanted to reach out to the people outside the Cape Colony. He felt that if he only preached to the British settlers, or to only one group of people, he would be disobedient to the call of God. He believed in the Great Commission recorded in the gospel according to Matthew Chapter 28:18-20. The Great Commission is the command given by the Lord Jesus Christ to preach the gospel of salvation to all nations of the world.

In his book, *My Mission*, Shaw wrote,

From the time when I received my appointment to Southern Africa, as Chaplain or Minister to a party of British settlers, my mind was filled with the idea that Divine Providence designed, after I had accomplished some preparatory work among the settlers who were located on the border of Kaffraria, that I should proceed beyond the Colonial boundaries, and established a Wesleyan Mission among the Kaffirs. Hence I resolved not to be disobedient to the Heavenly call, but while steadily pursuing the work of the day, my eye was constantly fixed on Kaffraria, as a great field for the future (Shaw 1872:59).

Shaw's views and feelings about establishing mission work for the Wesleyan among indigenous people, 'Kaffirs' in his own words, were expressed in a letter written to the Missionary Committee back in Britain. The letter was written from Salem in the same year he arrived in South Africa 1820, only a few months after his arrival in the Cape

Colony.

It is unfortunate that a few months after his arrival in South Africa Shaw had already written a judgmental letter to his missionary society, painting a wrong and uninformed picture about South African people. He saw people in this land as 'Kaffirs', heathens, people who did not know and believe in God. South Africa was, in his view, abounding in heathen inhabitants. In other words, he saw them as people who had no idea and knowledge of God. His argument was based on the fact that there were no mission stations among the people he referred to. The absence of mission stations did not mean that people did not believe and worship God. Similarly the presence of many church buildings would not necessarily mean that people are Christians. The good thing, however, about Shaw was his strong belief that the words of the Saviour, Jesus Christ in Matthew 28:18-20 were applicable to any part of the world at any time. About the indigenous people and the mission stations Shaw said that:

These stations will be the key to Kaffirland, a country abounding in heathen inhabitants. Certainly the present is not the time for penetrating that country; but I hope the present turbulent spirit of those people will soon begin to subside, and then I should wish to see a Wesleyan Missionary ready to take advantage of the opportunity to enter and to proclaim upon their mountains good tidings, and to publish peace and salvation. The time might soon follow, when you would see on your lists stations among the Tambookies, the Mambookies, and the various tribes of people between us and Delagoa Bay!

I hope the committee will never forget that, with the exception of Latakoo, which is far in the interior, there is not a single Missionary Station between the place of my residence and the northern extremity of the Red Sea, nor do any people professedly Christian, with the exception of those of Abyssinia. Here, then, is a wide field – the whole eastern coast of the continent of Africa! If ever the words of the Saviour were applicable to any part of the world at any time, surely they apply to Eastern Africa at the present time: The harvest is great but labourers are few (Shaw 1872:59 – 60).

In 1865 Shaw was called back home and was elected the President of the British Methodist Conference. He served as the president and key strategist of the Wesleyan

Methodist Missionary work until his death in 1872.

There are many more missionaries that came to South Africa under different Missionary Societies. Some of these were born of missionaries who came to this country and became missionaries themselves in the land of their birth. Men like Stephanus Hofmeyr, who succeeded Alexandra McKidd, a Scotsman, become an outstanding missionary. Hofmeyr had a successful mission career in the Northern Transvaal now called Limpopo Province among the Northern-Sotho (Bapedi) speaking people and also the descendants of Coenraad Buys or De Buis at Mara, the foot of the Zoutspansberg Mountains. Hofmeyr was said to be an ideal missionary, patient, courageous, cheerful, with deep insight into the meaning and interpretation of the Scriptures. He was also full of love for his fellow-men, both Black and White (Du Plessis 1911:285-6).

3.5 Missionary Functions and activities in South Africa

A good number of missionary stations were established throughout South Africa for many different reasons. The establishers of the mission stations, the Missionaries fulfilled many different roles. It is important to know and understand the reasons from which the missionary movement in Southern Africa started and why all the former colonies of the British Empire, in the Southern Africa were a major network of missionary activity. The arrival of missionaries to the Southern Africa at the end of the eighteenth century happened at same time with first occupation of the Cape by the British. The missionaries were sent and were being used by the British Government. Their coming together was not a coincidence: it was a planned venture, by the Government and the Church of England. To understand the roles of missionaries better we must view their functions as part of a great historical movement, the expansion of capitalism in the name of God. About the arrival of the missionaries from Britain and their purposes, Majeke said:

Now it is one of the many falsifications of history to obscure the true nature of events behind sentimental phrases or catch words. In the late 18th and early 19th centuries we hear much of the activities of the Evangelicals, the Humanitarians, the Philanthropists, the Emancipationists, those people who concerned themselves with the morals of the poor at home and the sufferings of the slaves abroad.

who devoted their energies to the emancipation of the slaves “the liberation of the Hottentots”, the conversion of the heathen to Christianity and such like. There is no doubt that there were well – meaning people who supported the humanitarian movements. But we would have a false perspective of events if we accepted these grandiloquent aims at their face value and assumed that there was some mysterious milk of human kindness animating the hearts of the English. From the days of Queen Elizabeth in the late sixteenth century, when English men joined the crusade for the plunder of the New World, when Sir Walter Raleigh and other adventurers were authorized to “advance the conversion of savages and increase traffic,” the glory of God and the profit of England had always been, one might say, synonymous terms. It is our business to look into the economic aims underlining all these activities at the beginning of nineteenth century (Majeke 1952:1).

Majeke’s suggestion is that when looking at the coming into South Africa of those who came in the name of God we should not be fooled into focusing on one side of the coin only. Every coin has two sides. To be specific it is the missionaries who came in the name of God. It is our responsibility to research and find out what other motives drove them to come to Africa and South Africa in particular. Villa-Vicencio agrees with Majeke when he says that:

Within this milieu of colonial expansionism the birth of the English-speaking churches took place. Military might and the acquisition of land historically altered the subcontinent in the name of progress under the benign protection of God’s providence and the Union Jack. It is a little story of the chicken and the egg to ask which came first: the missionaries, the traders, explores or the military. What can be said with confidence is that the missionary societies and immigrant churches planted in Africa during this period, like all other social institutions, acted as carriers of the social, cultural, economic and political forces of the society of which they were a part, in this case imperial Britain (Villa-Vicencio 1988:42).

It will be proper at this stage to point out that, the role of the church and the missionaries in the period between 1800 and 1900 was ambiguous. They came to South Africa to advance the preaching of the gospel amongst the African people, which they did, but they also helped the settlers, the imperialists, the traders or the oppressors fulfill their goals.

The fact that they were coming in big numbers to South Africa helped the process to be even faster than their governments thought. Elizabeth Isichei, Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Otago in New Zealand wrote that:

In 1911 – when there were over 30 missionary societies and 1650 missionaries there -- it was said that South Africa may well claim to being, with the possible exception of the South Sea Islands, the best occupied mission field in the world. However for much of the nineteenth century, missionaries often had curiously little success. Moffat admitted that he had fewer Christians than fruit tree, and Livingstone became an explorer largely because he was discouraged by lack of converts in his southern Tswana mission station. Those who became Christians were often ostracized or punished: yet they also experienced discrimination from their White co-religionists. An African Methodist said in 1863, to the natives we are but despised believers to the English we are no more than Kaffirs (Isichei 1995:100).

It is very sad to note that while South Africa had the greatest number of missionaries and missionary societies, it was the last country to come out of the oppression of the so called 'Christian Government' in 1990. The people were living peacefully before the missionaries arrived, but after they were converted to Christianity, they became objects of scorn by both the missionaries and their own people. The former punished them for turning against their native customs, religious practices and perhaps for associating with the oppressors who were considered 'wolves in sheep skins,' coming in the name of God to grab their land. The latter were the Whites who preached to them but still regarded them as 'Kaffirs,' In other words still as heathens. This suggests that the very people who preached the changing power of God did not believe in being changed themselves.

The White missionaries shared a common culture, and sometimes a common language with White settlers. As a result, the settlers or colonists were an important potential source of funds. Therefore it was sometimes difficult in these circumstances to be critical to the settlers' injustices. Because of this reason and many others, their gospel was closely linked to the White people's ideology of colonialisation. What they thought to be the fruits of the gospel they were preaching could no longer be distinguished from the cultural values of their homeland aspirations. The missionaries' interest may well have

been to further the gospel to all nations as the Bible says in Matthew 28 but it is difficult to sweep under the carpet the fact that they shared and greatly benefited their countries and themselves in promoting the settler and imperialist motives of coming to South Africa. By virtue of being custodians of religion of the settlers, the missionaries consciously and unconsciously found themselves serving and promoting the prevailing ideology of the imperial expansionism. Missionaries played a big role in the conquest of Africa, African people and African societies by White settlers. There is no doubt that, the preaching of the gospel by missionaries to African people was the beginning of making them their servants. In other words, they did not preach the true gospel of Jesus Christ with pure intents. It was a way of producing 'good' servants for their gardens, kitchens, farms, factories and even in the Church. This point is well expressed by the *Christian Express*, the Missionary Editorial Publication of 1878, which defines the whole purpose of the missionaries' intention in bringing Christianity among Black people in South Africa:

We want to see the natives become workers... And ... we believe Christianity will be chief cause of their becoming a working people....

How this... comes to be in twofold. Christianity creates needs. Generally speaking, every man will work first as much as he requires to do and not more. There will be constant relation between the time a man works and his necessities.... If you want men to work, then you must get them to need. Create need and you supply stimulus to work: you enlist the worker's own will on the side of labour. Few men anywhere, and certainly no heathen men, ever work for the mere pleasure of working.

Now, the speediest way of creating needs among this people is to Christianize them. As they will become Christianized they will want more clothing, better houses, furniture, books, education for children, and a hundred other things which they do not have now and never have had. And all these things they can get by working. But Christianity also teaches the duty of working, and denounces idleness as a sin.

So to Christianize a Kaffir is the shortest way, and surest, way to make him put his hands steadily and willingly to the work that is waiting to be done. This will make it both interest and his duty to work, will enlist, besides his bodily appetites, his home affections, his mental powers, and his conscience, on the side of industrious habits (cf. Villa -Vicencio 1988:44 -45).

This editorial sets the record straight as to the objective of the missionaries. They were there to help the imperialists achieve their goal of capitalism. They saw Africans as lazy people because when they arrived in South Africa no African worked for another person. Instead they were their own bosses. They owned land (fields) and flock of cattle, sheep and goats. Food was plenty. In fact, they had almost everything they needed. The capitalist knew that he would have no one to work for him. So, he took away what the rich Africans had, that is, the land and then Christianized and turned them not only to be workers as the Christian Express has recorded, but also to become 'buggers'. A worker will ultimately work for himself, but Africans have been turned into 'buggers' because they have been made 'workers.' Today they go around begging for jobs from the same people who turned them into 'workers'. The Editorial speaks about 'creating needs.' You cannot control a person who does not have a need. So, the White capitalist, with the help of the church and the missionaries 'created needs' for African people. Now that the Africans have the need of clothes, houses, education for children and many more, the capitalist is using these needs to control them.

In addition, the colonial administrator and missionary, reckoned to be the defender of the African people, Dr John Philip, could not escape the influence of being used by the imperialists, to further the ideology for capitalism of the British government. Dr Philip argued that missionaries were, by the most exceptional means, extending British interests, British influence and the British Empire. They also taught African people industrious habits, and created a demand for British goods. He further argued that the mission stations were the cheapest and the best military posts that any wise government can employ to defend its frontiers against the predatory incursions of savage tribes (Philip 1828:1X – X).

This kind of information enables us to understand the role of the missionaries in South Africa in a holistic manner. They came as preachers of the gospel of Jesus Christ, as well as agents of their governments, who played their full role in the subjugation of Africa. Whatever their differences, in political or economical approach, they all had a common aim when they left their countries: the confiscation of the land, the subjugation of its

inhabitants and finally the establishment of White supremacy.

The tendency is illustrated by a brief historical analysis of the Dutch and the English. The two groups arrived at different times. The Afrikaners and the English people fought over the land and power in South Africa. Villa-Vicencio says that:

As the course of South African history unfolded, contingent on the discovery of diamonds and gold, followed by the inevitable process of industrialization and urbanization, South African Whites, English and Afrikaner alike, jealously committed themselves to the institution and maintenance of politico-economic system which favored White supremacy. When these privileges were threatened, the South African English, despite their membership in non-racial churches, were drawn into alliance with their White Afrikaner compatriots against the Black majority, and against those Black persons who constituted the dominant majority in the churches, which they belonged. It is this that causes racial critics of both the 'left' and 'right' of English speaking churches to dismiss the non-racial image of the these churches as a deception (Villa-Vicencio 1988:46).

When looking at the bigger picture, we see how the different national groups and different agents of the conquest contributed to the main task. It is interesting to see how each part carried on where the previous agents left off. The church and the missionaries are no exception. It was part of the settlers and colonist's strategy, with their various instruments and sources, that the missionaries must find their rightful place in conquest. Therefore, it is objective of this thesis to uncover the colonisation strategy, which made use of the church and missionaries to achieve the colonial government's aims. While it is necessary to emphasise the part played by the church and missionaries, it is also important to point out that, this cannot be presented in isolation. They always worked in conjunction with other agencies, sometimes retiring into the background, sometimes even appearing to be in conflict with the government back at their homelands, by protesting on behalf of the very people who were being subjugated. Yet by so doing, they were actually still furthering the aims of the same Government they were representing.

There is an ongoing debate about the missionary activities in Africa, and more specifically in South Africa. There are those who argue that the missionaries were good and honourable pioneers, who contributed to the development of South Africa, without whom there would be no civilization, schools and hospitals. Sir Herbert Stanley, the High Commissioner for South Africa from 1931 to 1935 said:

It would have been hard to discover any appreciable benefaction in the impact of the White traders upon the Black consumers of gin and producers of slaves on the West Coast. The days of their iniquity, happily are over, but the evil that men do lives after them, and the close of the chapter may not be the end of the book. The aftermath of slavery still lingers on as a factor in inter-racial problems. The bygone horrors of the West Coast are not, of course, sympathetic of all European incursion and penetration into the Black continent. It would be unfair and foolish to interpret the White settlement, which has spread from the Cape of Good Hope northward as analogous in spirit or effect. Like so many attributes of our human imperfection it has been neither an unmixed blessing nor an unmixed curse. Things good and things evil it has destroyed. Things good and things evil it has brought, and of the good things, which it has brought, we have to thank the Christian Missionaries for the best. *They came loving God and loving men*, to carry the light of the gospel into dark places of superstitions and witchcraft. By the practice of Christianity, which they preached they built bridges between the old and the new, between the invader and the displaced, and the fearless in their humanism they tempered the clash of conflicting interests (Stanley 1949: Foreword).

While Stanley sees missionaries as God-loving and men-loving, people who are to be thanked for doing their best, and carrying the torch of the light of the gospel, others see the missionaries as indirect and direct agents of colonial subjugation and protectors of White domination and settlers interest.

In the view of the latter, Villa-Vicencio says that, the missionaries had little doubt concerning the superiority of their culture, and from a Western perspective their values and resources were considered superior. The missionaries, because of their attitude, disregarded the values and achievements of African people. It was this attitude which caused them to view the African way of life as evidence of religious and cultural

depravity. The African way of life was to be replaced by their kind of gospel which was not in line with the Biblical gospel of Christ. To receive the gospel or to be a convert of Christ meant a complete rejection of black men's African worldview, their heritage and a denial of traditional social customs. This kind of planned and systematic assault of African culture and political systems was probably the worst destruction performed by the missionaries and the Church in the name of God in South Africa among the indigenous people. They condemned African customs and institutions and taught the social norms of nineteenth century Europe as though these universal (Thompson 1907:251). The missionaries saw Africans as people who knew nothing about God and who had never experienced Him or seen Him manifested.

In his writings, one of the most popular missionaries in South Africa, Robert Moffat, spoke about the salvation of African people:

... a profound silence reigns of this awful subject... prepare for the gracious distribution of the waters of salvation in that desert soil, sowing the seed of the word, breathing many a prayer, and shedding many a tear, till the Spirit of God should cause it to vegetate, and yield the fruits of righteousness (Moffat 1842:243 -- 244).

Locked into their own sense of superiority and pride, the missionaries were not able to separate the message of the gospel of Christ from their cultural baggage.

Social paternalism also motivated many imperialists and many missionaries in South Africa:

My own view is that it was this paternalism, developed originally by the English churches with regard to their own missionaries which rubbed off, as it were, on the whole colonial church (cf. Hinchliff 1963:167).

Hinchliff points to a particular form of this paternalism at the centre of missionary structures and the operations of the churches. The ecclesiastical authorities in England were of a different social class and, they enjoyed a higher education than the rank-and-file of missionaries sent to the colonies. The result was the imposition of the English

structures onto the emerging African church, with missionaries Africa being treated in a paternalistic manner by their superiors at home. The outcome was that when missionaries dealt with their Black converts, they tended to treat them with the same paternalism prevailing in the British society. The missionaries were obliged to account for every decision made and every item of expense incurred. When African leaders began to emerge, they were treated in the familiar paternalistic manner, and in turn learned that this was the manner in which they were to treat their congregants. This resulted in an authoritarian and paternalistic ecclesiastical structure that relegated all the people of God, to a servile status requiring social submission. It was this attitude of the missionaries towards their fellow indigenous ministers of the gospel that led to the emergence of a large number of African indigenous or initiated churches. This was because African people felt that whilst they were free from the bondage of Satan, they were still under the bondage and control of White people's paternalism. African people left the White churches not because of a rebellious spirit, but in order to continue to experience their total freedom in God. This issue will be fully discussed later in this chapter **when we deal specifically with African indigenous churches.**

The third and final point raised by Villa-Vicencio in relation to the missionaries and their work, is that of the church's deference to civil authority. The Anglican Church was the state church in England, and also in the British colonies of the Cape and Natal in South Africa. It was the church of the government and, therefore, showed political support for and conformity to the status quo, up until the political union between the British colonies and the Boer Republics in 1910 (Hinchcliff 1963:10-11). William Shaw, in support of the imperialists the superintendent of the Wesleyan Mission, was instrumental in depriving the Ba-Sotho King Moshoeshoe of parts of his land. The Scottish missionaries, similarly, abstained from criticizing the government (Villa-Vicencio 1988:54-57).

The missionaries' attitudes of cultural superiority, paternalism and deference towards civil authority against the majority population of Black people resulted in the Church in South Africa turning a blind eye and justified the four major pillars of the apartheid government. The four pillars were: the confiscation of land from the rightful owners, the

indigenous people of this land: the economics of colour segregation; the politics of White-dominion; and race relations. In the following section, the researcher shall briefly discuss each pillar of Apartheid to see how the Church and missionaries supported these evil systems of governance.

3.5.1 The Confiscation of the Land

To the African people, land was the economic base, whereas cattle were the visible sign of wealth or capital accumulation. Land also formed an inherent part of the African social structure. Land represented health and food. It was an agricultural base where food and herbs were obtainable, and a place where people could hunt game for fresh and dry meat supplies. It also represented political power. To be without land meant the loss of political power and political identity. Cochrane quoted Wilson to show how Africans without land are regarded:

With the settler conquest of the territories and the later introduction of individual tenure (signaled by the Glen Gray Act of 1894), the stratification of African society was insured on the basis of relationship of land. Cleavages exist between landowners or those with organized land rights, and 'squatters'; and people from reserves generally look down on farm labourers as landless wanderers (cf. Wilson 1971).

It is clear here that the African community was being divided. Those that were 'squatters', people from the reserves looked down upon the farm-labourers, who happened to stay on the land owned by the farmer. Farm-labourers owned no land. The land belonged to the farmer and Black people would only provide cheap-labour and sometimes free-labour. In other words, to be without land in Africa is a disgrace and you will be scorned by the people around you. It is so because if you are without land you are considered to be among the poor of the poorest. It would also mean that you are too lazy to clear a piece of land so that you may own it. He continues to explain the role of missionaries confiscating land from the African people, when he said that:

In this regard, she describes the significant role of missionaries, as

well as of Sir George Grey and Rhodes, in motivating the allotment of land under individual tenure, a major structural factor in altering pre-colonial economy (cf. Wilson 1971).

Many scholars today accept the view that missionaries were the advance agents of White imperialism and that they were greatly used, perhaps more than any other agent, in the process of annexing the land from the Africans. The missionaries were willing to cooperate in the 'Christianisation' and pacification of the African chiefs and their people not to resist the confiscation of their God given wealth, the land. They were willing to be used officially and unofficially as representatives of the most evil systems of their governments. Majeke explained the missionaries' role and co-operation with the imperialists in stealing the land. She noted how they used the Bible and the name of God in committing this sinful act that today has enriched the whole of the West, while the whole of Africa is baptized in poverty:

At the outset, the missionary approaches the chief humbly, Bible in hand and asks for a small piece of land to set up his mission station. At his heels hastens the trader, the purveyor of cheap goods. Thus the Bible and the bale of the Lancashire cotton become the twin agents of a revolutionary change. The peaceful penetration by the missionary and the trade – sometimes the missionary turned trader -- is followed in due course by an "agreement" between the chief and the Governor whereby the British became the "friend and protector" of the chief. But this 'agreement' is actually the precursor of British interference, of war and looting of cattle, and it end with a so called 'treaty' in which the chief 'agrees' to seizure of a large piece of land belonging to the tribe. In return, he receives a magistrate as well as a missionary, who is much less humble than he was when he first arrived to beg land of the chief. Now other missions stations are set up in the still uncharted territory and in their train come still more traders, their tin shacks sitting like squat spiders throughout the land. The invaded tribes are split asunder: 'divide and rule' under the capable hands of the missionaries carries on its deadly work of disruption. In the already confiscated territory large tracts of land are handed out to Dutch farmers or British settlers: there is unrest on the so called frontiers: the hungry people try to retrieve their plundered cattle and the thieves accuse them of cattle-theft and send out destroying commandos to raid the sleeping villages.

They are joined by the military, who scour the country to keep order among the 'treacherous' tribes as the official phrase has it. Before long, gunpowder, fire and famine mark the next stage of conquest. Still larger tracts of land seized; the farmers cry out of labour and it is there for the taking; destitute Africans, robbed of their land, are being turned into cheap labour force. It is remorseless process. If for a time the policy of the British Government seems to dictate a halt in the rather costly business of war – for through it is a assegai against gun, the Africans are hard to subdue – these are always the Dutch (Trek Boers) to carry on with their land – grabbing, until, as a matter of principle, the British find themselves "reluctantly compelled" to annex the new territory in order to "protect the Natives". Hypocrisy has always been one of British's most useful weapons.

Throughout all this period, more than half a century, the missionaries are at hand, preparing the way, disarming the chiefs with message of God's peace – at the same time the God of an all-powerful nation prepare to be their 'friend'. Thus they make easy the negotiations between the Governor and the chief; they act as Governor's advisers and assist in drawing the terms of the 'treaties'. They become interpreters 'peace-makers' while at the same time they are military advisers to the invaders. For they know the geography of the land better than the commanders themselves: on receiving permission from the chief to set up a mission stations they make it one of the task to explore the surrounding territory. There after, when it is time to consolidate the conquest, they become magistrates and self-styled chiefs till in fullness of time the sons of the missionaries become governors, magistrates and ministers of 'Native' Affairs the inheritors of conquest into the third and fourth generation (Majeke 1952:7-8).

Missionaries were the most used agents in the process of land confiscation, both by the British settlers, the Dutch and the farmers. They were the key in the hands of both settlers and the Dutch in opening up the door to the land of the African people. At first, the land was for the missionary reserves and later it was turned to the empire of settlers or farmers. Matshikiza set this point straight when he said that,

A successful empire builder lays down laws. Strongly supported by the army, the missionaries become dogmatic and tough with us. We were dispossessed of large pieces of land which become by law 'missionary reserves' where only faithful and the proved 'followers' were allowed residents at the discretion of the missionaries concerned (Matshikiza 1963:18).

Mission stations were also used by the imperialists as important centers for the transference of traditional land from Black people to the dominant Whites. The missionaries and the mission stations did more than any other agent and institution to provide the settlers and the farmers with land in South Africa. Peires made this point clear when he says that:

More concretely, the mission stations were seen as an invasion of the sovereignty of the chiefs. The mission people considered themselves British citizens under the protection of the British Government (Peires 1981:145).

One other interesting account about the missionaries and the mission stations in relation to the issue of land is that, a time came in the Transvaal when African people were not allowed to purchase land in their own names. This was according to the law of the Raad. Because of this law, the common procedure for Africans to purchase land involved the missionaries. The African people would have to make use of a missionary as a 'dummy' purchaser (Segundo 1973:200). Nothing in the history of South Africa demonstrates more vividly the impact of the West than the massive confiscation of the land. A further strain on traditional patterns of land usage was the confiscation of large tracts of land as Crown land. This land was subsequently redistributed to the land hungry settlers. In Natal, for example, when the Crown lands were given, colonists were assigned the richer and more cultivatable portions of land. They were also given more land, which was uncultivated and unoccupied, whereas the use of native population got a much smaller portion of the land. This land consisted of broken tracts which were over crowded. This simply illustrates that as early as 1882 fifty-five percent of the African people in Natal were already either tenants on private land or squatters on Crown land owned by the settlers (Cochrane 1987:27).

Whatever the complexity of the causes, the consequences were obvious. The traditional, communal life, the pastoral structure of African life, gave way to a life of dependency the majority of the Africans. They were compelled to forever look up to the White bosses and ecclesiastical benefactors for survival in their own land. The acquisition of the imperialist's manufactured goods has become the accepted mark and measure of

civilization and progress.

This section will not be complete without the mention of the Group Areas Act. In the history of South Africa, the Group Areas Act has probably caused more uncertainty, anxiety, hardship and resentment than any other Act of law.

In 1913, soon after the formation of the Union, the Native Land Act was passed. Areas predominantly occupied by Africans were scheduled. Whites were prohibited from acquiring land in these parts. They would not, anyhow, want to buy property in these places because they mainly had poor soil. Africans were forbidden to acquire land from European rural areas outside the scheduled reserves, unless the Governor-General gave consent.

Then in 1950, the Group Areas Act was passed. This Act introduced many far-reaching changes for the Black population of South Africa. The main feature of this Act was to control all inter-racial changes in ownership and occupation of property. This also meant the Government of South Africa was empowered to decide where members of all different colours and racial groups should live. This included the Black population that had no power of the vote (Horrell 1956:25).

These terrible Acts were obviously backed by the White Church in South Africa. It is right for one to say so, because many of the White population of South Africa, Christians included, benefited from these Acts. They also justified what the government was doing.

The Group Areas Act was followed by 'forced removal'. Forced removal is the whole process of dispossession of African people, which is at the heart of the history of South Africa. Hard labour and migrant workers were created through the poverty, which resulted from their loss of land. Black people were forced to leave their homes and work under harsh conditions dictated by the development of capitalism in South African which was driven and directed by the government and the Church (Unterhalter 1987:2).

3.5.2 The Economics of Segregation by Colour

Almost everywhere around the world Black people are suffering. What wrong have they done that White people have so perfectly done. Black people are poor in America, in Australia and in Africa. If they were poor only in America one would argue that it is because they are in a foreign land, where they found themselves against their own will. It could be further said that they are also a minority group. But when it comes to Africa, these arguments do not apply. Black people are the majority and they are in their motherland and not fatherland. It is 'motherland' because it's the place of their origin. Their fathers did not have to fight for the occupation of Africa. What makes one worried is that Blacks are poor in foreign lands and poor at home. When one looks at America and Africa both countries are rich with food, water and minerals. Also, in both countries in general, Black people live at a much lower standard of living than their White counterparts. Hutt opens his thesis by asking thought provoking questions:

Why do the non-White peoples of the world today enjoy a much lower average standard of material well-being than the White people? The answer is compounded of history, climate, custom, powerful inertias, insecurity for investment, and legislative barriers to employment. How far can their inferior economic status be said to be caused by natural handicaps and how far by injustice at the hands of White people (Hutt 1964:9)?

Hutt continues to say that he attributes 'injustice' to any policy or action which is intended to perpetuate the inferiority of material standards or status of any racial group. The inheritance of inferior circumstances or status cannot be regarded as 'unjust', except to the extent to which First World or developed countries deliberately withhold opportunities from the under-develop or Third World countries or economic colonized peoples.

It is interesting that he sees the church playing a significant role in perpetuating the inferior status of Black people, who are poor, not because they are lazy or because of a natural handicap with their land but because Whites have been privileged over their Black fellow citizens. One is right to argue along this line because South Africa is full of

resources. He says that we must be just in evaluating the 'past'. Although we may deplore the era of slavery and colonization, we must always remember that it was not "condemned by the religious" system or its representatives, who existed at that time and benefited from it (Hutt 1964:9-10).

Black people's poverty is directly linked to their heritage of colonization. In his book *Who am I* Blackie Swartz makes a helpful comment showing that poverty is man-made or orchestrated, especially in the South African situation. It is interesting that Swartz in his comment also realizes the role of White Christians in perpetuating the Black people's poverty. Unfortunately many of those who are at an advantage fail to realize this.

As a result of these restrictions, the majority of Black people became poor. Because of the sub – standard of Bantu Education they could not achieve the same level of education and today sixty percent of the older people are still illiterate. They could only work as labourers doing manual work, that is, if they were fortunate enough to get a job. Though facilities are open to all at present, most people of colour do not earn enough to send their children to good schools outside of the townships. The Apartheid system ensured that townships were always far removed from the White areas and this also from the economic hub of society. The Black people who earn the lowest income have to spend the most on transport just to get to their places of employment. Although the common argument is that times have changed, the legacy of poverty has been carried over to this generation.

I have ministered in churches in the townships where I knew that some members of the congregation had not even had a cup of coffee that morning and possibly no meal the previous evening. Yet they came to rejoice and praise the Lord. When I preached about the goodness of God and His beautiful provision, I wondered how these poor hungry people could understand and accept the message. I realized that we, as whites, would have to begin to walk in our brothers' shoes to be able to bring the gospel across more effectively (Swartz 2001:68).

Swartz is a White South African Christian who sees and admits that the Church in South Africa has played a significant role in segregating the Black population from their White brothers, not only racially, but also economically. The legacy of poverty will sadly

influence the lives of Black people for many years to come. It is unfortunate that the majority of White South African Christians have not yet realized that they are living in better suburbs, occupying better positions, driving better cars and earning better salaries because of Apartheid laws that discriminated against the Blacks. If they have not realized this truth, how will they acknowledge their part as Swartz has done? How will they walk in their brothers and sisters' shoes of poverty?

Majeke add to what Swartz says by pointing out the missionaries' role in this regard:

Likewise the 'emancipation' of the colonial slaves, together with Christianizing him had nothing to do with his liberation, but on the contrary, his enslavement. It was part of a worldwide historical movement, the expansion of capitalism. ...It is against this background of vast economic forces that the influx of missionaries to the colonies acquires meaning. The missionaries came from a capitalist Christian civilization that unblushingly found religious sanctions for inequality, as it does to this day, and whose ministers solemnly blessed its wars of aggression (Majeke 1952:4).

The missionaries' acceptance of inequality amongst the people of South Africa can explain a great deal about the origins of the discriminatory employment politics that developed in this country. This led to a situation where the South African labour market got split. The conditions under which the one group was working, that is the Black population became cheaper and easily exploited by the White minority population. In that prevailing situation, the White workers fought to maintain their existing privileges within the industrial economy of the country. The end result of this was what is called a 'split labour market' by Bonacich. He said that:

... ethnic antagonism first germinates in a labor market split along ethnic lines. To be split, a labor market must contain at least two groups of workers whose price of labour differs for the same work, or would differ if they did the same work. Racial or ethnic antagonism is thus aroused by a three - cornered struggle between capitalists desiring the cheapest possible labor, workers of dominant ethnic group who resist being undercut or displaced by cheap labor from minority or subordinate group, and the alien newcomers who are struggling to find a niche in the economy (Bonacich 2000:553 – 554).

This situation in South Africa would imply that capitalism was a major motivation behind White people coming to this country. They desired to get cheap labour from the Black people. They would hire the workers regardless of the colour of their skin, both Black and White. White workers were automatically senior to the Black workers. They also earned a better salary than their Black colleagues for the same work. The Black people were also considered the best for all manual work, but they still got the lowest salary.

The discovery of diamonds in the Kimberly area in the 1870's and gold in 1886 on the Witwatersrand now called Johannesburg in the Gauteng province, changed the system from a free-market and competitive one to one of segmentation. The South African Church was blessed all this and even justified it with the Scriptures. The rights of Black people to be free workers and to move about freely in search of better opportunities were taken away from them. On the other hand, the White person had the whole legal system behind him to move freely and to seek greener pastures. Ironically all this took place in a country that saw itself as a Christian theocracy.

The notion that the only free worker was a White worker was first applied in the industrial situation in the diamond fields. In the 1870's, after the discovery of diamond in the now Northern Cape Province near the Orange River, White prospectors who rushed to the diggings found it natural and lawful to hire Black people only as helpers and cheap labourers for the hardest work. When the Black people attempted to claim shares of their own in this industry, White miners pressured the Cape government to set up Laws or Acts which would only grant Whites diggers' licenses. For technological and most probably economic reasons, the diamond industry was soon consolidated into a centralized enterprise, and Black term labourers were thenceforth housed in closed compounds and subjected to minute personal searches when they departed after a period of service. On the other hand, White employees were not restricted, but were allowed to live and go anywhere they wanted at any time after work. In 1883, when it was also proposed by the capitalists or owners that White workers be stripped and searched like their fellow workers, the Blacks, for stolen diamonds when they left the fields, they protested the

indignity and succeeded getting the order withdrawn (Doxey 1961:27-32).

After the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand in 1886, the segmented South African labour was fully and systematically extended to what quickly became South Africa's major industry. The basic division of the highly paid White skilled workers and low-paid Black migrants was originally justified in terms of the peculiar economic circumstances associated with gold mining on the Rand. This is perhaps the earliest case of a successful effort by White industrial workers to create a caste-like distinction between Black and White employes (Jeeves 1975:5-8).

All these were followed by a number of legislations to make sure that the White population's jobs are protected from the Blacks. Wilson introduces us to the legislative history of the colour bar when he says that:

The legislative history of the color bar began in 1893, when a recently organized White mineworkers union persuaded the Volkraad of the South African Republic to prohibit Africans, Asians and Coloureds from preparing charges, lodging drills, or lighting fuses. In 1896, the explicit racial restriction was eliminated, but a skilled miner was now required to have a blasting certificate, a kind of license that it was understood would only be granted to Europeans (Wilson 1971:126-127).

Villa Vicencio agrees with Wilson by providing information about job protection for White people by the Apartheid government. In 1924 the Pact government made it possible for White workers who wanted job protection against the threat of cheap Black labour. The government moved to meet this need, and the mine capitalist owners and their management teams was forced to accept the "quid pro quo" of protecting White workers' privileges in return for their support against Black workers' demands. Therefore, the economic division between Black and White was present from the earliest encounters between these groups in the British colonies (Villa -Vicencio 1988:70).

This led to the intensified racial and social stratification in South Africa, and provided a firm foundation for the eventual emergence of the Apartheid government. With the

Apartheid system, shaped by all these evil forces, the Church in South Africa fell into a socio-economic system trap, which contradicted all that it stood for. The Church failed to condemn the evil system and to set a good example for all South Africans. It was a period in which the White South African Christian community chose an alliance with the evil system of Apartheid because it best served their interests against those of the Black people who were economically and socially discriminated against. All this has affected the Church of Jesus Christ in this country and will continue to do so unless the Church does something about it.

3.5.2 The Politics of White Domination

During South Africa's conquest by the Whites, the focal point of the military attack was the chiefs. The missionaries were no exception in this regard, as they were always used to penetrate the situation or go ahead the colonists or imperialists. As described by Oliver and Atmore:

As we have seen, the missionary had entered most parts of tropical Africa ahead of the colonial governments. At anytime up till 1914, and in most places long after, he would have been a much more familiar figure, in the rural areas at least, than the government official. With the coming of colonial period his activities took on, almost everywhere, a new lease of life (Oliver and Atmore 1981:149).

This became the role of missionaries throughout the African continent. The full extent of this role included subjugation of African traditional chiefs by the colonists with the help of missionaries. In this case, missionaries found no difficulty in being servants of both God and Government. They were God's ambassadors as well as Government's mediators between the colonists and the chiefs. The missionary institution had become an effective and a powerful agent of colonization. The colonialists themselves saw the churches as reassuring cultural props in an unfamiliar environment. The missionaries or church leaders were faced with crucial decisions such as whether to accept the colonial dominance or resist it; to serve the needs of the settlers' community or to reach beyond it, so as to carry out the Biblical injunction to "preach to all the world" (Davenport 1997:51).

Among the African communities chiefs played an important role. They ruled their people and acted as agents of peace and harmony among their people. They were judges and lawgivers. They also led their troops in times of war, as well as defended the land and cattle from being taken away. They also administered the distribution of land for different purposes, such as residential, agriculture and grazing. The chief was regarded by his subjects as both a figure of security and the source of supply. As Davenport comments, that the chief was seen as,

... the father of his people, expected to govern conscientiously, wisely and generously. He was the judge of all serious misdemeanors, the lawgiver, the war leader, the distributor of land, and the universal provider, in times of need, from the royal herds, which were largely composed of beasts levied as fines or tribute. As the Zulu proverb expressed, he was the 'beast of the nation' (Davenport 1997: 44-45).

White political dominance had no place among African people, unless they sought to destroy the chief's powers and assume his role and responsibilities. In other words, the chief had become the major stumbling block to be removed in order to penetrate and dominate African people. To this Majeke adds:

For the invaders the problem at this period was to destroy the power of the chief as the military leader of his people. The breakdown of tribalism meant first the removal of the tribal head, the chief or chieftainship. Every effort had to be directed to this end (Majeke 1952:25).

To achieve this goal, the colonists used the missionaries in a number of ways. They knew that without this they would not reach their goal. Had they not succeeded in this, they would not have had a chance to penetrate the Africans as they did. This was so because the chief was a unifying figure and the shepherd of his people. The book of Zechariah, the prophet says:

"Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who is close to me!" declares the Lord Almighty. "Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered, and I will my hand against the little ones" (Zechariah 13:7).

The Bible clearly says that when the shepherd is struck, the sheep will be easily scattered. Africans, together with their chief would be united and a strong nation. The Whites on their arrival did everything they could to disrupt the African life. To achieve this goal the following ways were used with the missionaries being the major instruments of the colonists:

3.5.3.1 To Undermine the Authority of the Chief

The missionary played an important role of entrenching the dominance of the white men, apart from furthering the kingdom of God. His role was to make sure that every person that came close to was taught ideas of the new system that would to undermine the authority of the chief and, therefore, weaken his powers and position as the military head of his people.

3.5.3.2 Mission Stations Served as Military Bases

The missionaries developed and used mission stations as military bases to attack the authority of the chief. The best way to do this was by making sure that every convert relocated to the mission station. The new converts then put up their dwellings at the mission station. By so doing, they separated the converts from the rest of the tribe and the chief. They were taught a new set of customs and cultural values. The convert's allegiance to the missionary and the new set of Christian customs and cultural values obviously undermined their allegiance to the chief. The acceptance of Christianity also led most converts to accept submissively the government, the institutions and the law of the White man (Bundy 1979:99-100) that so much disregarded the authority of the chief and the unity of the tribe.

3.5.4 Wolves in Sheep Skins

When the imperialists or colonists were met with resistance from the chiefs, the missionaries were called to come in and help to soften them. The missionary offered 'friendship' and 'protection' to the chief from the colonial government. Behind the missionary would immediately follow the imperialists, traders and colonists. When they arrived they took the land and changed the order of the society to fit their own ambitions.

It was much later that the chiefs themselves became aware of what was happening. This was when missionaries were becoming magistrates and making decisions over people without the chiefs.

After persuading the chiefs, through the missionaries, to accept the 'friendship' and the 'protection' of the colonial powers, the next step was to offer the chief a subsidy, that is, a fixed salary. Majeke quotes Dr Phillip Van Der Kemp, the superintendent of the London Missionary Society saying, "Had a few of the chiefs been subsidized, by having small salaries paid to them, we might this time have had the affairs of the Kaffirland in our hands." He continued to say that, "We must be the masters, but rule as we do in India," namely through paid chiefs (Majeke 1952: 28-29). Van Der Kemp came to persuade chiefs to sign "peace" treaties but on the contrary, his main objective was to undermine the authority of the chiefs.

3.5.5 Divide and Rule

Of all the functions of the missionaries, that of divide and rule was the most preferred (Majeke 1952:20) to establish White dominance and destabilize the African order of life. If they failed to penetrate the chief and the people because of their resistance, the missionaries would not give up. They came up with all kinds of dirty tricks to see that they won and pleased their masters who sent them as their representatives. One of the popular tricks that were used was to divide the people. This kind of trick they have continued to employ successfully in all the spheres of life to the present day. They have used this ploy in politics, in business, in sports and also in the Church. This tendency manifested itself by making sure that part of the society gained 'favors' and 'special privileges' from the missionaries or their masters, the colonial powers. To such people, the colonial period brought them prestige, prosperity and achievement which the majority of the African people did not enjoy. The chiefs, who co-operated by showing their readiness to sign treaties and concessions, were recognized as superiors (senior chiefs) presiding over big areas and their fellow African chiefs. This brought friction amongst the chiefs to the satisfaction of the White men. By signing the treaties, they gave away the land and the mineral rights of the people without knowing that they were

doing so. These were the people who gained from colonial rulers. Those who challenged the colonial system and its agents, the missionaries, suffered at the hands of the colonists.

In discussing the problem of subduing the African chiefs and their tribes and 'civilizing' them by bringing them into the new economic system, Andries Stockenström said, about the necessity of co-operation between the Church and the Government:

These two forces combined, will not civilize unless they make the Native chiefs the principal levels in the operations of their people. ...If we gain the confidence of the chiefs, they, with the power of the Government and the efforts of the missionaries will influence the masses....

The powerful Government likes that of England, with equitable treaties... will soon have the chiefs so completely under its influence that its word will be law without appearing to be so (cf. Majeke 1952:29).

3.6 Racial Discrimination and Division

Racial discrimination was the worst evil and enemy of the Black majority in South Africa. In fact, the people preferred communism rather than apartheid. The Apartheid government denied one an opportunity to receive quality education and at the same time claimed that the people were backward and incapable of learning. Some people however, would be given proper and quality education and said to be clever and competitive.

Racial discrimination tore and divided the country on the basis of colour:

The concept 'racial discrimination' is of fairly recent origin in the moral vocabulary of the West. Though it was used in previous century, it became common coinage after World War II, following concomitant desalinization of Black nations and the civil rights movement in the United States. The factors largely determined the emotional climate in which the term racial discrimination became common. In fact, the emotional significance the phrase acquired was so great that racial discrimination is a greater evil than communism and a more serious threat to world peace (Esterhuysen 1981:1).

In South Africa, only those who have never been under the Apartheid system would argue that communism is worse than racial discrimination. The system divided the

people of South Africa based on the colour of their skins, shape and colour of the eyes, shape of their noses, hair colour and physical stature. It is important to note that one biological attribute alone is not sufficient to establish racial grouping. The term race would indicate a group of people who are biologically characterised by a certain concentration of inherited genes and physical attributes. In view of this, racial discrimination is the practice which, either in interpersonal relationships or on institutional and statutory levels (or both), deliberately withholds rights, privileges and responsibilities from people on the basis of their racial attributes or even denies those rights, privileges and responsibilities that are due to them as human beings (Esterhuyse 1981:1-2).

Racial discrimination in the South African context, therefore, meant the denial of rights, privileges and responsibilities to the majority population of Black people just because they were black. The Boers had developed this attitude of discriminating against Black people when they trekked northwards, in the 1830's. They had written it into the constitution, the Transvaal, South Africa which proclaimed, "There shall be no equality in the State or Church between White and black" (Oliver and Atmore 1981:188). Inequality was then practised in the Church and in the politics of the country in South Africa. The state of separating the nation on the basis of colour was called apartheid. According to the history of this country, Apartheid can be divided into three phases. This is what Omer-Cooper calls "the three phases of apartheid". We shall briefly look at these three phases of apartheid in South Africa. Between 1948, when the Nationalist Party came into power, and 1984, the system of apartheid developed through the three definable phases.

3.6.1 Baaskaap Apartheid

The first phase began in 1948 and lasted till 1961 when South Africa became a Republic, receiving its independence from Great Britain. The first phase called the classical or Baaskaap, (White supremacy) apartheid lasted from 1948 to the end of 1950's. Esterhuyse calls this phase "the separate phase or alternatively, the 'surgical' phase (Esterhuyse 1981:47). It was a period in which the Nationalist Party put its original

ideas into legislative form. The National Party inherited a situation in which there had been social, economic and even political intermingling between the different population groups. It may be said that, this phase reached its climax in 1961 with the achievement of Afrikaner nationalists' most cherished dream, the transformation of South Africa into an Afrikaner-ruled republic.

The strict racial segregation and social stratification assisted Afrikaners to consolidate their political control of 'white' South Africa. The economic situation of poor Afrikaners within the White society was improved. The Afrikaner share of the business world was also expanded and the Afrikaner language and culture was protected and given a higher status in national life in South Africa. To make sure that they had power under their control, South Africa was constitutionally transformed into a republic, free from allegiance to the British Powers.

3.6.2 Separate Development

In this period the fundamental basis of the apartheid policy was beginning to form. The main reasons for this were the major changes which had taken place and were taking place in the wider world since 1948. The changing economy of South Africa and the need to defuse growing African militancy strengthened Apartheid. The liberation of Mozambique and Angola, the wide spread African strike action on the industrial front, massive violent protests within the African townships and the beginning of ANC and PAC armed wings within and without South Africa on a significant scale, played a major role in this phase.

During this phase, emphasis switched from 'surgery' and separation to 'development'. This phase saw the realisation that, the separated racial groups should be placed on the road to self-reliance on economic, social and political levels. Something important to note during this phase, with respect to the outcome, was the concept of the development of the Bantustans or homelands and their ultimate so called 'independence'. In this second phase, the idea of separate but equal opportunities and institutions such as universities, for other population groups was first introduced (Esterhuysen 1981:47). In

introducing the promotion of Bantu Self-Government Bill to parliament in 1959. Dr Hendrick Verwoerd argued that, although this was not what White South Africans would have liked, they would have to accept that the Bantustans must be allowed to develop as fully fledged states, which might eventually become fully independent nations and members of the United Nations. He further said that, this would involve breaking up the territory of South Africa into a White state and a number of Black states.

3.6.3 Multiracial Co-option

The years 1973 – 1974 marked the transition from the policy of separate development to a new approach of multiracial co-option. The third phase of the National Party policy, according to Mr B.J. Vorster was the bridge-building phase (Esterhuysen 1981:47-48). Part of the background to this was the changing nature of the South African economy. Since the discovery of diamonds and gold, the growth of the South African economy had largely depended on exploitation of cheap low-skilled Black labour obtained through the migrant labour system. With the rise of technology and the numbers of Whites growing small in skilled operations, employers had to rely more and more on Black workers to perform the more skilled operations that the new machinery demanded.

Throughout these two phases, discussed above, the advance of Black workers up the ladder of industrial skills continued and was permitted by government so long as it did not threaten White jobs directly or raise serious political opposition from White workers.

The outbreak of the revolution in Portugal and the collapse of the dictatorship added to changes in approach of the National Party Government. This resulted in the victory of African freedom fighters in Mozambique, Angola and Guinea-Bissau. This was followed by inside pressure on the South African Government, when high school students in the South West townships of Johannesburg, popularly known as Soweto, revolted against the use of Afrikaans language at school. This took place in 1976 on the 16th of June, and was led by Tsietshi Mashinene (Ommer-Cooper 1987:193-236).

Under the Nationalist Party Government, during the Baaskap apartheid and separate development, many regulations and laws were formed to protect the minority White population of South Africa. The formation of apartheid legislations had a far more negative impact on the Black people than Whites as Carter noted:

Far more obvious than the Nationalists' effect on European society is their impact on the non-European. With surprising rapidity, the implications of apartheid have been spelled out in legislation, which provides fixed and definite provisions for what had almost always been customary practice. Initially apartheid legislation fell into the category of prohibitive or negative apartheid, either seeking to remove such rights as non-Europeans possessed in Europeans areas. Subsequently more radical measures of positive apartheid were introduced... at this late stage of contact, to recreate separate institutions, attitudes and values (Carter 1977:75).

It is remarkable how much attention and support the church paid to those apartheid laws. These laws were the final proof of the tenacity with which the ideals of apartheid were being pursued. Some of the apartheid laws and policies were formed by the Church, and passed over to the Government. Loubser commenting on one such law said

After 1915 the question of racially mixed marriages became a topic in the synods. In that year the Cape Synod instructed church councils to firmly oppose such marriages. The synod also decided to take the matter to the government. In 1917 prohibition of mixed marriages became the policy of the National Party (Loubser 1987:23).

The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act 1949 and the Immorality Act 1950 prohibited members of different races from having any intimate relationships. The Population Registration Act 1950, which made race a legal, as well as a biological concept, was particularly insulting in defining a Coloured person in purely negative terms, as 'a person who is not a White person or Native'. The Abolition of Passes and Co-ordination of Documents Act 1952 made it compulsory for all African men (and later women) to carry a 'reference book', a new term for the old 'pass', and established a country-wide system of influx control to regulate the movements of Africans and to restrict their entry into the urban areas. The Group Areas Act 1950 and its amendments, and the Separate Amenities Act 1953, attempted a complete physical and social separation of the races by the

removal of Coloured, Indians and Africans from their land, to the outskirts of cities and towns. Whites introduced rigid segregation in sport and other recreational activities. The use of separate facilities on the trains and buses and of separate seats in public parks, were part of the package, all of which led to a proliferation of 'Whites Only' signs across the length and breadth of South Africa. The Native Laws Amendment Act 1957 consolidated the control over Africans in urban areas. This had first been attempted in 1923, through the Urban Areas Act. The amended Industrial Conciliation Act 1965 legalised job reservation for Whites and excluded Africans from the process of industrial conciliation over wages. The Suppression of Communism Act 1950, the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1953 and the Unlawful Organisations Act 1960 aimed at the total suppression of all but the tamest opposition. These were almost unequalled for their harshness in the democratic countries of the western world. Only a few legislative measures of the National Party governments in the 1950s were overtly ideological. The most important of these were the Bantu Education Act 1953 and the Extension of University Education Act 1959, which took African primary and secondary education out of missionary control and created separate and inferior institutions such as universities for non-whites. These Acts made education an instrument of government policy in attempting to reshape and control African minds.

All these laws were affected the Church, especially the Black people, badly. Many Churches in South Africa were divided according to the colour of the skin of the people. As a result of this apartheid laws, Churches were divided according Black, Coloured, Indian and White. In all such structured churches, the White church was always considered the main or mother church. The Church was so badly divided that the majority of people, especially the Blacks, felt that the last place where they could have a sense of hope was crushed. They were oppressed both inside and outside the Church. In the Church, the Whites were the decision makers and the financial controllers. They were only told what, where and when to do things. Financially, they were told what had been paid for. Whites paid for their travelling, accommodation and their small salaries without their input in these important matters of the life of the Church. Outside the Church, the same White people were their bosses regardless of qualifications or skills. The White

person further earned a better salary compared to them.

With the emergency of nationalism and the rise of Black political parties such as the African National Congress and the Pan African Congress, the Black Christian leaders felt an urgent need to start Black led Churches away from the White domination and control. They wanted to start Churches that will accept and accommodate the African cultures and customs but which are not contrary to the Christian faith. It must be understood that Black leaders did not desire to be separated from their White brothers and sisters, but they, the Whites were the main cause of this act because of their support of apartheid system, whether, consciously or unconsciously. The following is a brief history of the African Indigenous Churches.

3.7 African Indigenous Churches

The history of the Church in South Africa cannot be complete without the mention of African Indigenous Churches. When one starts to read about these churches, one element, which is so striking and shocking, is the names ascribed to these churches. This is so, especially, by academics and religions experts of European and American origin. As Hinchcliff said in his book entitled, *The Church in South Africa*, that one of the most obvious features of the modern South African religions scene is the growing numbers and variety of "separatist sects" (Hinchcliff 1968: 90). He sees them or their leaders as people who advocate secession. Hinchcliff's judgment is biased and ill-formed, because not all of these churches came out of mainline churches. It will, therefore, mean that mainline or missionary churches also qualify to be called "separatists" because many of them, if not all, were formed out of other churches. Hinchcliff also uses the word "sect" which means a subdivision of a larger religious group, which has to some extent diverged from the rest by developing deviating beliefs, practices and doctrines. The AIC's at large do not fit into this definition. However, some will fit in as much as a good number of missionary churches fit in the above definition. The list of the names by which these churches are called is long. Some of them are dubious or derogatory and reflect, primarily, the attitudes and perspectives of Whites, mainline or missionary churches, government officials of the apartheid era and scholars who want to take shortcuts to academic preferment. They have been called native, separatists, heretical, proselyte,

quasi-Christian, millennial, magico-religious, neo-pagan, syncretistic and cultic churches (Pretorius and Jafta 1997: 211). It is clear that most of the terms used to refer to the AIC's go together with derogatory terms such as Kaffirs, Natives, Bantus and plural names often used by the apartheid government officials or authorities to refer to the Black people in South Africa (Makhubu 1988:1).

It is the truth that some of these churches' names included words such as Bantu or Natives. It was only so to please the government and its officials in order to secure registration for churches to operate officially and to obtain properties or land to build meeting places for Sundays and sometimes during the week. Even though things are changing, for a long time, the leaders and the people of AIC churches had to live with names, which suited the bureaucrats, but not themselves. Most of the time they would not even be regarded as churches or denominations, but mere sects or movements. (Makhubu 1988:1). Strassberger says:

It is obvious that many of the African Independent Churches can hardly be classified as Christian Churches. This would apply, above all, to the Zionist and Messianic types who exalt a leader to the rank of a saviour, thereby denying the unique position Jesus Christ holds as a central to the Christian faith (Strassberger 1974:89).

What is of great concern is that the apartheid government and its officials, together with the researchers who wanted to please their promoters by producing new knowledge or rather giving new information, gave these churches names without asking them what they would prefer to be called. Makhubu says many leaders of these churches prefer to be called "African Indigenous Churches" or "African Initiated Churches":

The title 'indigenous' churches is better, since it tries to demonstrate that these churches originate from the people themselves. They have not been initiated by Europeans or Americans or other outsiders. They were started by African people themselves....

We therefore prefer the use of the word indigenous even if this can be interchangeably used with independent. The word independent is unsatisfactory because there are many White churches that have

broken away from their mainline families, and these churches are obviously not independent in the sense of African Independent (indigenous) Churches. By using indigenous as an adjective, we hope to educate our people to discover who they are (Makhubu 1988:1-2).

The word "indigenous" rather than "independent" churches shows a positive desire by African Church leaders to adapt the gospel message to the cultural heritage of the African people in South Africa. It also suggests a deep desire to be rooted and contextualized in the African system of thought and practice in the presentation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and His Kingdom, rather than being merely independent from the Western churches. Mzimba said that the aim is to plant the spirit of self-support, self-governing and self-propagating amongst the Black people, so that African Indigenous Churches would produce a truly African type of Christianity suited to the distinctive spirit of African people in their specific country and time in their own languages and through their culture, to meet their specific needs (Mzimba 1928:89). Makhubu agrees with Mzimba when he says:

...an African Independent or Indigenous Church means a purely black-controlled denomination with no links in membership or administrative control with any non-African church. In contrast with the Black congregation that have been given self-supporting status by their missionary parents, the AIC's are churches that have completely broken the umbilical cord with the western missionary enterprise (Makhubu 1988:5)."

These churches are a true reflection of what Christianity in Africa or amongst the African people should be and how it should have been propagated. This does not mean that everything done or practiced within the AIC churches is correct or Biblical. However, it shows those things that are important which were suppressed by the missionaries and their institutions, the apartheid government and the White Churches in general amongst the South African Christian community. Sundkler says that:

...in these churches, one could be able to see what the African Christian, when left to himself, regarded as important and relevant in Christian faith and in the Christian Church...to be able to

discern tendencies that could be utilized in the practical task of building Christ Church in Africa (Sundkler 1961:17-11).

3.8 The Rise of African Indigenous Churches

African Indigenous Churches in South Africa are found all over, in the cities and countryside. You can see them in small bands of solemn worshipers clad in uniforms with religious insignias. In the White sectors of the cities, where most members of these churches are lonely domestic workers, living in small rooms behind their master's residence, they are likely to gather in parks. In the countryside, they usually assemble on a hillside, under a big tree or along a river where it would be easy to access water for baptism by way of immersion. In the coastal cities you may see half a dozen people raising their hands to the skies, and then plunging into the cold sea, where the leader of the church pushes their bodies into the turbulent waves in a triune immersion (Hope and Young 1981: 191).

The first African Indigenous Church on the African continent was founded in Zaire, now called the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) around 1870. The earliest and probably the first secession in Southern Africa took place in the Herman congregation of the Paris Evangelical Mission Society. About 150 members broke away from the control of the society. This took place in the then Basotholand and now the Republic of Lesotho. It was during the reign of King Moshoeshoe I. In 1882 Nehemiah Tile left the Wesleyan Mission Church, because the White missionaries were criticizing him for his strong Tembu nationalistic sympathies (Sundkler 1961:38-39). Tile was a Tembu, who had been ordained as a Methodist minister and was trained at Heldtown. In 1884 Tile founded a new church, the Tembu National Church with the support of Ngangelizwe the Tembu Paramount Chief. This was followed by another secession in 1885 from the London Missionary Society at Taung among the Batswana people. The secession that took place in Taung was led by the local Chief called Kgatlampe. The whole village left the London Missionary Society, and formed the Native Independent Congregation Church. The Chief appointed ministers of his choice to lead the newly founded tribute church (Makhubu 1988:7-8). All independent churches founded during this time were tribal churches. This was obvious from the two mentioned above, the Tembu National

Church and the Native Independent Congregation Church. This was simply because they were formed in places where there were people of the same ethnic group. The same case applies to the Bapedi Lutheran Church formed in 1889. The young and zealous missionary, J.A Winter, a German missionary of the Berlin Mission, working in the Northern Transvaal, now called the Limpopo Province, instigated and led secession from the Lutheran Church to form the Bapedi Lutheran Church. His vision was to delegate leadership responsibilities to the indigenous people he was serving as a missionary. He maintained that White people treated Black people, even the educated ones, as inferiors, and therefore, according to him, it was necessary to create independent churches in which Africans could govern themselves (Hincheliff 1968:91). The mission authorities disagreed with him on this radical move because giving African people any form of self-government or leadership was seen, and in many churches is still seen, as an irresponsible action. African people are regarded as people who cannot govern or lead themselves. This is still a problem in many church organizations where Blacks and Whites work together. It is very rare in such a situation to find a Black person holding a powerful and influential position. In many cases, Blacks are being appointed into non-administrative positions that do not influence the direction and the decisions of the organization. That is, they are given the responsibility but not the authority of the organization.

In the same year, 1889, the new move was beginning to happen in the Anglican Church in Pretoria. Khanyane Napo, an evangelist, and not an ordained minister, formed his own church. Napo's church was different from others since it was not tribal but national by its nature. The church was called the African Church. The name portrayed the desire for a single, united and true church of African people. Napo's vision was later followed by many of the African church leaders, who wanted to see a united and true Church of Africa for African people, expressing themselves unashamedly in the African way to worship God. Sunday, November 20, 1889 Mangena M. Mokone, a Wesleyan Minister launched a new church called the Ethiopian Church (Stassberger 1974:90). The new church was launched in Johannesburg. He was a gifted speaker and a great thinker. Mokone is said to have left his mission church because of segregated conferences. This proves to us today that racial segregation was being practiced in South African churches for a long time (Makhubu 1988:8). The Church would be divided into White and Black

congregations and so would be the conferences. He resigned from his church and later joined the African Indigenous Churches. Together with other leaders they founded the Ethiopian Church. This was inspired by Psalm 68:31, which says that, "Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God". He interpreted this scripture as a promise of the evangelization of Africa, particularly by Black people. Mokone took this to mean the self-government of the African Church under African leaders. At this time Ethiopia was symbolically for Black Nationalism and Black leaders, since Ethiopia was one of the first countries in Africa to receive freedom from colonialism. Pretorius and Jafta say that, "Ethiopianism was a direct expression of resistance against the missionaries, White settlers, and the colonial government" (Pretorius and Jafta 1997:213). Mangane Mokone mobilized men like Khanyane Napo, S.J Brander, Jonas Goduka and James Dwane to fulfill his vision for Africa and the African people. James Dwane was the most gifted of the group that joined Mokone and because of his outstanding abilities, he soon became the leader of the group, overtaking the man who introduced him to Mokone. Dwane, like Tile and Mokone was an ordained Wesleyan minister in 1881. Between 1894 -1895 Dwane was sent to England to represent his church and seek financial support for the work in South Africa. On his return, he quarreled with the missionaries about the use of money without his consent and left the Mission Church.

In 1896, at the conference in Pretoria he was chosen to represent the Indigenous churches in America, so as to seek affiliation with the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church among the African-Americans. The AME was founded in 1816 by Black American preacher Richard Allen in Philadelphia. He died in 1831. Dwane succeeded in securing affiliation with the AME for AIC group of churches in South Africa.

The remarkable turnaround of the AIC came in 1889 when the AME bishop, H.M. Turner visited South Africa. The visit lasted the duration of five weeks. The coming of the Black bishop from the United States of America, visiting Black churches in Africa, was of great inspiration to both the leaders and the members of AIC churches in South Africa. Turner managed to achieve some outstanding results within the duration of his

stay within the country. The work was organized in regional conferences. He also ordained sixty-five African ministers of the gospel and consecrated Dwane as an assistant bishop and bought land in Queenstown for the future development of the center for higher learning. Through Turner, the membership of the church more than doubled, mainly through affiliating malcontent groups from Mission Churches (Sundkler 1961:41). Dwane's consecration as assistant bishop by Turner was short lived. Many of Black American church leaders and their churches within the AME did not welcome the move. Dwane was very disturbed by the disapproval of the Americans. He was never a bishop, a position he so wanted to occupy. He finally cut off his links with the AME.

Another important figure of the Ethiopian Church is P. J. Mzimba who formed the African Presbyterian Church in 1889. He came out of the United Free Church of Scotland. Mzimba was widely traveled. He represented the Black people at the Jubilee Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland in 1902. His position as a pastor of the Presbyterian mission congregation at Lovedale made his secession a more serious one. According to Sundkler two-thirds of this congregation followed him (Sundkler 1961:43). After his death, the leadership of the church was taken over by his son, L. M. Mzimba, as is the case with many AIC churches. When the leader dies, the son takes his father's position and the church tends to become the family church. These tendencies seem to have been influenced by the African traditional leadership style where the system requires that when the father retires or dies the eldest son must take over the reigns of leadership.

The African Indigenous Churches continue to grow in South Africa. Some of these churches, when they come together to worship at their headquarters, especially during Easter holidays, count their members by hundreds of thousands if not by millions. In reference to this, Barret says that it is:

A central confession of Christ as Lord: a marked resurgence of traditional African custom and world view: a strong affirmation of their right to be both fully Christian and fully African, independent of foreign pressures (cf. Strassberger 1974:92).

Strassberger adds that, in South Africa the growth rate of African Indigenous Churches has been phenomenal. He gives the following statistics to support his claims:

Year	Churches
1913	30
1918	76
1932	320
1948	880
1955	1 286 (had applied for state recognition)
1960	2 200

Year	Membership	% of total population
1946	761 000	9. 6%
1960	2 313 365	21. 2%

It will be right here, to conclusion that in growth, these churches are outstripping the established or the missionary churches by a long distance. To a great extent, their growth is a result of an increase in the number of churches that are planted everywhere, whether in major cities, towns, villages and farms. The less sophisticated strata of the African population are attracted to these churches.

Some of the factors which enhance the role of the independent churches in South Africa are the following:

- the opportunity to express themselves fully in the forms of worship which appeal to them
- independence from White dominated leadership.
- heightened participation.
- and re-establishment of tribal values

3.9 The Reasons for Leaving Mission Churches

There are many reasons that caused the majority of African people to leave the mission churches, but the White South African Christian must accept part of the responsibility. In the past, the Church in South Africa was divided racially. Today, it is divided along cultural issues. The Whites preached the message of love but they did not love their Black brothers and sisters. They preached about giving generously when they had almost all the wealth of the country and refused to share with their Black brothers and sisters. When Black people shared the needs they had and asked for some help they were considered to be beggars. The Whites forgot how they were advantaged by the apartheid system and now ten years after the democratic government, Whites continue to enjoy the legacy of apartheid, whilst the majority of Black people are still suffering because of the legacy the same system.

3.9.1 Nationalism

When some of the leaders of the first African Indigenous Church went to America to study, they were inspired by the freedom of African-Americans. These Black Americans had a say in the administration and the direction of the Church that they (South Africans) did not have back home in their motherland. Makhubu says that, on the political front, African Nationalism was also growing and political parties such as the African National Congress and the Pan African Congress were growing and becoming strong inside and outside the country. It is clear that at that time the church was inclined to be a nationalistic institution. The fact that Black Christians were disappointed by their fellow White Christians, who they felt were taking sides with the Apartheid government or with colonists, forced both clergy and politicians to be gripped by the prevailing nationalist spirit and to work together, hand in hand (Makhubu 1988:15). Sundkler made this point clear when he said that, "... nationalism plays a great part in Bantu separatist church organisation (Sundkler1961:3).

3.9.2 Racial Attitude

Although racism is not practiced openly one can "sniff the smell" of racist attitudes everywhere in South Africa, Churches included. Makhubu says that Black people were

stopped from attending the funerals of their fellow-workers if they were White, because they were Black. But no White person was ever stopped from attending a funeral of his or her "good boy or good girl" or Black friend. They got all the help and respect of the Black people and they were given the best seats. Oppressed and deprived, the Black man felt, he could not be oppressed at work, in social life and in worshipping God, in other words, in the church (Makhubu 1988:19). Black people are still feeling the racial segregation attitude both outside and inside the Church in South Africa. Colour has played a big role and still is, in the division of the Church. Sundkler says that,

... nowhere else has the Separatist church movement grown to such dimensions as in the Union of South Africa, this must mean that there is in South African society some particular root cause not found elsewhere, at least to the same extent, which leads to this result. This root cause is the colour line between White and Black ... any inquiry into the life of the independent Bantu churches must give some consideration to the racial caste system in that country (Sundkler 1961:32).

The emergence of African Indigenous Churches was a result of Black people's disappointment with their supposed brothers and sisters who would not accept them as equals. They had hoped things would be better in the Church, but the opposite was the case. One of the young leading Zulu who expressed strong views on this matter was quoted by Sundkler:

For a long time the church acted as a mellowing influence in African life. Whatever inequalities existed in the harsh everyday world, the Africans firmly believed that these would not exist within the church. But in many cases these hopes have not been fulfilled. The result has been racial bitterness and the ultimate formation of Bantu separatist churches. Even where this has not happened there is a general acceptance of the inevitability of an African National Church, unless relationships between Africans and Europeans take a turn for the better. (cf. Sundkler 1961:37).

The racial attitude has many faces. Outside the church, the social relations between Black and White Christians in South Africa is usually only casual. The relationship does not go deeper than the church business that affects the family and the practical conditions of one's life. Segregation and the colour bar created a glass wall between the

different races in the church in South Africa. The master-servant attitude is still so strong that it is as if one can touch it in many churches. Black people are seen as servants of the Whites. They are still perceived as good for hard jobs such as gardening and kitchen work. To put this in the South African oppressive language, they are perceived as good garden-boys and kitchen-girls. Many of the leaders of the AIC complained that their fellow White workers treated them as inferiors when it came to the issues pertaining to leadership, finances and major decisions of Church life. They also felt that they were not given equal rights with White believers within the same Church or denomination. Black leaders are less sought after in the Churches where Black and White Christians work or fellowship together.

Finally, leaving Mission Churches came as a result of trying to escape White people's domination in Church life. Some White missionaries, instead of teaching the Gospel of Jesus, promoted and taught White civilization. The Black people were stripped of their customs and culture, and, in exchange, were forced to embrace Western customs and culture which they detested.

The African Christian leaders were surprised when they discovered that their culture that was condemned by the fellow White Christians, were found and upheld by the very same Bible read by White people. When they tried to interpret and find the biblical meaning of Scriptures in the Bible, they discovered that the Bible affirmed many aspects of African culture and customs.

The African people did not accept the Western culture, but were forced into it. On the other hand, White people condemned and demonized the African culture. As far as the White people's culture was concerned, Black people were expected to be obedient and submissive without questioning why. If one questioned, especially church teaching, that person was seen rebellious and unspiritual. The tendency and attitude of mission church leaders was, "We know what is good for you. Accept without question because you will not understand even if we tried to explain to you" (Makhubu 1988:22). After adopting Western cultures and customs in order to be Christians, Black people soon found out that

nothing of their own culture and customs were left. They had become copies of their teachers, the Whites and were no longer good for the African masses in Africa. The result was frustration and that is how some of the African Indigenous Churches came to exist. They were responding to the urgent need of the people. People were in need of the unadulterated gospel; a gospel that is good enough for the African masses just as it was good for the Americans and the Europeans.

The answer did not lie with Black people being forced to accept the White people's culture as we have so far witnessed. Nor does the answer lie in White people accepting Black people's culture because the end result will be another extreme of the former case. The answer will be found in open discussion among people of both cultures and customs and finding common grounds from the Bible as it is the Word of God meant for all the people of the world. The approach should be that of a "salad-bowl" and not that of the "melting-pot." In the former approach, all things that are biblical, positive and good from every group are used to enhance and complement each other for the enhancement of the gospel and the kingdom of God. For one is not complete without the other. A multicultural approach in leadership, music, administration and in dealing with problems in our local churches is necessary to see South Africa continue to grow in Church, politics, sports, education, business and many other arenas. To the Corinthians Paul wrote:

Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I become like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law, I become like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I become like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law). To the weak I become weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel that I may share in its blessings (I Corinthians 9:19-23).

This is what all South African Christians, both Black and White, and all Christian Churches should be – all things to all men. This leads us to look into the challenge of multiculturalism in the local churches of South Africa. The local churches of South

Africa are supposed to “become all things to all men” if they are to facilitate peace and harmony amongst all South Africans of different colours, languages and cultures.

3.10 Conclusion

The history of Christianity and this country date as far back as 1501 when the Portuguese Catholics built the first church building in Mossel Bay. In the history of the church in this country we have learnt that there are three missionary that stand out than all others. These are J.T Van Der Kemp of the London Missionary Society, Dr. John Philip also known as the defender and liberator of the people and William Shaw of the Wesleyan Methodist. These three men and many more men and women that this thesis did not mention by names did a lot of good things for the Church and this country. However, we have also learnt that missionaries were used to fulfill other purposes other than the preaching of the gospel. Some missionaries played an active role in the confiscation of land from the indigenous people by the colonists. They were used to segregate black people from the main economic activities of South Africa. The missionaries accepted that some people be treated as less creatures than others. As for white people achieving political dominance in South Africa, the missionaries were used in many ways, for example to undermine the authority of the chief. The fulfilled this role by teaching the subjects new ideas that would weaken the chief’s authority. Mission stations were used by missionaries as the military bases to attack the authority of the chief. Racial discrimination was the worst evil supported by the church in South Africa. Most denominations were divided along the colour line. With blacks, coloured, Indians and whites worshipping the same God but separated on the bases of the colour the skin. Not being treated as equal to white people especially in the Church lead to the rise of African Indigenous churches. Black people were seeking a place were they could worship God and express themselves freely.

CHAPTER FOUR

UNDERSTANDING THE NATURE OF CULTURE ACCORDING TO VARIOUS SCHOLARLY PERSPECTIVES: A CASE STUDY

4.1 Introduction

Racism has affected almost every facet of the people's lives in South Africa. These include education, sport, business to mention just a few. On many occasions we hear or read of racial tensions within the sports circles, most noticeably in our cricket and rugby national teams. In education, we often hear or read of racial issues especially in the beginning of our academic year. You hear of former white schools refusing to admit black pupils. In the business circle, you hear of black managers complaining of being sidelined in decision making processes. The church is no exception in this regard as we have seen in the previous chapter. The church was, in apartheid South Africa, so divided that believers would not worship together because of the differences in the colour of their skins. Even when believers belonged to the same denomination, they would go to different local churches in the same town because of their different skin colour. Today in the new South Africa, in the post-apartheid era, the challenge is no longer that of the colour of the skin so much, but of culture. The issue of culture has become a serious one in South Africa and even more so in local churches.

South Africa is a home for people with different cultures. Many people call this nation a "rainbow" nation. This rainbow is not only reflected by the colour of our skins but also

by the different cultures. These cultures must be allowed to exist and be nurtured, hence the study of the challenge of multiculturalism in the South African local churches. The local churches in our cities and towns must reflect the beauty of our rainbow nation.

If South Africa is a country of multi-cultures, this study is therefore imperative. This is a valid reason for conducting a study such as this one. The reason for this study is to encourage understanding and respect of each other's culture so that we can worship God together and serve each other well irrespective of our differences. It also encourages local churches to view cultural differences from a positive point of view. Our cultural differences must be used so as to compliment each other rather than cause division in the body of Christ in South Africa. Wederspahn says that:

People always have reasons to learn about their cultures...The conflict between Muslim and Christian beliefs and values that preoccupied much of Europe and the Middle East from the Crusades until about the 16th century was a negative type of cross-cultural encounter. Marco Polo's account of his trip through Asia in 1274 sparked new interest in foreign lands and customs on the part of Westerners. The age of exploration that began around 1400 brought many societies throughout the world into sudden contact with each other. The establishment of commercial and colonial empires by western powers in the 1700's intensified the day-to-day interaction between people from vastly different background (Wederspahn 2000:8).

The negative cross-cultural encounter is taking place everyday between teachers and students; business owners, service or product providers and their customers, on bank queue and also between pastors and their congregants or in church meetings. This is the outcome of people of different cultures living together South Africa has experienced an influx of people from different cultures who came to South Africa for different reasons. Some came for trade and commerce, others to establish colonial empires and still others came for missionary reasons.

Wederspahn adds that the Protestant missionary movement of the 1800's created a new interest in the customs and lifestyles of other cultural groups. The emergence of the modern nation-state raised a great awareness of cultural identity. This is a result of

boarders drawn between and around various ethnic groups (Wederspahn 2000:8)

He further quotes Jawaharla Nehru who says that:

If we seek to understand a people, we have to try to put ourselves, as far as we can in their particular historical and culture background. One has to recognize that countries and people differ in their approach to life and their ways of living and thinking ... We have to use their language, not language in the narrow sense, but the language of the mind (cf. Wederspahn 2000:8).

There is an urgent need to learn about each other in South Africa, in particular the Church as the main focus of this thesis. If the Church in South Africa is not willing to learn about the cultures of the people, the unfortunate history of racism and monoculturalism may be repeated. The history of monoculturalism of human relations in South Africa is filled with misunderstanding, intolerance, friction and unnecessary conflict. Some people see others as enemies to be defeated or competitors to be won over. If they fail to overcome them they, demonize their cultures and customs and give them a new set of values and culture foreign to them and make them forget who they are.

To avoid the repetition of this grievous historical mistake, the Church in South Africa needs a well developed systematic tool to help wrestle with the challenge of multiculturalism in local churches. This tool should provide knowledge, understanding and also promote mutual acceptance of different cultures and positive interaction on the basis of equality in a multicultural local church. About this, Wederspahn had this to say:

Only recently have the knowledge and the intellectual tools needed to systematically promote acceptance and positive interaction among people of different cultures have been made available.

During the past 50 years, the academic disciplines of anthropology, sociology, psychology, linguistics comparative management, and communications all have contributed to the development of intercultural field. The international experience of corporations and humanitarian, religion, and development organizations also has provided input

The field is a relatively new area of endeavor being defined by a fledging profession. Providers are typically rushing to meet the

needs of their clients. They also have the challenge of working with their colleagues to establish a generally accepted set of qualifications, approaches, tools and standards that is the hallmark of a fully recognized profession (Wederspahn 2000:8-9).

Before we look at the definition and description of multiculturalism in its fullest and broadest sense, it is imperative to define culture itself.

4.2 What Is Culture?

Scholars define the word culture in different ways. They often define it within the limitations of their field of specialization. For example, some theologians may say that culture is essentially a godless phenomenon which has neither positive nor negative relations to God or Jesus. For others, culture or cultural activities would be godless in the negative sense of being anti-God. For others, culture would seem godly as it is solidly based on a natural and rational knowledge of God. On the other side of the coin, anthropologists say we are born with culture and others would say that culture is something we inherit from our ancestors. Still others will argue from a totally different angle to say that culture is not inherited nor are we born with it but that it is learnt from the people around us. These people could be our parents, peers, teachers and society at large. To define culture Niebuhr says that:

It is the sum of all that has spontaneously arisen for the advancement of material life and an expression of spiritual and moral life- all social intercourse, technologies, arts, literature and sciences. It is the reason of the variable, free, not necessarily universal, of all that cannot lay claim to compulsive authority (Niebuhr 1951:31).

Culture is not created by agreement but springs out from within a specific community of people at specific times to meet a specific need. The need could be a material, spiritual or moral need or it can be as an expression of spiritual and moral life. In other words, the way we meet our special and specific needs in different places and times among different people results in culture. In his words Dawson says that:

Culture is artificial, secondary environment which man superimposes on the natural. It comprises language, habits, ideas.

and beliefs, custom, social organizations, technical process and values (Dawson 1947:47).

Two things are worth noting here, nature, which is primary and permanent; and culture which is secondary and temporary. What man imposes on the natural becomes his culture. This would mean that nature or the natural is the basis for the development of culture and that culture becomes evident in the form of language, habits, beliefs, customs, values, to mention but a few.

Coleman and Watson agree with Dawson in their definition of culture. They say that culture refers to knowledge and values that are passed on from one generation to the next generation of one social group. They see culture as comprising of language, habits, ideas, beliefs, customs, social organizations, artifacts and values. As a result, culture has an effect on the way people think of different things and it also has some influence on people's behavior. However, they see cultural effects as different from the genetic characteristics of humankind. It is passed on through social rather than biological means (Coleman et al. 1990: 13-14).

Nutall and Michael also say that:

Culture is not seen as narrated side shows to the historical main events. The daily practices, rituals and order of things, space, and time are understood to be related to each other in a complex manifold of meanings and values that is relatively independent of their temporal sequence (Nutall et al. 2000:40).

This definition seems to agree perfectly with the two definitions mentioned or discussed above. In this study, the researcher will use the definition of culture as articulated by Wederspahn.

In his definition of culture Wederspahn answers three questions, what, how, and why. In his own words, he says that:

Culture shapes what people believe and value, how they think and feel about themselves, others and the world, and why they act

towards each other the way they do (Wederspahn 2000 :32).

He continues to say that academics and cultural practitioners have defined culture in many ways over a period of more than fifty years. To sum up, a comprehensive definition would include the following elements:

- Culture encompasses an identifiable group of people who share common values, beliefs, customs and a distinctive way of life.
- Culture explains why these people tend to think, feel, communicate, and act the way they do.
- Culture is learned, mostly informally, within the social environment.
- Culture also includes the unique artifacts, language, art, music, drama, literature, folklore cuisine, architecture, and other products of a people.
- Culture is an integrated whole, coherent, and internally logical: it creates a unified worldview and mindset.
- Culture is not static but changes slowly due to the influence of other cultures and internal developments and innovations.

As much as we have defined culture, it is equally important that we understand it. There is an urgent call or demand to the South African local churches to understand culture in order to respond and be relevant to their communities, which are composed of people of different cultures.

Today's world challenges all of us to understand culture, not only our culture, but that of others as well. Through radio, television, tourism, foreign relations and technical assistance programs, we all come into contact with people whose values, customs, interests and intentions clash with ours one way or another. The Church in South Africa is no exception. Occasionally, with unusual insight, we somehow, penetrate another culture intentionally or unintentionally (Honigmann 1963:3).

4.3 Understanding Culture

It may not be possible to define culture in a way that satisfies all people of different disciplines within academia, but we can describe some of the “chief characteristics” of culture for our better understanding of the word itself. Niebuhr in his book entitled *Christ and culture* spells out what he calls “chief characteristics” of culture. These characteristics are a key for individuals and institutions who want to learn and understand what culture is and how it is formed and finally its importance in human society in general. Better knowledge and understanding of culture is a vital instrument in working for and with people of different cultures, especially in a context such as that of new South Africa.

The chief characteristics of culture as discussed by Niebuhr are as follows:

4.3.1 Culture is always social

Culture is interestingly bound up with man’s life in society. In other words, culture always needs to be understood within a social context.

The essential fact of culture, as we live and experience it, as we can observe it scientifically, is the organization of human beings into permanent groups (cf. Niebuhr 1951:43).

Culture is the social heritage individuals and societies receive from their immediate ancestors and also transmit to the next generation. When they pass it on, it may not be exactly the same as when they received it. The main reason for this is that culture is always undergoing changes. Social life is always cultural and culture is always part of social life. Culture and social life go hand in hand.

4.3.2 Culture is human achievement

Human achievement is separated from nature in that there is evidence of human purposiveness and effort. Culture is the work and outcome of men’s minds and hands. Culture is that portion of men’s heritage which has been given to us through the hard-work of other men, if it does not come to us from the supernatural being, God. Hence, it includes speech, education, tradition, myth, science, art, philosophy, government, law, rites, beliefs, inventions, technology and many more. It is the result of past human

achievements and no one can possess it without effort and achievements of his own. When one studies culture one is dealing with what men has intentionally or unintentionally embraced and with what men can or ought to do.

4.3.3 Culture is a world of values

What men have laboured and produced one must assume is intended for a good purpose. It can never be described without reference to ends in minds of designers and users. When one looks at science and philosophy, technology and education, whether in the past or present, one always judges them with reference to the values that were intended by men and to the values that attract us. To be sure, the ends that human achievements serve may change from time to time, but what was intended for use may be preserved for the sake of our satisfaction or for social harmony.

4.3.4 Cultural Values which are Human Achievements are predominantly those of the Good of Man

Philosophers in cultural societies seem to agree that man is the centre of all things, as far as cultural developments are concerned, man must serve his own good. Whether the ends that are to be served by culture are ideal or natural, whether they are ideas of value given to spiritual meaning or natural good, which ever way, ends are interesting to men, as a biological being. In defining the ends of all his doings, both past and present, as they are realized in culture, men begins with himself as the chief value and the source of all other values. Therefore, it means what is good is that which is good for man and serves his good. This search of the good-for-man is dominant in the work of culture. But this should never be understood or interpreted as the works that perpetuate man's exclusivity from his Creator and other beings, for example animals and plants. This is evident in man's desire to please God through worship, by looking after animals and by preserving nature. Man's respect of life for other non-human species and their right to existence is overwhelming. Yet, his pragmatic tendency to do all these things within the cultural context for the sake of his good seems unconquerable.

4.3.5. Culture is Concerned with the Temporal and Materialization of Values

This does not mean that all of man's efforts are geared to peruse temporal and material things only, although one would be right to say that much of the persuasion is mainly part of cultural achievement. Apart from physical needs, man in culture seeks to gain intangible values. In his own words Niebuhr says:

But even the immaterial goods must be realized in temporal and material form: even the good-for-man as mind and person must be given "a local habitation and a name." Prestige and glory on the one hand, beauty, truth and goodness on the other to use the unsatisfactory symbols of spiritual – value theory – are presented to feeling, imagination, or intellectual vision; and human effort presses on to embody in concrete, tangible, visible, and audible forms what has been imaginatively discerned. The harmony and proportion, the form, order and rhythm, the meanings and ideas that man intuit and traced out as they confront nature, social events, and the world of dreams, these by infinite labor they must paint on wall or canvas, print on paper as systems of philosophy and science, outlined in curved stone or cast in bronze, sing in ballad, ode, or symphony. Visions of order and justice, hopes and glory must at the cost of much suffering be embodied in written hours dramatic rites, structures of government, empires, and ascetic lives.

Because all this realization of purpose are accomplished in transient and perishing staff, cultural activity in almost as much concerned with the conservation of values as with their realization (Niebuhr 1951: 32- 33).

The true actualization of the purpose of cultural activity would require education and training by every cultural group in every generation. If education and training are allowed to lapse for one or two generations, the whole grand structure of past achievement falls into ruins. In other words, culture as a social tradition, needs to be conserved even by painful struggle. It needs to be conserved or protected against those cultures that seek to swallow others in the name of religion or civilization.

4.3.6 Pluralism

Each culture is highly complex, and is made up of many institutions with many different goals and inter-related interests so much so that society can never realize all of them. Therefore, the values a particular culture seeks to realize in any given time in the history of mankind are numerous. Because men are many in number, it is probably the main

reason why values are many. Commenting on pluralism Vico says that:

Thanks to their varying geographical circumstances, history and forums of self understanding: different societies organized themselves on different principles. They develop different human capacities, needs, ideas of human excellence, and forms of cognition, modes of imagination and systems of belief, and threw up different forms of artistic and literal activities. They ask different questions about human life and the world and answered them these on their own unique manner (Vico 1984: 84).

Even though people have different geographical circumstances and different historical backgrounds, different people will still have the same kind of basic needs. However, these same needs will be met in many different forms depending on what resources are readily and mostly available within the geographical and historical circumstances. As much as these six characteristics of culture help us to understand it, Bhikhu has this to say:

The influence of culture permits the individual's ways of thinking, feeling and judging himself or herself together, pleasures, pains, values, ideas, dreams, nightmares, forms of imagination and aesthetic and moral sensibilities. Human beings felt at home and realized their potential only within their culture and were awkward and profound disorientated outside of it, which was why Europeans who displayed great civic virtues at home, often behaved with uncharacteristic brutality when traveling or living abroad Since no man could be human outside his cultural community, membership of it was a basic need just as much as food and physical security (Bhikhu 2000:69).

Every culture has two levels namely "surface culture" and "deep culture". Many times people think they know or understand a particular culture by simply observing or practicing few things done by the people. They do not realize that they have simply stopped at the surface level of culture. Many times people are deceived because of the superficial similarity between the two cultures.

To further clarify on the point of culture, Wederspahn used a model he calls "the iceberg model" or "pyramid model." The model is divided into two parts. The first part is the "surface culture." This includes the five senses we use to see, hear, touch, taste and smell.

The surface part of every culture can be learnt or understood through our five human senses. At this surface level, superficial similarities and patterns of behaviour may overshadow significant difference between cultures at the deeper level. Such similarities include the use of language. For example, English is used in South African schools churches and at business places. The adoption of western clothing, food, building style, furniture and many more things are part of the surface culture. These apparent commonalities may mislead many people into playing down the importance of cultural diversity. One may think that because of all these things, we are the same at every level. Such conclusions could be partly right but at the same time seriously misleading.

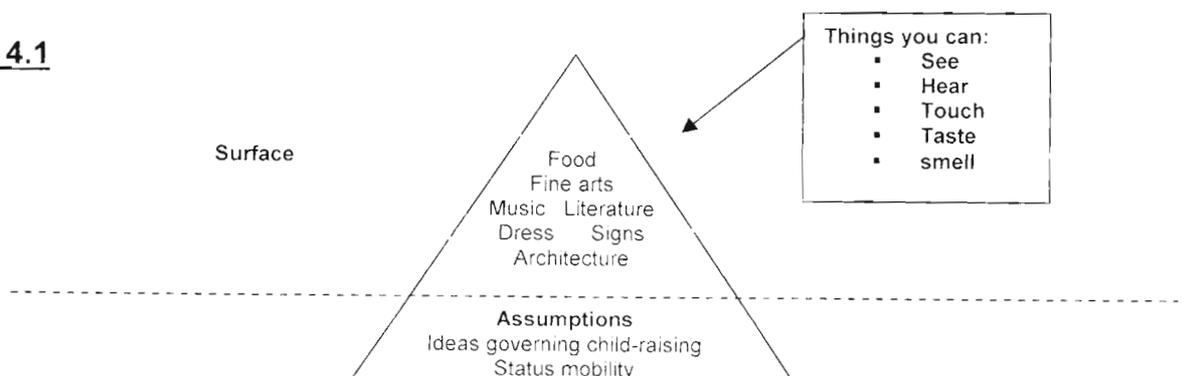
The second part of the pyramid model is the "deep culture." This part includes those things we cannot see on the surface. This is even more so if we are strangers or outsiders to a particular culture. To argue this point Vico says:

Since human societies are vastly different, understanding them is an exceedingly complex activity. A good deal of their inner life is lived in the imagination and based on unarticulated assumptions and unreflective judgment. They were structured by customs and conventions and driven by deepest fears and hopes, whose internal rationality was often missed by outsiders (Vico 1984:51).

Most culture is beneath the surface where it is realized or easily understood, especially by insiders. Since this part of culture cannot be seen, it poses great danger in a multicultural setting. For example, sport, business, education, social life and as well as in Church life. This level of culture is hidden even from the majority of people within it, which makes it worse for those from outside. Deep culture is the force that drives human behaviour and thinking patterns. This forms the larger part of human culture. It comprises of assumptions, perceptions, attitudes, values and beliefs.

The iceberg concept of culture (Wederspahn 2000: 35):

Figure 4.1



Varathan also mentions three points that would help in the understanding of what culture is all about. He says that:

1. Culture is universal in man's experience, yet each local or regional manifestation of it is unique.
2. Culture is stable, yet is also dynamic, and manifests continuous and constant change.
3. Culture fills and largely determines the course of our lives, yet rarely intrudes into conscious thought (Varathan 20003:15).

If we are to understand better what culture is, we shall need to keep in our minds that, culture is a historically created system of meaning, beliefs and practices, which a particular group of people in a specific place understand, regulate and structure in their individual and collective lives. This would mean both understanding and organizing human life. The kind of understanding human-beings seek when they form or create a culture has a practical deeper meaning and is not just pure theoretical in nature like those offered by philosophical and/or scientific theories. However, the way in which culture organizes and regulates human life, is not of temporal nature but it is grounded in a particular manner of conceptualizing and understanding human life. William has this to say about the development of culture:

Every culture develops over time and, since it has no coordinating authority, it remains a complex and unsystematized whole. It has residual stands of thought, that is, those that were once dominant

and now survive either as historical memories or as undigested elements in dominant culture (Williams 1980:10).

When the term or word culture is used broadly, it encompasses more or less the whole of human life. When objectified, it refers to the area or aspect of human life highlighted by the adjective. The term business culture, drug culture, moral culture, political culture, academic culture, religious culture or essential culture refer to the body of beliefs and practices regulating a specific group of people, including the ways in which these are conceptualized, demarcated, structured and regulated. Such terms as gay, youth, mass, and working class culture refer to the ways in which other people understand particular groups of human beings, their place in the society in which they belong, and the manner in which the group itself regulates its internal and external relations. Folk or popular culture refers to the beliefs and practices of ordinary men and women or to culture as it is actually lived. High culture refers to the great creative achievement of the talented minds of society (Bhikhu 200:143).

4.4 Misunderstanding of Culture

There are many debates carried on in our time about what culture is. These debates are with special reference to the new democratic South Africa. The debate is amongst historians and theologians, politicians and traditional leaders, statesmen and churchmen, young and old, black and white. What is interesting is that they all have different views. Some see culture as something that we are born with, whilst others say it is something that we learn. These debates are carried out in public meetings and symposiums. Amongst these parties, there are those who are for the idea and those against it. Those that are for the idea see the good part of culture, whereas, those against it say that it serves to divide us. At the same time, there are those that are battling with this issue privately in their consciences.

At times culture is viewed on one specific area of life. In the case of education, for example, it cannot be divorced from culture. In South Africa, Black children are still left out because the education system is still based on the Eurocentric values instead of the

Afrocentric approach. In Church circles, African people also feel that Christianity is used to marginalize their cultures and cultural practices. They actually feel that their cultural practices are being demonized in the name of the Christian faith simply because they do not march to the “Western way” of doing things. Hence, the need of contextual theology in the Christian circles at large. Contextual theology is a theology that will meet and reach different people as they are and where they are with the same gospel of Christ. It is a theology that will answer the people’s questions in their specific culture.

The debate is confusing to many because of its many sides. So many voices are heard: so many confident, but diverse assertions about culture and its importance are being made: so many issues that bewilder and cause uncertainty amongst many people are raised. This also applies to the Christian Church in South Africa.

In the Church, it is helpful to remember, as was highlighted in the discussion above, that the challenge between the Christian faith and culture is by no means a new issue. It is helpful also to recall that the repeated struggle of Christianity with the issue or challenge of culture have yielded no single answer, but only a series of answers which, together with faith, represent phases of the strategy of the militant church in the world (Niebuhr 1951:2). The question of culture has certainly contributed to the understanding of different people as well as to the serious misunderstanding of some Christian groups.

Bhikhu brings this issue of misunderstanding of culture to clarity by discussing the three major theorists of cultural diversity, namely Vico, Montesquieu and Herder. The three are praised, not only by Bhikhu, but by many other authors of culture and cultural diversity as the pioneers of a new tradition of thought. They are credited with breaking away from the long and enormously powerful tradition of moral monism and laying the foundation for a pluralistic alternative.

He says that in all the positives they have contributed in the study of cultural diversity, they also got things wrong from time to time (Bhikhu 2000:77). These mistakes are by no means unique or only limited to them, for they tend to reoccur in many of today’s

discussions about culture. There are seven common mistakes that were committed by Vico, Montesquieu and Herder which are still happening or continuing in our time. These are:

4.4.1 Fallacy of Cultural Holism

To take culture to be an integrated and organic whole, and ignored its internal diversity and tensions.

4.4.2 Fallacy of Cultural Distinctness

To assume that cultures are self-contained units, which have distinct spirits, ethos or organizing principles, and could easily be individuated and distinguished from each other.

4.4.3 Fallacy of Cultural Positivist, Historical or End-of-history

This fallacy happens when we tend to take a static view of culture. While appreciating that culture is the product of a long historic process, we start to think that from now forward it must be preserved more or less intact. This was true of Herder who insisted on preserving the authenticity of the current German culture. Vico and Montesquieu also thought that the culture of their age represented the highest form of human achievement and marked the end of history.

4.4.4 Fallacy of Cultural Ethnicisations

We tend to see each culture as a unique and organic expression of the spirit, soul, and national character, level of mental development or deepest yearnings and instincts of the relevant community. We have homogenized both the culture and the community, taken a quasi- anthropomorphic view of the latter, and found it difficult to explain how the community requires a particular character in the first instance or why a culture changes over time; why it is internally contested; why cultures share some of their important features in common.

4.4.5 Fallacy of Cultural Closure

This is when many of us decide to take a highly conservative attitude to culture. Since culture is assumed to be an integrated whole, even the smallest changes in it are deemed to be fraught with unpredictable consequences. Reforms are, therefore, either to be avoided or undertaken with the greatest of care.

4.4.6 Fallacy of Cultural Determination

This involves seeing culture as a kind of self-acting collective agent, which dictates, requires or expresses itself in a particular body of beliefs and practices and follows its own internal laws and logic. For many, each culture has a dominant spirit or organizing principle, which constitutes and disposes its more or less passive members to act in certain ways. Not surprisingly, these kinds of theories and culture exist only in limited or narrow spaces of freedom.

4.4.7 Fallacy of Cultural Anatomy

Many people disassociate culture from the wider political and economic structures of society. Quite often, references to the role of social and economic factors are only made in passing. Since every culture represents a particular way of looking at the world and structuring human relations, it tends to legitimize and sustain a particular kind of social order. As a system of power, it is interlocked with other systems of power, and can never be politically or economically neutral. Far from being a transparent and univocal system of meaning, claiming the spontaneous allegiance of its members, every culture is subject to contestation. Its dominant meaning tends to reflect the balance of power between its different groups. By ignoring the politics and economics of culture, many misunderstand the process of its creation and consolidation and the basis of its power.

4.5 Defining Multiculturalism

Before we define the term 'multiculturalism' we shall begin by familiarizing ourselves with terminologies often associated with multiculturalism.

The following terms apply:

4.5.1 Cross-Cultural

The term cross-cultural refers to interactions and communications that take place between different cultures or rather people of different cultures. This term usually refers to two cultures interacting.

4.5.2 Multicultural

Multicultural refers to interactions and communications that take place between people of different cultural backgrounds. However, this term will always refer to many cultures operating or working in the same place.

4.5.3 Trans-Cultural

This term, trans-cultural, refers to transcending or going beyond a particular set of cultural boundaries.

4.5.4 Intercultural

Intercultural refers to interactions or between cultures. This term would often be used interchangeably with the earlier terms, cross-cultural, multicultural or a combination of both.

4.5.5 Cultural Diversity

Cultural diversity refers to different cultures or people with different cultures, yet each group has its own unique cultural trends.

4.6 What Is Multiculturalism?

Multiculturalism as defined in the *Word Finder (the Readers Digest)* refers to or constitutes several ethnic groups within a society or community. The word 'multi' comes from the Latin word 'multus' which means more than one, many forms, much and many (Tulloch 1993:998).

In other words, multiculturalism refers to two or more people of different cultures coming together to form, or existing within one society in order to produce, a new

community for all of them. According to the *World Book Encyclopedia*, multiculturalism is a political or social philosophy that promotes cultural diversity (Fain 2000:918). Fain further says that this idea is supported by many educators in the United States of America. These educators favour the teaching of multiculturalism (different cultures) for the purpose of understanding and appreciating each other.

It is imperative for South Africa to focus its eyes on multiculturalism (Mazrui and Kariuki 2006: 23). Mazrui and Kariuki further to define multiculturalism in the following manner:

- Multiculturalism adheres to a philosophy of cultural synthesis.
- Multiculturalism is a pluralistic method, seeking to represent diverse cultures.
- Multiculturalism is an inclusive quest for diversity.
- Multiculturalism is a rainbow coalition embracing the colours of different global realities.
- Politically, multiculturalism is a quest for solidarity of the oppressed, seeking their recognition in world citizenship. It unites Blacks, Latinos, Native Americans and other oppressed groups of people.
- Multiculturalism is predicated on the universal cultural interdependence of all groups of people.
- Multiculturalism sees the world civilization as a melting pot: the pooling together of cultural resources of many groups of people.
- Multiculturalism is a celebration chorus of diverse legacies.

The multiculturalists adhere to a philosophy of cultural synthesis. In the South African context, the supporters of multiculturalism would claim that too little attention has been paid to contributions made by Africans (blacks), Indians and Coloured people in the development of this country, in particular the Church. These supporters would feel that social and church conflict could be reduced in South Africa if South Africans of all races were able to understand and appreciate the rainbow nation's diverse cultures and people. They would also feel it is important that all South Africans, especially the white

population, recognize the injustices, be they socially, politically, economically, and otherwise, that Blacks, Coloured and Indians in the past suffered. In addition, the supporters of multiculturalism claim those members of these groups derive valuable pride and self-esteem from seeing their cultures being taught and practiced in society and in the Church.

Fain says that multiculturalism grew out of a reaction against the idea of the melting pot, a traditional way of understanding America's identity (Fain 2000:918-919). According to the melting pot idea, the American society was like a boiling pot into which all migrants were thrown. As immigrants 'melted' into the mixture, they lost their original cultures or ethnic identities and became 'true' Americans. The melting pot idea became popular in the late 1800's and early 1900's. Many immigrants or their descendants adopted a general American culture. However, some people began to challenge the melting pot idea in the 1950's and the 1960's. By the 1970's, some began to prefer the image of a salad bowl instead. In the salad bowl model, different cultural or ethnic groups are 'tossed' together in such a way that each keeps its unique identity. Numerous multiculturalists prefer the salad bowl concept and many members of the minority groups have worked to preserve the distinct cultures of their groups (Fain 2000: 918-919).

Peter Cows agrees with Fain's definition of multiculturalism. Multiculturalism stands for a wider range of social articulation, ideas and practices that the "-ism", reduces it to a formal singularity (cf. Cows 1994:1). Multiculturalism has been idealized by many who are its supporters and dismissed by its critics as pedagogical instruments of social and political purpose.

In describing multiculturalism Thomson uses three components. He says that, firstly, it has something to do with cultures. Secondly, it points us to a multiplicity or plurality of cultures. Thirdly, it refers us to a specific manner of reporting that multiplicity or plurality of cultures, hence the suffix 'ism' which signifies a normative doctrine (Thomson 1997: 167).

He continues to say that not all multicultural societies are the same. They differ in both the range and depth of their multiculturality. Some societies may include a large number of different cultural communities than others. For example, South Africa has more cultural communities compared to Australia. In its range of multiculturality South Africa is therefore, far wider and deeper than Australia.

On the other hand, differences between cultural communities in one society might be much wider and deeper than those in another. When that is the case, we might say that the width and the depth of multiculturality in the former community are greater than the latter. For example, White people and Black people of South Africa differ by far from each other compared to the Zulus and Xhosas, Venda's and Pedi's, or Sotho's and Tswana's (Thomson 1997:167-168).

Goldberg, however, suggests that multiculturalism cannot be defined because the moment you start to define it, you limit it. Rather, multiculturalism can be described phenomenologically. In describing it, he makes mention of four things, namely the multiculturalism conditions, the contributors to multiculturalism, the themes of multiculturalism and the readers of multiculturalism (Goldberg 1994:-3).

We shall briefly look at what Goldberg means by each of these points.

4.6.1 The Multiculturalism Conditions

In his own words, Goldberg says that multiculturalism:

Is concerned primarily with the theoretical, Philosophical, Pedagogical, and political prepositions and implications of multicultural commitments rather than with their superficial expressions, reactive responses to standard reductive criticisms or facile charges of "political corrections." Multiculturalism then, delineates the prevailing concerns and considerations, principles and practices, concepts and categories that now fall under the rubric of "multiculturalism." Contributors spell but critically the vision of knowledge and education as well as the social relations forming its fabric. Analytic focus is directed to a variety of related objects: to the metaphors structuring representations of the multicultural in and across beyond traditional definitions of the disciplines; to the **practices** encouraged and represented by way of

multicultural articulations and expressions; and to how these practices and their representations differ from, are opposed to, and undertake to overthrow or go beyond those that are given and presumed, those seemingly constitutive of the tradition and prevailing forms of common sense (Goldberg 1994: 1-2).

In this context the primary focus of multiculturalism is its commitment to the principles and practices of multicultural communities rather than superficial expressions. Thus, it focuses on being committed to each other, through preferring and respecting of each other rather than coming together in one meeting on Sunday morning, hugs or shake hands in a superficial manner or in a reactive response to fit to the reductive standard of political correctness. It goes beyond thinking of "me" into thinking of "us." All these are done with the intention of wanting to see the kingdom of God prevailing in the church in South Africa, especially in the local churches where people of different cultures come together on a weekly or daily basis to worship together. Education on a multicultural community by leaders of local churches will play a big and vital role in order to realize strong and healthy social relations between people of different races, colours, and cultures in the country.

4.6.2 The Contributors to Multiculturalism

The contributors would include writers or researchers and practitioners of multiculturalism. Theirs is to interrogate the claimed relationship between the principles and practices in multicultural societies, especially communities such as the local churches. The church has often laid down good principles, based on biblical teachings. But quite often, she has failed or fallen short to live up to these good principles. Commenting on the church and multiculturalism, Aguinaco argues that:

Parishes and the dioceses often miss the mark when it comes to multiculturalism (Aguinaco 2000:22).

Goldberg said that:

Contributors to multiculturalism interrogate the sets of relations between the principles and practices of multicultural expression.

namely, between the theoretical claims constitutive of multiculturalisms and the praxis such theoretical claims evoke, and between the commitments to specific practices representative of multicultural conditions and the theoretical claims sustaining them.

Multiculturalism explores the assertive foundations of disciplines, scrutinizing the boundaries of subjects, conceived as agents and disciplines. It pursues the interdisciplinary interpellations of (or calling to) subjectivity from within while transgressively challenging the confinements, the borders of established institutional structures, subjected and subjectivities, and improved disciplinary forms (Goldberg: 1994:2).

It is important that contributors to multiculturalism do not only focus on commitments to specific practices but they also evoked its theoretical claims. They also interrogate the conditions and the theoretical claims that would sustain the community concerned. The confinements and the borders of established institutional structures, such as the local churches, are subjected to radical challenges.

4.6.3 The Themes of Multiculturalism

The themes of multiculturalism are so broad and wide that this thesis would not be able to cover them all. Trying to engage in such an exercise would result in the study losing focus. However, we shall briefly look at the themes of multiculturalism to the degree that they help us to have an understanding of the subject. Writing about the themes of multiculturalism Goldberg says that:

...analyzed include the relations between Self and Others, selves and others, Subjects and subjects: between knowledge, power, pedagogy, politics and empowerment. They also include relations between the status of the national political formations and local and transnational capitals: between the institutionalized power of managed multiculturalism in the academy and the politics of insurgent, polyvalent, and the critical multiculturalism, between disciplinary definitions and canonical confinement, inter-and trans-and postdisciplinarity. And they cover relations between the sciences, social sciences, and humanities, between meaning, ambiguity and representation, between History and multiple interesting histories, Reason and the rationalities, between cultures, domination, resistance, and self-assertion: and, broadly conceived, between identities and differences, homogeneity and heterogeneity

(Goldberg 1994:2).

It is clear that multiculturalism in its broad and narrow sense focuses on relationships or brings together two or more parties in a peaceful way. But the term "peaceful" should be understood in this context as a word that comes with challenges. Multiculturalism in this research looks mainly at the relationship between selves and others. That means one cultural group within a community relating to another cultural group to fulfill or realize a common purpose. Knowledge would mean striving to know and understand another's culture in order to foster or facilitate a good relationship. Power and empowerment would refer to cultural diversity in the coexistence of different cultures within a society and moreover within one community, more specifically the local churches. This is a place where one culture should not dominate another, but instead creates a cultural environment conducive for all different cultures to manifest themselves and grow. In other words, it is a place where cultures empower each other. Each culture, present in the cultural diverse environment, is empowered by giving and receiving from others. This environment can only be created if all the participants strive to promote principles that do not favour one culture at the expense of all others. Winter says that as more parishes recognize the reality of multiculturalism, the church will not just reluctantly tolerate diversity, but will marvel at the beauty and joy that such diversity brings to the life of the parish (Winter 1996:8).

4.6.4 The Readers of Multiculturalism

The readers of multiculturalism are divided into two categories, namely, 'Thinking the Unthinkable: Setting Agendas' and 'Breaking the Bounds of Disciplines.' Here again we are faced with theory and practice, rationale and practical, general and specific. However, these should not be understood to reflect divisions between theory and practice. Goldberg says that these should be seen to:

... reflects a rough distinction, points emphasis, between the general and the particular; between the broad principles and practices articulating multicultural expression in any manifestation, and the ways these practical principles and principled practices prompt from within the confines of established institutional structures and the imposed disciplinary forms the boundary

transgression of inter- and transdisciplinarity. In this sense, the division into parts represents alternative points of approach to a common undertaking, though not a predefined end (1994: 2-3).

4.7 Conclusion

The need for understanding the meaning of culture from different scholars in the South African context in particular in the Church is very huge. This is so because of the number of cultures represented in this country. It is a country of many cultures as we realized that culture is impacting on almost all levels of daily life.

Many scholars definition of culture has helped to realize that culture is not necessarily evil or against the Christian believes. We have come to understand that culture springs out from within a specific community of people at specific times to meet a specific need and that it is secondary and temporary in nature. It also refers to knowledge and values by a particular community that are passed on from one generation to the next one for social cooperation. For the purpose of this thesis culture would continue to be defined in a way of answering the following important three questions: what, how and why. That is to say, what do people believe and put value on? How do they think and feel about themselves, others and the world around? The last question is why people act towards other people in a particular way different from other groups of people (Wederspahn 2000: 32?)

However, this thesis does not claim that the definition it chose to use will satisfy or fit every person. This definition was chosen because it includes what Niebuhr call "chief characteristics" of culture. The characteristics are as follows: culture is always social, culture is human achievement, culture is a world of values, cultural values which are human achievements are predominantly those of the good of man, culture is concerned with the temporal and materialization of values and pluralism.

The definition and understanding of culture also helped us to transition and understand the definition of multiculturalism, which is the core subject of this thesis. There are a number of terminologies that are associated with the word multiculturalism. Some words that are related to multiculturalism are cross-cultural, trans-cultural, intercultural, cultural

diversity and many. Multiculturalism as it has come to be defined in this thesis is two or more people of different cultures coming together to form, or exist within one society, in order to produce, a new community for all of them. This conclusion was reached because of the meaning of the word "multus." A Latin word which means more than one, many forms, much and many according to Tulloch 1993: 998 in the Word Finder (The Readers Digest). That is to say that multiculturalism adheres to a philosophy of cultural synthesis, is a pluralistic method, seeking to represent diverse cultures and is an inclusive quest for cultural diversity (Mazrui ed. 2006: 23). This thesis is in opposition to the "melting pot" approach which calls for people to lose their cultures when they join a particular local church to adapt to the culture of the dominant or majority group. It is in favour of the "sald bowl" approach. In these approach people of different cultures are accepted with their cultures as long as they do not conflict with the Scriptures or the Christian faith. The point here is that local churches that embrace this approach will create equal space to all cultures represented in its community of believers. One culture will not be allowed to rise over and above all other to a place where it is credited the status of Christianity. All cultures will be treated equally.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE CHALLENGE OF MULTICULTURALISM IN THE LOCAL CHURCHES

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Our world has shrunk into what many would call a 'global village.' In recent years, we have witnessed the globalization of our societies, countries and continents into one village. The rapid increase in the mobility of people from one continent to another has brought us much closer together than ever before and our world has become a much smaller place (as suggested by the term global village) for almost everyone. At the beginning of the 20th century the flow of population and ideas was from the west. Now it seems that the flow is reversed (Mohabir 1992:16).

This is very true of the South African context, especially since the dawn of democracy in 1994. In the past, South Africa was perceived as a large country, especially to the Black majority. Black people could not travel as much as they wished in their country of birth and the land of their ancestors. Although it is an accepted fact that the majority of White people living in the country were born here, they still have strong connection with the

lands of their ancestors. The proof of this point is that most of them, including those born in South Africa, hold two citizenships: one South African passport and another from the country of their ancestors. Their fathers fought wars and shed blood to stay in this country and the continent of Africa, hence the term fatherland. White people could travel from one end of the country to the other without prevention by the law and the state. They could also travel from one white local church to the black local church without any hindrance. However, Black people could not do so. Now, the situation has changed for the good of both Blacks and Whites. Many Black people have relocated from the villages and townships to the suburbs that were only reserved for White people during the apartheid era. Because of this, many Black people go to the former white local churches than White people do to the black local churches.

In his own words Mohabir continue to say that:

Until thirty years ago the focus for the world missionary outreach and activity was on the so-called "Two-Thirds world" the non-Western nations. The trust was from the West to the uttermost parts of the earth. Now the uttermost parts of the earth are moving to the West and, in a very real sense, the world has landed on the doorstep of the Western Church. Help! The ends of the earth are upon us. This unannounced convergence of so many peoples, languages and cultures has caught the Western world by surprise. Even the Church and Christians have been unprepared and, in some cases, totally unaware of this shift of population and dislocation of people around the world (Mohabir 1992:16).

It is disappointing to see that the business world, educational institutions, sports world and many other institutions are aware of this great move and are making necessary adjustments, while the Church of God in South Africa is still sleeping. The Church and Christians are not renowned for a willingness to adapt to changes. They seem not aware that they are significantly lessening their usefulness and effectiveness to the new South Africa by failing to respond to the challenge of multiculturalism. This often renders the Church ineffective in its effort to comfort this present generation. Its message is unchanging.

The world is getting smaller as people migrate from their countries for various reasons

some are fleeing war zones: whilst others are seeking better employment opportunities. This movement is creating cross-cultural encounters at a mind-boggling rate. Modern media and the internet contribute to the blurring of cultural borders, thus making some people, including the Church, think that there are few cultural differences. In relating to one another, however, the truth soon becomes apparent. Hostilities quickly flare as ethnic groups become polarized and cultural identities are defended.

Besides that, Black people are relocating to former white local churches, more than any other time in South Africa's history. Moving to these churches is easy, but knowing how to connect or relate with the local people they meet, visit or live among is a different story. Even when people come back to their local churches excited about the great response they had from the people of another country, race or culture, they rarely know the other side of the story: the cultural confusion they may have created during their visit. Relatively speaking, very few people who try to work with or preach to those of another cultures understand that the way they live out their values and customs is probably completely foreign to those they are preaching the Gospel to (Janier 2000:11-12).

The challenge of multiculturalism comes to the Church, in particular the South African local churches in the words of Jesus, the head and owner of the Church, as written in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke:

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always to the very end of the age (Matthew 28:17-20).

According to Mark, Jesus said:

Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned (Mark 16:15-16).

And according to Luke, Jesus said:

... you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).

All three authors agree that the gospel message, according to Christ is meant for "all nations." This means that there is no person, race or culture on the planet earth that is excluded by Christ's command. This point is made clear by Mohabir when he wrote that, "... for those who are redeemed and who belong to the Church, there is no Jew or Gentile, bond or free, black or white, rich or poor, male or female (Gal 3: 28) (Mohabir1992: 67)." Therefore, it should be accepted for one to say that, the true witnesses of Jesus' message, should not exclude any person from being an active part of the Church on the basis of colour, language, race, gender or culture. Christ come to destroy the racial and cultural walls of division and form a new community of all those who believe in Him. "... Christ's sacrificial death gave birth to a new humanity, and nail to the cross all the walls of division between men and women, thus creating new possibilities for unity among all people of the earth (Eph. 2: 14 - 15) (Mohabir 1992: 68)."

"Christ for the nations." is a motto worthy of every Christian and local church that is under the lordship of Christ. This motto should be the theme of a life-long preoccupation of all of those who confess Him as our Lord and Saviour. The 'Great Commission' is a specific charge and distinct commission from Jesus to his entire Church, to make Him known to every group of people, all languages and every culture in the world. It is not a job for a specially chosen few, but the single pursuit and sincere endeavour of every child of God and every local church (Mohabir 1992:12).

Cross-cultural ministry is to be understood as any other ministry in the Church. In this ministry, one interacts with people who have grown up learning values and lifestyles that are different from one's own. In South Africa, the cross-cultural ministry includes, not only going overseas or across the border, but also trying to be an effective witnesses in the major towns and cities of this country. Cross-cultural ministry then is something in which many believers will be engaged without going overseas or across the border

(Lingenfelter and Mayers 1986:11). In South Africa, cross-cultural ministry takes place on the door steps of church buildings, especially those in towns and cities.

In His own purpose, God has chosen the Church to be an agent of His love and grace. The Church in South Africa, today, is faced with people who are more culture conscious than would previously have been the case. This point is made clear by Murray Bosrock when she wrote about the political and cultural borders in the European Union. "As political borders drop, cultural borders rise. People are more determined than ever to hold on to their cultural distinctness (language, food, religion, and customs), even as they enjoy and anticipate the benefits of EU membership (Murray Bosrock 2006: 9)." It seems the same thing is happening in South African communities as well as in the local churches that since the dawn of democracy in 1994, that is after the fall of apartheid every group of people desires to go back to its roots. Many of these people, especially Blacks, feel that they have been denied the opportunity to live their real life. This was especially so in the local churches because almost everything from the African cultural point of view was demonized and rejected as evil and of the kingdom of darkness. About this Makhubu has this to say.

"Some of our customs and traditions which are good, were said to be evil and heathen. People were told to abandon them without much teaching and explanation. Western culture was preached as being Christian and good. Instead of open discussion on the customs of Africans, what normally followed was disciplinary actions, and resentment ... (Makhubu 1988: 22)."

In this context, perhaps, one would be right to question the issue of people's colour, thus, 'black and white'. Are others called 'black' to associate them with evil when others are called 'white' to associate them with holiness? Theologically and biblically we do not read anywhere where God refers to a person as 'black or white.' In most cases, the term black is used to refer to the kingdom of Satan, darkness, without light, very dirty, evil, wicked, harmful and the like (McLeod ed, 1986: 81). On the other hand, the term white in the Bible is used together with the term light. Both refer to the kingdom of God, righteousness, holiness, purity, beauty, honourable, generous and benevolent, without malicious intent to mention but a few (McLeod ed 1986: 989). This should remind us how dangerous it is to even use words such as this in the context of the Church. The

problem is even worse because the so called blacks are far from being black. The same applies to those referred to as whites. If one was asked to say what colour he is, before he was socialized to believe that he is black or white, this would be his most difficult question in life to answer. One might even argue that those said to be black are brown or those that are said to be white are pink. Perhaps it is right to say, like his creator, man has no colour. But if man has colour, as many of us want to believe, then, up until now, it is still God's holy secret (Deuteronomy 29: 29). Perhaps that is why the Bible always uses personal (Gen 17: 1 – 5 and 15), geographical or national (1 Sam 17: 1 – 4) names to refer to different people. The gospel message of Christ is not for black and white but for all nations.

The primary purpose of the God-given commission on the Church's agenda is to communicate Christ to all the nations of the world. This serious business is to be carried out by every single believer and every local church in South Africa. About the Great Commission, Mohabir says:

It sounds very simple and straightforward and yet is complex. Complex not because of the gospel we must present, but because of the complexities of the world to which we must present it. The gospel, though not simplistic is simple. It is simple and yet profound. The world, however, is far from simple or straightforward. Contemporary society is a labyrinth of problems, a tangled, tortuous web of humanity. A 'heterogeneous' society filled with variety. There are many races, religions, customs and cultures. This diversity does not necessarily imply that one is right and another wrong but it does constitute a major challenge to the people of God, a challenge to relate adequately to the intricate systems of beliefs, customs and values in our world, in order to communicate intelligently the gospel to each person without compromising the heart and essence of its message (Mohabir 1992:14).

The complexities that Mohabir refers to do not only end with societies, but lie mainly with the different cultural groups of people that the Church has to reach and minister the gospel to, as it is said that God's creation differs greatly in its values and orientations.

... it is clear that individuals, the work of God creative activity, differ greatly in their values and orientations, as do the societies of which they are members, each society rewards and punishes individuals in accord with its own particular biases. Therefore, persons called to minister in a foreign setting must become acutely aware of the cultural differences they will encounter (Lingenfelter and Mayers 1986:10-11).

In order to deal with multiculturalism, Lingenfelter and Mayers present us with two challenges that face the local churches in South Africa. Firstly, is that the Church needs to know that God's people differ greatly from one place to another. In other words, the Church must avoid generalization, when presenting the gospel to people. It should not be one size fits all.

Secondly, is that the presenters of the gospel message must be aware of the cultural differences amongst different groups of people. In other words, they must be prepared to handle cross-cultural settings. The biggest problem, perhaps, in South Africa today, is lack of skills to handle cross-cultural settings. This could be as a result of the segregation policies, where people were divided along colour lines. This has left a big gap in the South African Church because there was never an opportunity to learn from each other's cultures. To make this point clear, Lanier says that:

The average cross-cultural worker has few cross-cultural skills and, in some cases, does not even see the need to acquire them. The sad thing is that their good intentions can be read wrongly, damaging the relationship with their colleagues without knowing it (Lanier 2000:12-13).

This is not the only challenge facing those that want to be effective witnesses of Jesus Christ in and through the local churches in South Africa, but there is also the danger of dividing the Church again, but this time on cultural issues. The problem is when others do not want to learn the skills that will enable them in a cross-cultural ministry, especially when it has to do with previously disadvantaged groups. All they want is to go and preach or teach the gospel without being equipped to do so in various cultural contexts. Perhaps, it is so because they see the previously disadvantaged groups as needing to be

converted not only to Christ, but also to their own cultures. They see all other groups of people and their countries simply as places where they are obligated to go and fulfill the command of Christ without acquiring the necessary skills to do so. However, you would hear the same people crying foul of Black people not being qualified to preach or teach them. The question, therefore, is who then determines who qualifies or has enough skills to teach or to preach to whom? There seems to be people who are both players and referees at the same time. Perhaps this is caused by the attitudes of superiority and inferiority that was implanted in us by the evil system of apartheid. As a result, the Church in South Africa stands divided because others underestimate the cultural differences that exist in the local churches and other people's cultures.

To underestimate cultural differences in the new South African context would mean to overestimate the significance of one's own culture and to suggest that one's own cultural modes and patterns of doing things and communications are so superior to others that they deserve universal acceptance. This is far from the gospel truth and an obvious lie.

It is only very recent that a few local churches have begun to change their attitude and start to recognize that the questions raised by people from other cultures are as valid as those raised in and amongst people of western orientation. More still needs to be done in South Africa, especially in the local churches, which are the hope of our communities. No one should assume that cultural blindness is a thing of the past. The situation may have improved, because we have local churches where both Black and White are worshipping together. However, very often, when Black people enter through the front doors of local churches, the Whites leave through the back doors. At the same time, you find that local churches that propagate homogeneity, even if they do not say it loud and clear, enjoy the luxury of numerical growth by members from those local churches in the same city or town that are open to multiculturalism. There is still a long way to go if our local churches are truly going to be relevant and effective in catering for the masses, the different languages, values, customs and cultures.

It is the duty of every local church to be fully representative of the different cultures in its

community. This will require effective teachings and commitment from the leaders of every involved local church. Culbertson gives us light on this point when he writes about pastoral theology and multiculturalism in the context of New Zealand. New Zealand, like South Africa, has a dominant culture and the dominated culture. The former is the culture of the White people. The White people migrated to the country and later dominated the Maori who are the indigenous people of New Zealand. Speaking about the Anglican Church and multiculturalism he said that:

... while the Anglican Church here may be culturally diverse as a whole denomination, most local parishes remain de facto monocultural, apparently by mutual choice of the various parties involved. The bicultural commitment seems to demand repeated re-affirmation and education, particularly to keep on board those parishes where there are no Maori for miles around. The pastoral theology curriculum at St. John's pushes the theology of "otherness" quite strong, in the vision of helping to create a greater comfort level for all in a multicultural church, as well as creating new opportunities for reconciliation between even a single individual and any other in his or radical uniqueness (Culbertson 1997:163).

It is easy to speak of and commit the denomination to multiculturalism, but it is a different and difficult thing to practice it at the local congregation levels. "It sounds very simply and straightforward and yet it is complex. Complex, not because of the gospel we must present, but because of the complexities of the world to which we must present it (Mohabir 1992: 14)." Multiculturalism should be practiced in the local churches, instead of debates that take place in denominational headquarters and Christian conferences. Unless local congregations in South Africa start to commit themselves to the realization of multiculturalism the Church may be guilty of insensitivity and arrogance as alluded by Mohabir when he says that, "If we (the Church) ignore this problem and fail to equip ourselves to address this need we show great insensitivity and a callous disregard for the complexity of our task. We may even be guilty of arrogance (1992: 14 = 15). Multiculturalism congregations should not be left to happen by chance they should be the result of God's providence and his people's intention.

In the article "A multicultural Congregation", King describes the short history of

multicultural local churches, unlike those of the Anglican Church in New Zealand. The St. John United Methodist Presbyterian Church in Columbia, Maryland is to cope well with the challenge of multiculturalism. According to King, this congregation reflects the vision of the town's founder and planner Jim Rouse. This suburban city was conceived in the late 60's and early 70's and designed to provide a home for a variety of cultures and economic groups.

Right from the beginning in the early 1970's, this local church affirmed the importance of honouring all people and maintaining openness to all cultures. This congregation includes African-Americans (a growing component of the membership), Africans, Cambodians, a few Koreans, and a majority of "Anglos" as full and active members in the life of the local church.

King continues to explain that this kind of openness and diversity has led to two new Cambodian members being welcomed and baptized as new believers in Christ. One of these new members described her decision to become a Christian as a response to "meeting the real God" through the kindness and the love of the people of the local church. It was so because this local congregation chose to respect the tradition and the culture from which she came, while welcoming her into the new tradition and culture found in community of believers.

This local church's commitment to becoming a multicultural and reconciling congregation grew out of its long-term commitment to Jesus the Lord of the Church, to openness and to the inclusion of different people from different cultural groups in all of the structures of the life of their congregation. He continues to say that, "The decision was not an easy one. A task force team had to be formed, to work and to help the congregation understand the issues and all the sacrifices involved in multiculturalism." The decision to help the Presbytery (the highest leadership team of the local church) to become open to this possibility was now paying off. Once the mission of the group was under way, its new agenda was to help develop a new community among the other local churches in the surrounding areas that were opening up to multiculturalism.

For this local church, the decision to become committed to cultural diversity and become a more light and reconciling local congregation, was so consistent with their whole faith and life style that there was no great tension (King 1996:6).

To follow the example set by the St. John United Methodist Presbyterian Church would require a deep sense to multicultural sensitivity and the conviction that God is in and can speak to and through all cultures. There is an urgent call to South African local churches not only to develop the culture of sensitivity to different people but to live it as well. This is a big challenge and requires an urgent attention of the local churches in South Africa. This is imperative if the Church in South Africa desires to remain effective and relevant.

The 1998 article titled 'Multiculturally Challenged' made an insightful and important point about multicultural sensitivity. Multicultural sensitivity requires that one thinks carefully about how one's insights can be most fruitfully shared with the rest of the Church. The sharing has to be done in a way that respects not only the perspective of other Christians, but sometimes the perilous cultural context in which other Christians make their witness.

It continues to say that, since Christ is able to speak to and through all cultures, we should expect a dizzying variety of Christian witness and a lot of ways in which the gospel will interact with the particular cultures in which it takes roots. One of the benefits of multicultural sensitivity is that it always reminds Christians of this diversity and of the gospel that challenges, fulfills and transcends all cultures, including one's own and including its strength (Christian Century: 1998).

Cultural sensitivity must remind the Church in South Africa of our Lord Jesus. Jesus, though He was God, was also able to live among the Jewish people and adapt to their culture. He came to live among men. In the gospel according to John we read that:

In the beginning was Word, and the Word was with God, and the

Word was God... The Word become flesh and made dwelling among us... (John1: 1, 14).

Most of the believers, if not all, hold the incarnation as a fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith. This doctrine says that God Himself became flesh and blood like human beings and He come to live among us. There is great truth in this, though we seldom ask what the implications of the incarnation are. In other words, what did it mean for Him to become flesh? How did God plan and choose to live among us? In what manner did He come? Does his example have any significance for us as we are sent to others of different cultures (Lingenfelter et al. 1986:16).

If we ask ourselves these kinds of questions in the context of multiculturalism, we will realize that the incarnation has some significance for the Church in South Africa to learn and gain from. What is this significance for the South African local churches that has an urgent call to multicultural ministry?

The first significant fact about the incarnation is that Jesus came to this earth as a helpless infant to help his people. In the gospel according to Luke we read the account of Jesus' birth.

He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While there were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloth and placed him in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn (Luke 2:5-7).

We read that Jesus was born as Mary's child, wrapped in swaddling clothes, and placed in a manger. It is important to take note of the following in the account of Jesus' birth or the incarnation:

- God, in Jesus did not come to us, human beings with culture and as a fully developed adult. He was born as a helpless infant. The challenge here for those of us who are called as the Church of Jesus Christ in South Africa to do

multicultural ministry, is that we learn from Him, that we should approach people of other cultures as those who do not know everything about them and their cultures.

- Jesus did not come as an expert. Even though He was God (all knowing) He did not show this attitude. He knew everything, since the Scriptures say that everything was created through him, and without him nothing was created. The challenge here is that what we know from our culture does not warrant us that we know everything about other people's cultures. One cannot even use knowledge based on one's culture to judge other's cultures.
- He did not come as a ruler, or even as part of a ruling family or a dominant culture. The Bible declares Him as King of kings and Lord of lords and all Christians agree on that point. But when He came to us He did not come as king. He did not even associate himself with the dominant culture. The challenge here is to stop seeing one's culture as better than all one should also not use it to dominate others.

The second significant fact about the incarnation is that Jesus was a learner. He was not born with knowledge of language or a particular culture. In this respect, He was an ordinary child. He learned language from his parents. He learned how to play from his friends. He learned the trade of a carpenter from Joseph and studied the Scriptures and worshipped in the same manner as did all young people of His time.

The implication of Jesus' status as a learner are seldom discussed, let alone understood or applied. God's son studied the language, the culture and the lifestyles of his people for thirty years before he began his ministry. He knew all about their family life and problems. He stood at their side as learner and as co-worker. He learned to read and study the Scriptures in his local language and earned respect to the point that the people called him Rabbi. He

worshipped with them in their synagogues and observed the annual Passover and other feast in the temple in Jerusalem. He identified totally with those to whom he was sent, calling himself the son of man. Luke 2:52 tells us that he grew in favor not only with God but with man as well (Lingenfelter et al. 1986:16-17).

People and local congregations that will be able to learn from Jesus' example of incarnation are those with a dream or vision of the future. These are people and congregations that meet the challenges of today or the present by making huge sacrifices, in order to prepare for a better future. They are people and local churches that are not consumed with self but are preparing a better future for the coming generations.

On 28 August 1963, Martin Luther King led a march of more than 250, 000 people, both Black and White Americans, to Washington DC. King and all these people were committed to seeing America becoming a place where all people of different colours and cultures could live together in peace. On that day King shared his dream of a multicultural America. He said:

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave-owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day we the state of Mississippi, state sweltering with the heat of injustice... and oppression will be transformed into oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that one day in Alabama, with its vicious racists... little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys white girls as sisters and brothers....

With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood.

With this faith we will be able to work together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day ... (Scott 1969:249).

Between June 25- 26 in 1955, a group of three thousand delegates gathered in Kliptown, Johannesburg, to adopt the 'Freedom Charter.' The document was drafted by a sub-committee of the National Action Council from contributions submitted by groups, individuals and meetings all over South Africa and approved by the African National Congress (ANC) National executive (Mandela 1990:50).

Each section of the charter was adopted by delegates with acclamation and hands being lifted up. Some people held their fists up and shouts, 'Africa! Mayibuye!' meaning, 'Africa must return' were heard. This was a gathering of men and women with a dream or vision of the kind of South Africa we are now enjoying, although there is still more that needs to be done to fulfill their dream. Part of the Freedom Charter as quoted by Mandela reads:

"We, the people of South Africa, declare for all our country and the world to know:

That South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of the people:

That our people have been robbed of their birthright to land, liberty and peace by a form of government founded on injustice and inequality:

That our country will never be prosperous or free until all our people live in brotherhood, enjoying equal rights and opportunities:

That only a democratic state, based on the will of all the people, can secure to all their birthrights without distinction of colour, race, or belief:

And therefore, we, people of South Africa, black and white, together-equal, countrymen and brothers – adopt this FREEDOM CHARTER.

And pledge ourselves to strive together, sparing nothing of our strength and courage, until the democratic changes here set out have been won (cf. Mandela 1990:50-51)."

The freedom charter adoption was the most spectacular and moving demonstration South Africa had ever seen or heard of. Through it, the people of South Africa, both Black and White, proved beyond any reasonable doubt that they had the ability and the power to live together and triumph over every obstacle, be it cultural differences or otherwise to win the future of their dreams. Above all it is important to note the projection of the spirit of a multicultural society in the Freedom Charter. Its noble objectives are unique in that during oppression and racial hatred, it called the whole nation, people from all walks of life to meet as equals, irrespective of race, colour, gender and creed to form a multicultural society in South Africa.

When we read through the Freedom Charter, there are words that keep on appearing almost in all sections, words like all, black and white, our people, our country, and all the people. These words show or prove to us that these men and women were committed to all people of South Africa. Perhaps the Church, in particular local churches in South Africa, needs to develop such a dream and spirit for 'all the people' not just for some people. There must be a dream or vision in the Church in South Africa to see multicultural local churches developing across our country. Unless the Church in South Africa starts to dream and produce local churches that are multicultural in heart and spirit, the future of this is doomed.

There are five areas that will prove to be major challenges of every local church in South Africa that desires or dreams to be multicultural. If these areas are to be well developed, it is the heart and hope of this thesis, that the local churches will be homes for people of different colors, races and cultures without fear of being discriminated against or dominated by another culture. The five areas are major challenges that face the local churches, in particular, because this is where people come together for fellowship of the brethren almost every day or every week. This is where people of different cultures rub shoulders. The five major challenges are as follows: the challenge of multiculturalism and community; the challenge of multiculturalism and contextualization; the challenge multiculturalism and equality; the challenge of multiculturalism and communication and the challenge of multiculturalism and leadership. In the following section we shall critically explore each challenge of multiculturalism in the context of local churches in South Africa.

5.2 The Challenge of Multiculturalism and Community

There is a great need of community within the South African local churches, especially local churches where people of different backgrounds and cultures come together in one service or worship meeting. "The infant church in Acts presents us with a type of Christian community ... which was the result of spiritual revival. And all that believed were together and had all things in common (Unger1957: 216)." However, the unfortunate history of our country, that is apartheid, has left the Church with very little to

be desired. It has left us with the condition of false completeness and wholeness. It makes us deny our weaknesses and those of others. It encourages us to fake or hide our weaknesses and failures. Yet, deep down we know that we need our brothers and sisters. In suppressing and denying this desire, we limit ourselves and the Church of God in our desires to fulfill its mission in South Africa. This makes many believe the lie that community is impossible. Even people in the house of God believe this lie. Writing about the individuals and the fallacy of rugged individualism, Peck says that:

We are called to wholeness and simultaneously to recognition of our incompleteness; called to power and to acknowledge our weakness, called to both individuation and interdependence. Thus the problem –indeed the total failure of the ethic of rugged individualism is that it runs with only one side of his paradox incorporates only one half of our humanity. It recognizes that we are called to individuation, power, and wholeness. But it denies entirely the other part of human story: that we can never fully get there and that we are of necessity in our uniqueness, weak and imperfect creatures that need each other.

This denial can be sustained only by pretense. Because we cannot ever be totally adequate, self-sufficient, independent beings, the ideal of rugged individualism encourages us to fake it. It encourages us to hide our weakness and failures. It teaches us to be utterly ashamed of our limitations. It drives us to attempt to be superwomen and superman not only in the eyes of others but also in our own. It pushes us day in and day out to look as if we “had it all together,” as if we were without needs and in total control of our lives. It relentlessly demands that we keep up appearances. It also relentlessly isolates us from each other. And it makes genuine community impossible (Peck 1987:57).

During the apartheid era, separation on the basis of race was the order of the day. Politics of the time influenced the Church in South Africa highly. People of different colours, cultures and backgrounds were isolated from each other. People became prisoners of their own ideology. We acted as though we had no need of each other even though we desperately needed each other.

Today in the new South Africa, the Church, especially local churches, are faced with this daunting challenge – to build a community of believers of different colours, cultures and

backgrounds. Jesus is building a Church of people from every nationality and every language (Rev 7: 9). The problem in South Africa is that people were never accorded the chance to appreciate each other or to learn from each other. The biggest challenge is that, even though believers of all cultures and different races believe that we serve and worship one and the same God, there is still division in the Church of God. There is a serious lack of desire for true community. This lack and thirst is particularly heartbreaking in those places where one might expect to find real community in local churches (Peck 1987:57). In this case, it would be fitting to say that, if the Church cannot get it right, there is little hope for our country. The local churches in South Africa need to rise to meet this challenge of creating real communities if they are to continue to count for God and serve the people of this land.

5.2.1 What Is Real Community?

The word community has been used to describe all sorts of things. Generally, the word has been used to refer to any collection of people, such as a town, church, a student body, professional association, business groups or fraternal organization. Community is "a group of people having cultural, religious, or other characteristics in common (McLeod ed, 1986: 172)." However, the term community cannot be applied to any group of people everywhere at any given time. Community goes deeper than a group of people with common interests and objectives. McLeod continues to define community when he says that, is "the people living in one locality (1986: 172)." Proximity does not warrant community. Community has some qualities or characteristics that a mere group of individuals does not have:

If we are going to use the word meaningfully we must restrict it to a group of individuals, who have learned how to communicate honestly with each other, whose relationships go deeper than their masks of composure, and who have developed some significant commitment to "rejoice together, mourn together," and to "delight in each other, make other's condition our own" (Peck 1987:59).

Community is something more than the sum of its parts, its individual members. It is integrative: it incorporates people of different colours, cultures, ages, sexes, life styles and stages of development. True community does not obliterate individuals or diversity,

but embraces the opposites and welcomes other people's view point. It seeks to see the other side of every issue that has arisen within itself. It integrates all its members with all their differences into a functioning body. A true community is a mystical body. It is a phenomenon which no word will be able to fully explain or describe and human languages comes short of explaining it.

The communal model views the Church as the Body of Christ, as God's people, as a fellowship in Christ deeply committed to the well-being of its members. Theologically, the strength of this model lies in its deep Scriptural roots; anthropologically, its strength lies in a deeply ingrained human trait, the human need and subconscious craving for fellowship in almost everything we do as humans (Luzbetak 1988: 376).

Peck used an analogy of a germ to further explain this concept of community:

The seed of community reside in humanity – a social species – just as a germ originally resides in the earth. But it is not yet a gem, only a potential one. So it is that geologist refers to as a gem in the rough simply stone. A group becomes a community in somewhat the same way that a stone becomes a gem – though a process of cutting and polishing. Once cut and polished it is something beautiful. But to describe its beauty, the best we can do is to describe its facets. Community, like a gem, is multifaceted, each facet a mere aspect of a whole that defies description (Peck 1987:60).

Peck continues to explain the beauty of community. Because of our past experiences of racial discrimination and more than forty years of separation under the apartheid government, it is hard for us to believe that a true community of believers, both Black and White, can even exist. It sounds impossible:

The gem of community is so exquisitely beautiful it may seem unreal to you, like a dream you once had when you were a child, so beautiful it may seem unattainable... The problem is that the lack of community is so much the norm in our society, one without experience would be tempted to think, how could we possibly get there from here? It is possible we can get there from here. Remember that to the uninitiated eye it would seem impossible for a stone ever to become a gem (Peck 1987:60).

There is no doubt that community is what people are looking for when they go and visit different local churches in their respective towns or cities in South Africa. People are looking for the true community of believers. "The Church exists because human beings need each other: they need community (Luzbetak 1988: 377)." They know that God is love and that He loves them. But they are looking for a group of believers who will offer them a sense of community.

5.2.2 Characteristics of true community

Peck discusses nine characteristics of true community. It is safe to say that a local church without these characteristics falls short of true community experience. That kind of local church is still only a group of people worshipping together under the same roof. For local churches to experience true community, the leaders must teach and encourage every member to start to practice the following characteristics of true community:

5.2.2.1 Inclusivity

Community is and must be inclusive. Inclusion is the act of including others and the state of them feeling being included (McLeod ed. 1986) in the day to day affairs of the concerned local church. The greatest enemy of true community is exclusivity. The local churches that exclude others because of some different cultures or race or nationality are far from being true communities. They are cliques. Inclusivity is not an absolute and long-term. Communities must invariably contend over the degree to which they are going to be inclusive. Most of the local churches find it easier to exclude than to include. Inclusive local churches are caring churches. "... Church is about caring, loving and bringing God's healing power to people (Matt 22: 34 – 40). God cares for people through people (Daniel 1993: 45)." Groups such as clubs and corporations give little thought to being inclusive unless the law of the country compels them to do so. It should not be so with the Church of God. True communities do not ask "How can we justify taking this person in? Instead the question is "is it justifiable to keep this person out?"

In a true community, like in the local church, there should be no pressure to conform. There should be an "allness" in the local church. The ultimate of Christian community is

unity. Jesus prayer for all believers was “that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I in you (John 17: 21).” About unity in the New Testament local churches Luzbetak said, “... the New Testament churches strove relentlessly for nothing less than the ideal. It is this *perfect* New Testament model that missiological anthropology must keep in mind when called upon to help build a Christian community ... Accepting anything less than this perfect New Testament model would entail failing to recognize the meaning of “*Christian* community” (Luzbetak 1988:377).” It should not be merely a matter of including different cultures and races but recognizing the true meaning of Christian community that is inclusive in its nature. It should also be inclusive of the full range of human emotions. It should be a place where tears, laughter, fears, as well as faith are all welcome. It should also be a place where different styles of expression are welcome: the talkative and the silent. The local church should be a place for all people, where all human differences are included and all “soft”, individuality is nurtured.

5.2.2.2 Commitment

In order to be inclusive it is evident that every member of the local church must be fully committed: that is, showing a willingness to coexist with others. “Commitment means you have no hidden or secret agendas (Daniel 1993: 124).” For community to flourish, sooner or later, the members of the local church, in some way, must commit themselves to one another if they are to become or stay a true community. Like in marriage, community requires that we hang in there when the going gets a little rough. It requires a certain degree of commitment.

Transcending individual differences is the cornerstone of building a local church, which is a true community of believers. There can be little doubt that this requires an appreciation and a celebration of our different cultures. To learn all this will, of course, take time; a time period that can only be bought through commitment. “Transcend” does not mean “obliterate or demolish”. It literally means “to climb over or above (McLeod ed. 1986: 920).” Individual differences are commonly accommodated by making use of a strong individual or benevolent dictator. Another less primitive way of resolving individual differences is through democracy, in which the majority decides which

differences will prevail. Both these approaches are anti-community and not good for the local church. With that in mind, one might wonder how it is possible to go beyond dictatorship and democracy. In a true community, individual differences are transcended through a process of consensus, which because of its mystical nature, defies definition and explanation. The full impact of consensus within a local church can only be glimpsed through personal experience and through conceptualization.

5.2.2.3 Realism

Another characteristic of a true community is that it is realistic. Since a community includes members with many different viewpoints and the freedom to express themselves, it is evident that a much broader perspective in the local church emerges. With so many frames of reference, less would be left out and conclusions reached are usually very much more realistic than would be the case with an ordinary group of the same culture or race. Acts 15: 24 - 29 would be a good example. Realistic decisions are more likely guaranteed in a local church that is inclusive and is in a true community than in any other human environment.

An important aspect of the realism of community that deserves to be mentioned is humility. Individualism leads one to arrogance and pride. In local churches with a true sense of community, people begin to appreciate each other's gifts, and by so doing, they begin to appreciate their own limitations. In the true community when you begin to witness others sharing their brokenness, they help you to accept your own inadequacies and imperfections. People become fully aware of human variety in the context of multicultural and multiracial local churches and they recognize the interdependence of humanity. As people in the local church do these things, they become a community. They also become more humble, not only as individuals, but also as a group. As a result, they become more realistic.

5.2.2.4 Contemplation

The word "contemplative" has a variety of connotations. Contemplate according to McLeod is "to think about intently and at length, especially for spiritual reasons (McLeod

ed. 1986:184).” Most of the meanings centre on awareness. The essential goal of contemplation is increased awareness of the world outside oneself; the world inside oneself; and the relationship between the two worlds. The good biblical example would be the Parable of the lost son. “How many of my father’s hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death (Luke 15: 17).” Besides the community being humble and realistic, it also becomes contemplative. It examines itself; it is self-aware; it knows itself. Self-examination will be the key to every local church in South Africa that wants or desires community. It is the key to insight, which leads to wisdom. As Pluto said that, “The life which is unexamined is not worth living (cf. Peck 1987:66).”

Community-building is a process and requires serious self-examination from the beginning and as members of local church become more thoughtful about themselves, they will also learn to become increasingly thoughtful about the church as a community of believers. Since no community can expect to be in perpetual good health, it is important for local churches in South Africa to start asking themselves these self-examination questions. How are we doing? Are we still on track? Are we a healthy local church? And “Have we lost the spirit of true Christian community?”

By being contemplative, a local church is able to recognize its ill health when it occurs and quickly takes appropriate action to heal itself. The Prodigal son did not stop by contemplating about his present situation and how his father’s house was, he took some steps to change his situation and heal himself. He said, “I will set out and go back to my father. ... So he got up and went to his father (Luke 15: 18 and 20).” Healthy local churches are skilled at responding to the biblical procedures, which ensure that they remain on course. Local churches that never learn to be contemplative either do not become communities in the first place or impact negatively on the people around them.

5.2.2.5 A Safe Place

One of the outstanding characteristics of community is that it constitutes a place of real safety. This is a rare feeling since most of us spend nearly all of our lives in an environment, which is partially safe, if at all safe. The apartheid system had rendered

South Africa a dangerous place to live in. People did not feel safe even in Church. Even today, after more than a decade of democracy in our country, very few people would say they feel completely safe and unconditionally accepted in multiracial and multicultural local churches. Writing about the why Christians should assume a more active role in the struggle against racism and the oppression of other cultures he said, "In 1980, Black South African Christians made a statement in which this painful realization was put on record: The churches to which we belong have conformed to the patterns of racism society. The persistent cries of the Black people that the church is not consistent with the demands of the gospel of Jesus Christ have fallen on deaf ears (cf. Boesak 1984: 109)." People do not feel free to be themselves because of a serious lack of community in our local churches.

A great deal of work and time is required to establish safety for individuals or different cultural groups in the multicultural local church in South Africa. There is no such thing as instant community. However, once this has been achieved, the floodgates are opened and our masks of composure and pretence come down. As soon as it is safe to speak one's heart, as soon as most people in the local churches know they will be listened to and accepted for who they are, years and years of frustration, hurt, guilt and grief of the legacy of apartheid will come pouring out. It will come pouring out faster than we ever thought or anticipated. Too many of us, in particular men, have been mostly denied the wonderful gift of vulnerability and tears. In an environment where one is truly valued and appreciated, both Black and White men will become more and more open to seek help from the community and old wounds will be miraculously healed, resentment forgiven, and habitual resistance overcome. Fear will be replaced by hope, hatred replaced by love and negativity replaced by positivism.

Local churches that create an environment for the Holy Spirit to bring about healing and the conversion of the human spirit and soul are place of safety for our nation. When we try to force healing and conversion on others, we automatically hinder the spirit of community. Human beings have within them a natural yearning and thrust towards health, wholeness and holiness. But most of the time this is hindered or obstructed by

fear and neutralized by our defenses and resistances. Yet, when we find ourselves in a safe place, there is a natural tendency for us to go towards healing and conversion. The multicultural local church must be a safe community where its members do not attempt to impose their cultures, fix or change each other.

We meet as strangers, each carrying a mystery within us. I cannot say who are. I may never know you completely. But I trust that you are a person in your own right, possessing a beauty and value that are the earth's richest treasure.

So I make this promise to you. I will not impose any identities upon you, but will invite you to become yourself without shame or fear.

I will hold open a space for you in the world and allow your right to fill it with an authentic vocation and purpose. For as long as your search takes, you have my loyalty (Swartz 2001:78).

5.2.2.6 A Laboratory for Personal Disarmament

A laboratory can be better defined as a place specially designed to be safe for experimenting or testing. In South Africa there should be no better place set apart for experimenting coexistence of cultures **than the local churches**. According to the *Oxford Universal Dictionary* the word laboratory is a building set apart for experiments in natural science especially in chemistry (Little et al. 1959: 1095). The *Collins English Dictionary* concurs with the above definition but take it further when it says, laboratory is "a place where chemicals or medicines are manufactured (McLeod ed. 1986: 471)." The local churches in South Africa need to develop to be such safe places of experimentation or testing new relationships that will be helpful in healing the wounds of the past. In South Africa, we desperately need such a place, because when we experiment we are trying out or testing new ways of doing things. Perhaps it would be right to say that, local churches in South Africa must become laboratories of our country. If it does not work in the Church, there is surely no hope for our country and the world at large. When offered the opportunity of such a safe place, most people will naturally begin to experiment more deeply than ever before with love and trust. People will drop their customary defenses and threatening postures, the barriers of distrust, fear, resentment and prejudice. In his words, Peck says that:

An experiment is designed to give us an experience from which we

can extract new wisdom. So it is that in experimenting with personally disarming themselves, the members of a true community experientially discover the rules of peacemaking and learn its virtues. It is a personal experience so powerful that it can become the driving force behind the quest for peace on a global scale (Peck 1987:70).

Once the members of a multicultural local church begin looking at each other and themselves through “soft eyes,” then community is coming into existence. This involves seeing through the lenses of respect, honour and preference for each other irrespective of cultural differences.

Consider *mutual* respect, for instance. The early Christian communities respected each other because each was created according to the image and likeness of God (Gen 1: 26). Each member had a unique charism worthy of the highest respect (1 Cor 12:14 – 24, 28 – 31). The charism of even the weakest and lowliest was appreciated, for it was regarded as a part of God’s plan that allowed for no substitutes (cf. supra, 1.2.3) each member was respected because each had been redeemed at the same Price, the Blood of the Son of God himself (Jn 3:16). Each was respected because whatever was done to the least member of the community was regarded as having been done to God himself (Mt 25:40). Those in positions of responsibility were respected because true authority come from God, and those in authority were accountable not only to the community but to God himself (cf. Rom 12: 8; 13: 1; Eph 6: 1, 5; Col 3: 20, 22; 1 Tim 2: 2; 1 Pt 2: 18 – 21) (Luzbetak 1988:379).”

Because as their masks are dropping, they start to see the suffering, the courage, the brokenness and deeper dignity underneath. They truly begin to respect, accept, prefer and honour each other as fellow human beings, created in the image of God regardless of different colours and cultures.

5.2.2.7 A Group That Can Fight Gracefully

A community cannot be created or maintained without conflicts. Therefore, a multicultural local church that desires to develop into a community is not going to be free from conflict. Quite often, consensus in a true community is reached after much struggle. Today in the Church, whenever we make reference to the early Church we speak of it as a

Church that was free from anger, jealousy, quarrels and misunderstandings. It is true as recorded in the Holy Scriptures that it was a powerful and a wonderful church. "This is, of course, not to say that the early Christian communities did not have their share of jealousies, selfishness, misunderstandings, grudges, anger, lies, quarrels, acts of revenge, divisions, and scandals (see, for instance, 1Cor 1:10 – 11: 6: 7ff; 8:9, 12; Gal 5:15; 6:1; Eph 4:31f; Phil 2: 3, 4 14; Jas 3: 16) (Luzbetak 1988: 377)." Within a true community, however, conflicts are resolved without physical or emotional bloodshed. The Bible tells us that, our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, the authorities, the powers of this world and the spiritual forces of evil (Ephesians 6: 12).

In his own words, Peck says that:

In genuine community there are no sides. It is not always easy, but by the time they reach community the members have learned how to give up cliques and factions. They have learned how to listen to each other and how not to reject each other. Sometimes consensus in community is reached with miraculous rapidity. But at other times it is arrived at only after lengthy struggle. Just because it is a safe place does not mean community is a place without conflict. It is, however, a place where conflict can be resolved without physical or emotional bloodshed and with wisdom as well as grace. A community is a group that can fight gracefully.

That this is hardly accidental. For community is an amphitheater where the gladiators have laid down their weapons and their armor, where they have become skilled at listening and understanding, where they respect each other's gift and accept each other's limitations, where they celebrate their differences and bind each other wounds, where they are committed to a struggling together rather than against each other. It is a most usual battleground indeed. But that is also why it is an unusually, effective ground for conflict resolution (Peck 1987:71).

There can be little doubt that there is more conflict in multicultural local churches than in monocultural local churches in South Africa. That it is a fact that many have tried to become multicultural local churches and gave-up when conflicts started to flare. Language as the main vehicle of culture does not play a lesser part in multicultural churches. As Makhubu said, "The first Dutch settlers worshipped together with servants,

But latter separate services become necessary for obvious reasons. One of the reasons was said to be the language and the inability of the blacks to understand it. The every day simplified language for communication was not permitted in church services. The Dutch language was not easily followed by the servants or slaves. Separate services became necessary (Makhubu 1988: 18).” Many of those that tried and gave up would even advise those that have dreams of multicultural local churches not to try because it does not work. Many of those were hurt, taken advantage of, taken for granted, dominated or oppressed, misunderstood, experienced rejection or resistance by those that have no vision for community in local churches. Peck suggests that this may well be because we have got it all backwards. Instead of reasoning: If we can resolve our conflicts, then someday we shall be able to live together in community we should be considering the opposite, that. If we can live together in community, then someday we shall be able to resolve our conflicts (Peck 1987: 76).

5.2.2.8 A Group of All Leaders

Although a community in this sense would be seen as a group without a leader, it will probably be appropriate to think of it as a group of all leaders. If one is designated a position of leadership, once the group becomes a community, his or her nominal job is over. He/she can sit back and enjoy being one among many leaders and followers. In other words, they learn to put on different masks at different times. The nominal leader then becomes the first among the equals. This is more so in the church where we are all equal before the eyes of God. This view is well articulated by Corner when he writes that:

It is “Elders” in the plural and “Church” in the singular when dealing with the local church...Not only does the Old and New Testament show the plurality of eldership, it also teaches the co-equality within that plurality of eldership. That is, no elder is to be exalted as a person above another elder. However, it is co-equality of office and of elders as persons, but it is NOT a co-equality of divine ability. Thus all Elders are equal as persons and office, but there are differences of grace-gifts given to them which also have to be recognized... The very fact that God has given a variety of ministry gifts, spiritual gifts and talents to the members of the body of Christ confirms the truth of the same amongst the elders. It is this fact that should be seen in the examples here of plurality, co-equality of eldership, yet an elder being “first among equals”

(Conner 1989: 98 – 99).

It is important to bear in mind that community is anti-totalitarian and its decisions are reached by consensus of plurality. One of the most beautiful characteristics of community that needs to be displayed or demonstrated in the local churches of South Africa is what Peck calls the “flow of leadership.” This means that, while the lead leader feels free not to lead, the shy and the reserved also feel free to lead. The shy and the reserved also feel free to offer their talents and gifts of leadership. This flow is due to the spirit of community, which leads rather than a given limited or possessive individual.

5.2.2.9 The Spirit of Community

When community is attained in the local church there is an atmosphere of love and peace, which prevails and this is frequently referred to as the spirit of community. The members of a local church who have achieved a true and genuine spirit of community take pleasure in their gatherings as a collective. There is nothing competitive in community like in sports. To the contrary, any local church possessed by the spirit of competitiveness is by no means a community. It is so because the spirit of true community is always inclusive when on the other hand competitiveness is always exclusive.

The spirit of community is the spirit of peace. Spirit of peace is the state of harmony, stillness, silence or serenity and absence of mental anxiety between the members of the community (McLeod ed. 1986: 620). When a local church attains community, there is a dramatic change of spirit. The question, “How will we know when we are a true community?” is no longer asked by those who are inside and experiencing it. There is no mistaking it. A new quietness descends on the ground and while people speak more softly, their voices seem more powerful and focused. Listening and silence become more pronounced and takes a new significance when differences emerge, which they will inevitably do. The ensuing struggle always loves and moves towards consensus. The spirit of genuine community appears to descend upon the group rather than to emerge from the group or any of its individual members, just as the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus in the form of a dove and upon those that were gathered in Jerusalem on the day of

Pentecost. The spirit of community is the manifestation of the Holy Spirit in His Church in our days. The spirit of community, which is the spirit of peace and love, is also the Spirit of Jesus, the king of peace (Peck 1987:59-76).

6.4.10 The Challenge of Multiculturalism and Contextualisation

It is imperative for the South African local churches to learn and know the art of contextualization. It is more important and urgent for those local churches that have already started to attract or are visited by people of different backgrounds and cultures. Contextualization is for those that want to reach people beyond their own comfort zones and have the desire to make the gospel message relevant to all people of different cultures in our beautiful country. Speaking about the writing of contextualising materials or documents Peters says that:

It is not written for entertainment but in order to clarify issues and to serve missionaries and all who are reaching for ways to make the message of God relevant to our age and to people of various worldviews, cultures, and psychologies. At the same time it is a staunch defense of the position of those who believe that contextualization can be done without whittling away the sharp edge of the biblical gospel. The gospel is relevant to all ages, cultures and people; but its communication must be contextualized in order for it to be as the living message of God (Peters et al 1977: x).

The living message may be rendered dead by those who communicate it if they fail to contextualise – that is to communicate the gospel message in and through the context. Koyama articulates this point well when he says that:

Contextualisation of theology is something more than taking the historical and cultural context seriously, it is letting theology speak in and through the context... Authentic contextualisation is always prophetic, arising out of a genuine encounter between God's word and his world...the ultimate moment of such authentic contextualization is the incarnation of Jesus Christ (Koyama 1974:21).

From this point of view, Christian contextualization can be thought of as an attempt to communicate the gospel message of the person, works and the will of God in a way that is faithful to God's revelation, especially as it is put forth in teachings of the Holy

Scriptures and that is meaningful to respondents in their respective cultural and existential contexts. Contextualisation is done in both words and actions. It has to do with theologizing, bible translation, its interpretation, and practical application of incarnational lifestyle. These specially apply to the delivery of the Gospel message, evangelism, Christian doctrines, church planting, church growth and worship styles.

In other words, contextualisation is a way or method of doing theology by considering both the word of God and the people's context seriously. When the local church strives to contextualise it is, therefore, doing justice to both the Gospel message of the Bible and the hearers. By so doing, the local church will take the people from the known to the unknown. This view is well articulated by Donovan when he says:

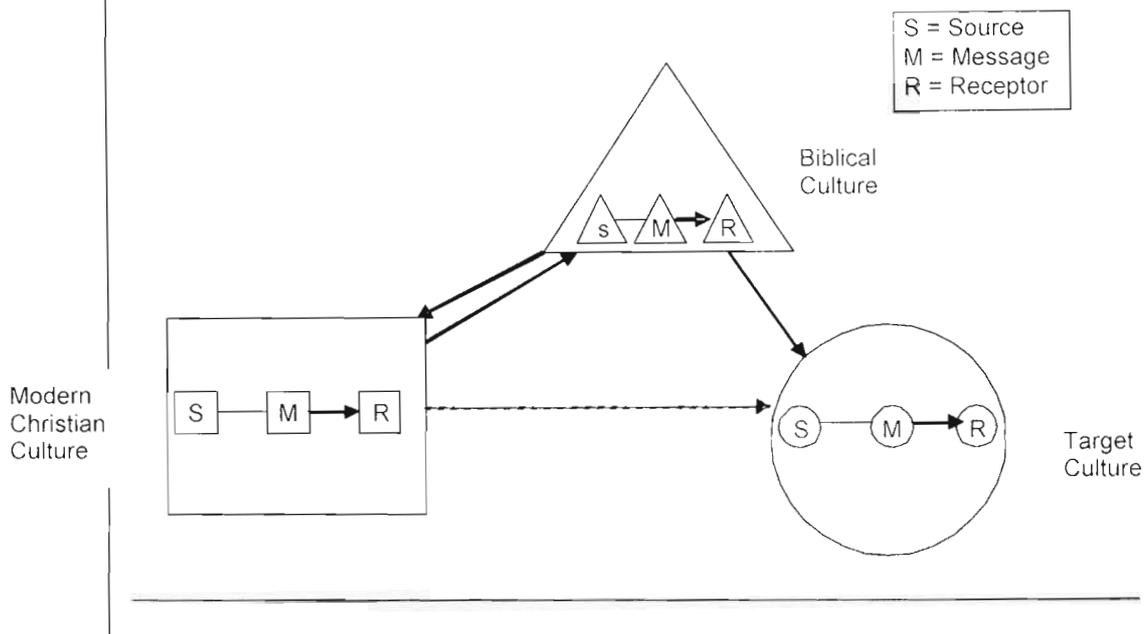
Do not try to call them back to where they were, and do not try to call them to where you are as beautiful as that place might seem to you. You must have the courage to go with them to a place that neither you nor they have ever been before (Donovan 1978: VII).

It is clear that the work of the multicultural local churches is not just to deliver the word of God for simple consumption by people who hear it, but it is meant to be a saving message which needs to be understood and meet the needs and problems of hearers in their specific place. Contextualisation seeks to be fair to both the Word of God and the context of the hearers. Contextualisation seems to do justice to both cultures of the speakers and the hearers and to the word of God as it is and can be interpreted through their context (Barbour 1984:301).

To further clarify the point of contextualization, Hesselgrave and Rommen have adopted and used the three-culture model. This model or diagram was first used by Eugene A. Nida.

Figure 5.1

CONTEXTUALIZATION-A THREE CULTURAL MODEL



The three-cultural model illustrates that the biblical message came in a language and concepts meaningful to the sources. That means Bible authors, prophets and apostles, and their receptors, as well as, their hearers and readers in the Hebrew and Greco-Roman cultures of Bible times. Consciously and unconsciously, the biblical message has been contextualized to be meaningful to the people and cultures to which the Christian message has spread, in which the Church developed, and from which the Church sends out her cross-cultural ministers. The ministers' task and the task of the local churches is to interpret and de-contextualize the biblical message to limit the intrusion of materials growing out of their culture. They then must contextualize the message to communicate it effectively to hearers or respondents in a target culture (Hesselgrave et al. 1989:200-201).

In contextualizing, the minister of local churches in South Africa must aim at understanding and fulfilling what contextualization is all about. It is seeking to create an atmosphere of understanding, mutuality, and community between culturally diverse members, namely, the speaker and the hearers of the gospel message. In this sense contextualization is a method, which seeks to bring together the culture of the biblical

world and the culture of the target group of today's Bible readers. In other words, contextualization serves as a bridge building method. Thus, the kind of a hermeneutics it employs is here referred to as hermeneutical bridge. Padilla writes that:

Hermeneutics has to do with dialogue between scriptures and contemporary cultures. Its purpose is to transpose the biblical message from its original context into a particular twentieth-century situation. Its basic assumption is that the God who spoke in the past and whose word was recorded in the bible continues to speak today in scripture (Padilla 1978: ii).

The ultimate goal in the communication of the Gospel has always been to present the supra-cultural message of the gospel in culturally relevant terms. There are two potential hazards, which must be avoided by all those who are involved in this endeavor, including all South Africa local churches and preachers that are engaged in cross-cultural evangelism locally or across our borders. The two potential hazards are as follows:

Firstly, is the perception of the communicator's own cultural heritage as an integral element of the gospel.

Secondly, a syncretistic inclusion of elements from the receptor culture which would alter or eliminate the aspects of the message upon which the integrity of the Gospel depends. In other words, speakers of the gospel message of all ages have had to come to grips with, not only their own enculturation, but also the customs, languages, and belief systems of the world's people, that is, the hearers of the Gospel message (Hesselgrave et al. 1992:1).

The goal of contextualization is the successful telling of the Gospel message. He says that contextualization has a double task, namely, "critical task" and a "creative task." He continues to say that the critical task serves to test the adequacy of yesterday's telling of the gospel. The intention of examining critically the way the gospel was communicated in the past is to prepare for tomorrow's proclamation and to make sure that "the Gospel will be preached at least a little better tomorrow."

The creative task of contextualization is that which seeks to enable the Gospel message to reach and touch the hearts of different people in every culture and every generation in the whole world. The aim of this task is to bring the Spirit of Christ to bear witness upon the world and in people in their daily life experience, as well as in their personal relationship. In the local church, it creates an atmosphere of understanding, mutuality and community between members of diverse cultural groups and facilitates dialogue between the Word of God and a particular context (Jenson 1964: 7 - 8).

5.3.1 The Meaning of Contextualization

There are three different meanings of contextualization. These are apostolic contextualization, prophetic contextualization and finally syncretistic contextualization. The different contextualizations are the results of different and universally recognized theological orientations. The importance of context to meaning has been realized by communicationists for a long time (Hesselgrave et al. 1992:148). The following are the three types and meanings of contextualization:

5.3.1.1 Apostolic Contextualization

To understand apostolic contextualization we need to first of all define the word "Apostle." There are over eight occurrences of the Greek word "apostolos" in the New Testament. It derives from the common verb "apostello" which means "to send" or "the sent one" or "messenger." In specific New Testament terms, first of all, it refers to Jesus as the sent one of God (Hebrews 3:1). Secondly, it refers to those sent by God to preach to Israel (Luke 11: 49). Thirdly, it refers to those sent by local churches (Corinthians 8:23, Acts 13:1-5). In a restrictive sense, the word apostle would specifically refer to the group of twelve men appointed and commissioned by Jesus (Mark 3:13-19). But the Greek term apostello means to send with a particular purpose (Douglas et al. 1990:59).

This understanding of the apostolic contextualization now leads us to the meaning of contextualization with specific reference to those sent out for a particular purpose. Contextualization properly applied means to discover the legitimate implications of the Gospel in a given situation. It goes deeper than simple application (Peters et al. 1977:69).

Contextualization of the gospel message aims at communicating scriptural meanings to the ordinary people in a given situation with a real life context. Contextualization does not seek to focus on people and ignore their real situation.

Nicholls agrees with Peters when he writes that contextualization is the translation of the unchanging content of the Gospel of the kingdom of God into verbal form, meaningful to the peoples in their separate cultures and within their particular existential situation (Nicholls 1975: 647).

In other words, contextualization does not water down the gospel message but it helps the preacher to preach the gospel message in a changed context. The message of the Gospel is unchanging, but the way (methods) in which it is presented changes from one culture and situation to another in order to do justice to the hearers of the gospel. This is a great challenge which the South African local churches need to be aware of and be equipped with as our churches are becoming full of people from different cultures. If we are not equipped to meet this challenge we will think that **one size fits all**. If that is not being the case, then one culture will be glorified above all others. As a result one culture will dominate others.

Going back to Peters and Nicholls' definitions of contextualization, it is clear that they both believe in the supra-cultural nature of the biblical message. In their definitions, they seem to recognize that the biblical message is not a-cultural. All the biblical authors, prophets and apostles, were men who received and recorded the divine message, not in a neutral language and culture, but in a specific linguistic and cultural background.

There seems to be no doubt of the divine revelation and the uniqueness of the gospel message as being pure and true. But that does not ignore or overrule the imperfection of the authors, cultures and human languages through which the perfect gospel was provided to us. The words of the prophets and apostles are endorsed by our Lord Jesus Christ when he gave the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20. Note that it starts with the emphasis on the word "Go" hence the need of the apostolic contextualization, which is going to "all nations." Hesselgrave articulates this view more clearly when he

writes that:

Their emphasis is on taking apostolic faith "once for all entrusted to the saints" (Jude 3) and contextualization (translating, interpreting, adapting, applying) that faith (body of the truth) of the people of a respondent culture in such a way as to preserve as much of its original meaning and relevance as possible (Hesselgrave et al.1992:149).

5.3.1.2 Prophetic Contextualization

Prophecy is an oracle (message) from God through an individual. It is God's direct response to the human situation. Prophecy is one of several gifts of the Holy Spirit mentioned in I Corinthians 12:10 and elsewhere in the Bible. The purpose of prophecy is to reveal God's word and will, his truth and his purposes to his people (Pyches 1993:10).

Prophecy has generally been understood to cover the following main categories:

1. Preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God.
2. Opening and the interpreting of the word of God.
3. Being a critic of the times.
4. Speaking into social conditions. II Chronicles 35: 21 -22.
5. The study of the end times: comparing contemporary world happenings with Scriptures.
6. Prophecy in praise. Exodus 15:20-21, I Chronicle 25: 1 and Psalms of David.
7. Supernatural revelation of God's will and purposes for the strengthening, encouraging and comfort of God's people (Pyches 1993:10-11).

Prophetic contextualization is speaking into the future and bringing the future into the present. It causes change in the present so as to prepare for the future. The ability of the speaker of the gospel message is called to attention as far as reading and interpreting the signs of a specific culture, generation, times and situation at a given time. The aim is to be able to discern what God is busy doing by his Spirit and finally to involve oneself and others in that which God is doing. In other words, prophetic contextualization is not only a matter of words (speaking or articulation) but it goes further to actions (deeds and works).

Coe highlights this point when he writes that:

In using the word contextualization, we try to convey all that is implied in the familiar term indigenization, yet seek to press beyond for a more dynamic concept which is open to change and which is also future oriented.

Contextuality ... that is critical assessment of what makes the content really significant in the light of the signs of the times, seeing where God is at work and calling us to participate in it ... Authentic contextuality leads to contextualization ... This dialectic between contextuality and contextualization indicate a new way of theologizing. It involves not only words, but action (Coe 1976: 21 – 22).

It is important to note that in his definition, Coe's primary emphasis seems to be more on the prophetic side. This has to do more with the insight of the contextualizer, that is, the person proclaiming the Gospel message. His insight must also apply to the cultural, political, and other situations in which he finds himself ministering. Prophetic contextualization entails entering a cultural context in which the speaker of the gospel found himself involved in, discovering what God is doing and saying or speaking into the context by challenging and working into the situation to effect change.

5.3.1.3 Syncretistic Contextualization

Syncretism is the mixture or the coming together of different faiths or beliefs. In this sense syncretistic contextualization means the coming together of representatives of various major religions in which participants, not only discuss religious teachings, but also worship together (Hesselgrave et al 1989:150-151).

Syncretistic contextualization is not going to be discussed at length since it does not form part of this thesis. This thesis is more concerned with the Christian faith than with different religions.

In the following section, we will now discuss the realities which necessitate the contextualization of the Gospel message from context to context and from one culture to another by those that proclaim it.

5.3.2 The Realities That Necessitate Contextualization

In his unpublished article 'What Is Contextual Theology?' Professor Moila makes mention of four realities that necessitate contextual theology. The four realities necessitates and guarantees contextualization to be authentic and relevant to people and their specific context. There is an urgent call for the South African local churches who desire to be God's instruments in bringing our people of different cultures together in order to worship; to know that they themselves are culturally and socially conditioned; that the hearers of the Gospel message are also human beings who are culturally and socially conditioned; that the Old and the New Testament express the divine relation of God in culturally and socially conditioned languages and patterns of thought and lastly, that today's preachers and today's hearers of the Gospel message cultures are always intertwined.

5.3.2.1 The Preachers of the Gospel Message

The preachers of the Gospel message need to be aware that they are culturally and socially conditioned. This simply means that whether they like (believe) it or not, their preaching and teachings are reflections of what their cultures and social conditions have made them to be. In other words, as they read the Scripture (the Bible) they are bound to hear and interpret the Gospel message in terms of what is going on in their cultural context. This means that the preaching of the Gospel is done by human beings and not by angels. Refusing this fact would result in the preachers causing serious damage in their local churches.

5.3.2.2 The Hearers of the Gospel Message

In the local churches we need to know that those that are listening to the message of the gospel are human beings, who are culturally and socially conditioned. This means that their cultural and social context, conditions their hearing of the Gospel message. This would mean that those who do the preaching and the teaching of the Gospel message need to be aware that it takes place among individuals and groups who are already culturally and socially conditioned. It is impossible for the hearers of the Gospel message

to prevent themselves from the influence of their culture and social conditioning. This is a fact that is to be accepted and embraced by the preachers of the Gospel message even before the hearers themselves. If not, the preachers of the Gospel message will impose their specific cultural and social conditions on their hearers.

5.3.2.3 The Old and the New Testaments

The preachers (and/or teachers) and hearers of the Gospel message in the local churches in South Africa need to accept the fact that both the Old and the New Testaments express the revelation of God in culturally and socially conditioned languages and patterns of thought. In other words, the Bible did not fall from heaven. Rather it emerged from a particular society that had its culture and social conditions. It is a product of human beings, who though were inspired by God according to II Timothy 3:16, were still cultural and social beings. To transmit what they heard or received from God by inspiration to their own societies the authors, both prophets and apostles, used their languages and elements of their cultures. Hence there is need by both the preachers and the hearers in the local churches in South Africa to be aware of the fact that the Bible expresses God's divine revelation in a culturally and socially conditioned language and patterns of thought. When God wanted to communicate with human beings, He did not use a heavenly language, but the language they knew and understood better. He spoke through their context.

This historical context from which the Bible emerged needs to be thoroughly understood by the Bible preachers of today's multicultural world, in order to facilitate the Gospel message well.

5.3.2.4 The Intertwinement of today's Preachers, Hearers and the Scriptures

The cultures of today's preachers, today's hearers of the Gospel message and Scriptures are always intertwined, hence the need of multicultural local churches in South Africa and around the world. The point here is that, human cultures cannot be distinguished absolutely from each other. They are linked to each other by both implicit and explicit similarities. The overemphasis on differences of cultures resulted in apartheid in South

Africa under the National Party government. On the other hand, to underestimate cultural differences result in overestimating the significance of one's own culture and seeing it being superior to all others and that it should find universal acceptance. This view is well articulated by Mohabir:

To underestimate cultural difference in our present world context is to overestimate the significance of our own culture and to suggest that our own cultural modes and patterns of communication are so superior to others that they should find universal acceptance (Mohabir 1992:145).

The fact that we are culturally different should suggest that people of one culture are not complete without the other. As a matter of fact, we desperately need each other. This is so because we compliment each other in our cultural differences. We will only see this if we stop seeing each other as competitors or comparing each other. In this case, our similarities or our differences may either facilitate or hinder multiculturalism in our local churches and our beautiful country, South Africa. In the biblical world, we observe that both the Hebrew and the Greek cultures, in which the word of God is encoded, have a tremendous influence on other people's acceptance or resistance of the Gospel message. The Holy Spirit continues to use these cultures to convey God's message. At the same time, He uses the cultures of present preachers and hearers of the Gospel message no matter how different they are.

The important point here is that the Gospel message does not come in a vacuum and cannot be preached in a vacuum. Perception of two different but similar cultures is therefore absolutely necessary when doing contextualization. As long as the preacher of the Gospel message is not an angel but a human being and the target of his preaching are not angels but human beings with a culture and social conditions, it goes without saying that any serious task of Gospel preaching must be contextualized.

6.4.11 The Challenge of Multiculturalism and Equality

Even after more than ten years of democratic changes in South Africa, inequality is still tearing us apart. There are still cries in most sections of our society of unequal treatment. Inequality is escalating. People are being left out (Fakir 2006: 9). Speaking about our

country's constitution Fakir says that:

South Africans celebrate a decade under a constitution hailed the world over as an example for all: experts warn that persistent inequality and imbalance of power threaten its lofty ideals at home. The country's post-apartheid constitution, and its accompanying bill of rights, are widely seen as among the most progressive in the world, enshrining equality and protecting the rights of all groups, individuals and cultures (Fakir 2006: 9).

Our sad past of apartheid presents a vital challenge for multicultural local churches in South Africa to treat all people equally regardless of their colours and cultures. Our past cannot be the excuse not to treat God's people equally, especially if we consider Paul's teachings in II Corinthians 8:8-15, where he puts a lot of emphasis on equality. The word equality appears twice in this portion of Scripture. In this Scripture Paul uses the Greek word "isotes" which normally means "equality" but can also mean "fairness" or "justice." Equality implies treating others with fairness and with justice. In his own word, Paul says that:

I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. For you know the grace of our lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he becomes poor, as that you through his poverty might become rich.

And hear is my advice about what is best for in this matter: Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so. Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means. For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one have.

Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. Then there will be equality, as it is written: "He that gathered much did not have too much and he that gathered little did not have too little" (II Corinthians 8:8-15).

The context of this Scripture shows Paul encouraging the Greek churches to make relief collection for the poor Judean Christians. Paul saw it as a good thing for the Greeks to help, their fellow believers in Christ, even though they were in separate geographical areas. What is more important is that this principle still will holds the truth for those

local churches in South Africa that face these kind of situations in their services every Sunday. He begins by assuring them that, this is not a command but a test. The question is a test of what? It could be a test of their faith in God or perhaps a test of their love for God. One is reminded of what John the apostle says, "How can you say you love God if you do not love your brother and sister that you know and live with, when you do not see God?" Paul is seeking the evidence of their genuine love to God and their brothers and sisters in the Lord. Their giving is to be voluntary, but not in the sense that it is optional, because by the love of God they are under the obligation to share with their brothers and sisters. But it must be spontaneous and out of free will.

Paul makes his point strong by making reference to the theology of incarnation. Incarnation is all about giving and equality. God, because of His love, gave His only Son to die for us sinners. God's Son came in human body and lived among us. He became like us. In other words, He became equal to us. Though He did not cease for one minute to be God, He became equal to us or He identified with us in all our humanness except our sinful nature. He further reminds them that it was because of grace that they had what they had. In other words, they did not deserve what they now had or who they are. It was only by grace that they got what they had. For grace is free and undeserved love. Paul and his companions' desire is not to relieve others from their hard pressing poverty by causing the Greek brothers and sisters to give until they themselves are in need, for that would be merely solving one problem by creating another. He said that his desire is rather "that there might be equality (8:13) that is fairness and justice. He then continues to show them how equality can be achieved. He said that what the Greeks have should supply and meet what the Judeans are lacking. On the other hand, what the Greeks are lacking shall be supplied and be met by what the Judean brethren have (8:14). This is the principle of equality. While you receive what you do not have or are lacking you must be prepared to realize what you have should also be used to meet the lack or needs of the one giving you. While you give, you must also be prepared to receive what you are lacking from the same or another person. In other words no one person has everything or lacks everything.

Thus, Stott says that Paul puts the affluence of some alongside the want of others, and then calls for an adjustment that is an easing of want by affluence (Scott 1999:160) Paul says when all that has happened "...then there will be equality (8:14)." There will not be a situation where one will have more than he needs, while another or his fellow believers in Christ have far less or nothing.

In the context of this study, the South African local churches can make use of the good principle of equality from this portion of Scriptures. It is God's desire that equality, which is fairness and justice be abundant in His Church. All cultures and all people should be given a fair chance and space to express worship to God and be treated with justice in all the local churches of South Africa. This should take place without coercion, for Christianity is not a religion that propagates itself by force. Those cultures that are dominant in the Church should be gracious to the dominated and start giving them enough space to be expressed. Out of grace and motivated by love, those that have or used to have power, material and space should start to provide for their fellow believers who do not have or used to be denied by the old systems of our country. All these should be done so that there might be equality in the Church in South Africa. We will now sum up Paul's instructions of equality in the context of multiculturalism.

Firstly, God has provided enough material, space and opportunity for every culture to thrive and to help compliment others. If this is not happening, it is only because of the human sinful nature of selfishness. This is so because people tend to think of themselves and measure almost everything according to their own culture.

Secondly, any great disparity between the majority and minority, powerful and powerless, affluent and needy is unacceptable in the Church and before God.

Thirdly, when a situation of serious disparity arises between two or more cultures in the local church, it ought to be confronted by the biblical truth, corrected and adjusted feared in order to secure equality.

Fourthly, the Christian motive for desiring such "equality," which is fairness and justice,

is an example of loving grace and generosity learnt from Jesus Christ, who though rich, became poor so that through his poverty we might become rich.

Finally, in local churches we are to follow Jesus' example and by so doing we shall demonstrate and prove the genuineness of our love to the brethren and to God himself (Stott 1990: 160 – 161).

The equality that Paul speaks about in II Corinthians 8:13 and 14 does not refer to uniformity in all things. He is not here recommending or introducing the doctrine of absolute egalitarianism, the doctrine that teaches that all people are absolutely equal. In other words, all people are absolutely equal in IQ, abilities, talents, must receive the same salaries, wear the same clothes and live in the same houses. That is not what Paul is teaching, nor what this thesis desires to promote. But this study desires to emphasize that equality means that all have opportunity, space, time and no caste or class system in the local churches in South Africa. This view is well articulated by Stott when he writes that:

... the equality **he sets before us** a goal is relative rather than absolute. He is not recommending a total egalitarianism by which all people become precisely the same, receiving an identical income, living in an identical home, with identical furnisher, wearing identical clothes and developing an identical lifestyle. For the living God is not the lord of uniformity but of colourful diversity. True he made us equal in dignity and worth (for all share his life and bear his likeness). True also, he gives the blessings of sunshine and rain to all humankind indiscriminately (Matthew 5: 45). But he has not made us equal in ability (Stott 1990:161).

The point made by Stott that God has not made us equal in ability cannot be taken literally as it is everywhere. If you articulate the same statement in the South African context of multiculturalism, it might suggest the perpetuation of the injustices and unfairness of the past. It may also seem to support the idea that those who have wealth have more ability and through their culture can dominate others in the local churches. It may also suggest that they have different and better abilities than the poor and dominated. Unfortunately, this line of thought will want to forget that those that are today culturally powerful and have wealth, they were once favoured by the old system, while the poor and

now culturally dominated were denied the opportunity, space and time to develop their potential and prove their ability.

To achieve cultural equality, the Bible emphasizes that the powerful individuals or groups should not impose their culture or will on the church and that no local church may violate the rights of individuals or minorities. The weak and the vulnerable are carefully protected in the Scriptures. Far from exploiting the weak, powerless and the vulnerable, God's people, the Church, should be the one that loves, protects, cares and speak for them. Paul Oestreicher quoted by Stott says that:

When the electrodes are turned on, the torture victim suffers equally when the 'security' thinks they are saving free enterprise from the revolution or the revolution from reaction.... My own commitment is neither to liberalism nor to Marxist, but to a curious idea put about by a carpenter turned dissident preacher in Palestine that the test of our humanity is to be found on how we treat our enemies.... A society's maturity humanity will be measured by the degree of dignity it affords to the disaffected and the powerless (cf. Stott 1990:176).

The challenge of multiculturalism and equality in the South African local churches becomes serious when you listen to the way we communicate. When Black people talk amongst about another Black person, the conversation is punctuated by pronouns like 'he' or 'she'. But if the next person to be referred to during the same conversation happens to be a white person, the conversation is punctuated with the term 'White person.' The same applies to White people the conversation will be punctuated with 'Black man' or 'Black people', as if Blacks or Whites do not fit in the category of people if the speaker is of a different skin colour. This explains how people of different colours and cultures treat each other unequally but also how we think of each other.

The principle of equality in the multicultural local churches would challenge us not to think or speak of one another in terms of Black and White or Coloured and Indians. The principle of equality would demand that one think and speak of others as people. The moment one starts to think or speak of others by referring to skin colour, one becomes a perpetuator or victim of inequality who rejects or accepts people on the basis of their

culture or the colour of their skin. It would be wrong and against the will of God for such practices to happen amongst the rainbow people of South Africa more so in the Church. These should never happen amongst the believers. The authorized Bible translation speaks about 'no respect of a person.' This does not mean that one should not show respect to other people. The original Greek expression simply means that there is 'no acceptance of faces.' The New International Version (NIV) says that there must 'no partiality.' In other words, in the Church of God and in our attitude to people, we must give no special deference to some one because they are rich, powerful, famous or influential. Just like our God, in our dealings with each other, we must not show partiality. God is an impartial judge. He does not show favouritism whatever our cultural, racial or social backgrounds may be. In his words Job says that:

If I have denied justice to my menservants and maidservants when they had a grievance against me, what will I do when God confronts me?
What will I answer when called to account?
Did not he who made me in the womb make them?
Did not the same one form us both within our mothers (Job 31:13-15)?

Job seems to say that he and his servants have the same and equal rights before their Creator. Both their dignity and equal rights are based on the creation, the fact that they are all created in the image of God. This fact should be applied in the same spirit in the multicultural local churches. People of different colours and cultures need to know that although they are different in that respect, they are also the same by creation and in God's eyes.

The same principle is also articulated by James the apostle in his book of the New Testament in Chapter 2 verses 1-9. James appeals to the people of faith in the Lord Jesus not to show favouritism. He said if we show favouritism in the way we treat people, "... have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? (James 2:4). It is a disturbing fact that James said this to a community of believers. Where then is hope? If the very people who are commanded (not requested or suggest to) to love each other (John 15:12 and 17) are the very ones discriminating against each other

there is, therefore, little or no more hope. This is a direct opposite of what they are to be. For James says that if you show favouritism by not loving your brother and sister (neighbour) you have sinned (James 2:8-9).

5.4.1 Equality Is Not Toleration

Tolerance is not good enough for the Church of God. It can be good for people outside the Church but not in the body of Christ. If one looks at the definition of the word critically, it says it all. Firstly, it means a willingness to be patient towards people whose opinions or ways differs from one's own. This would mean that the person does not accept other people's different opinions or ways, but he is patiently and willing to accommodate them until they accept his opinions and ways. Secondly, it refers to the willingness or the power of enduring beliefs and actions of which one does not approve of. In other words, the person has will and power to put-up with another person's beliefs and actions without acceptance or approval. This would mean that the one that put-up with what he does not approve is powerful and stronger than the tolerated (*World Book Dictionary* 2001-2202). Aguinaco articulates this view clearly when he writes that:

We don't like the word or accept it. Touting tolerance as a triumph for church or culture places one group of dominant people in a good light, encourages complacency, and doesn't really acknowledge the true value of the "other." Tolerance places the tolerant, "normative" person or group in a position of superiority. Tolerance is almost like saying: You are inferior; you bother me. I don't understand your values or your culture. I don't like you, but because I am big person-or group-I, or we, will tolerate you." It is condescending and annoying to people on the receiving end. And by encouraging complacency tolerance calls for merely cosmetic and painless changes, after all-it breeds indifference. It leaves the dominant cultures as dominant and only grudgingly makes "room for the different (Aguinaco 2000:22).

A tolerant multicultural local church will finally, often after there has been a long public outcry, acknowledge the dominated group of believers, presence within its boundaries and then schedule another worship meeting in another language. In the South African context, for example, it will be IsiZulu, Sesotho, Tshivenda or any other African language mostly used in that specific area. In most cases, it will be at a time when it is least inconvenient to the White worshippers or the English worship service.

The message here is clear loud and clear. The "White" church is the real one, the important one, but we will do a good thing by tolerating, we will show some charity to those who are darker, or speak a different language, until they learn English and our ways, becoming like us (Aguinaco 2000:22).

In South Africa, what makes this situation even worse, is that in most cases the main (English) worship service facilities are not all used by the group that is tolerated. This is so for a number of reasons. Because of the disadvantages of the past they (the tolerated in most cases Black people) do not have experience or skills in sound engineering skills to play the kind of musical instruments such as piano and many others that the main church uses.

In his definition of tolerance Michael Walzer mentions four points. He says that tolerance is understood as an attitude or state of mind, would mean the following:

Firstly, these reflect the origins of religious toleration in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. There is a resigned acceptance of difference for the sake of peace. In other words, people killed one another for years and years, and then, mercifully, exhaustion set in, and toleration was called for.

Secondly, this attitude is passive, relaxed, and benignly indifferent to difference.

Thirdly, is a principled recognition that the others have rights even if they exercise those rights in an unattractive way. This is the most common of all views of tolerance.

Fourthly, is the expression of openness to others, curiosity, perhaps even respect, and a willingness to listen and sometimes to learn (Walzer 1997:10-11).

5.4.2 Understanding what the Local Church that does not tolerate Multiculturalism would do

Local churches in South Africa and their members, who do not tolerate multiculturalism but embrace it, fulfill the following:

1. The local church worshippers enjoy all the solemnity and reverence of all the cultures represented. This is worship that would be characterized with warmth, colourful cultural expressions and a sense of celebration. The implications are that all the people in the local church are embraced rather than reflecting the characteristics of one particular culture.

2. This is a local church where the spirit of community would not overwhelm the sense of individuality and a personal relationship with God. It is a local church that observes that people are one and different at the same time. This is unity in diversity.

3. It is a local church where the spirit of sacrifice for others often overcomes the sense of personal convenience, but also where the pain of what death always looks in hope to the resurrection.

4. In the South African context, it would be a church where Black people would learn to think in the language of efficiency and affirmation of their own individuality, while on the other hand White people would learn to give more priority to the language of community and family as a larger reality.

5. It is a local church where Western culture that has been hard at work to deny the pain and difficulty and even the death of the African culture would learn to face the difficult truth calmly and in hope. The African culture that has been oppressed for many years would shake off the dust, its sense of fatalism and resignation to sorrow, and start engaging in the affirmation of rights and the change of "what has always been."

6. It is a local church where the deep meaning of Christianity is discovered, restored, appreciated and practiced by all cultural groups while there is discernment and openness to reject fanatical beliefs in magic or superstitions and even materialism.

7. It is a local church where the search for multiculturalism and cultural sensitivity is welcome amongst the community members and where these do not become the end but the beginning of life eternity.

5.4.3 Equality in the Multicultural Local Church

This is a difficult subject to deal with in the Church context since to many believers and theologians equality is based on the theory of human nature, which is that we are all created in the image of God. Whether we are Black or white, we all have souls, common capacities and common needs such a food and shelter. This is true on one hand, but on the other it falls short of human cultural differences. The former description assumes that since human beings are equal because of their shared features or similarities, therefore, equality means treating them in more or less the same way. This misses another area, which is very important in human life that is culture. Human beings are the same as God's image, they share some common capacities and needs and at the same time they are different cultural beings. This would also mean that equality in the multicultural local church would mean treating them in the same way some times and differently at another time. It would further mean that they enjoy the same rights or privileges at one time and different ones at another. This view is well articulated by Bhikhu when he says that:

Human beings are at once both natural and cultural beings, sharing, a common human identity but in a culturally mediated manner. They are similar and different, their similarities and differences do not passively coexist but interpenetrate and neither is ontologically prior or morally more important. We cannot ground equality in human uniformity because the latter is inseparable from and ontologically no more important than human differences. Grounding equality in uniformity also has unfortunate sequences. It requires us to treat human beings equally in those respects in which they are similar and not those in which they are different. While granting them equality at the level of their shared human nature, we deny it at the equally important cultural level (Bhikhu 2000:239:240).

There is also a danger overemphasizing the cultural differences in the local church because it might results in separating people in different worship groups based on culture. The result is that you end up with two or three cultural congregations in one local church. This would be following the apartheid ideology of separate development. On the other

hand, if we move away overemphasize uniformity we create a problem, one which is different from the former. Bhikhu adds that:

Since human beings are supposed to be basically the same, only a particular way of life is deemed to be worthy of them, and those failing to live up to it either do not merit equality or do so only after they are suitably civilized. The idea of equality thus becomes an ideological device to mould humankind in a certain direction. A theory of equality grounded in human uniformity is both philosophically incoherent and morally problematic (Bhikhu 2000:240).

Human beings do share several capacities and needs in common, but their different cultures define or seek to meet the common needs in different ways. For example, people staying at the coast and those inland both share the same need of food. But they will each devise their own ways and means to meet the same need. At the coast, they would eat sea-food, such as, different kinds of fish, crayfish, prawns, crabs, snails and many others. Whereas in places such as the Limpopo province and Botswana that are inland, they would eat things like locusts, mashodzha (mopani-worms) and many more. The main reason why people eat different food is because people make use of what is mostly available as food in their place. Human beings are at once both similar and different. They should be treated equally at one stage and differently at another. Such a view, which grounds human equality not in sameness, but in the interplay of uniformity and difference, builds differently into the very concept of equality in the local churches and breaks away from the traditional equation of equality in the sense of sameness.

Therefore, equality in the multicultural local church would require us to take into account the similarities and differences of all people involved much more seriously. In this case, equality does not mean treating all people with different cultural backgrounds identically. Treating them identically may constitute treating them with difference or with discrimination. This is well articulated by Bhikhu when he writes that:

In a culturally homogenous society, individuals share broadly similar needs, norms, motivations, social customs and patterns of behavior. Equal rights here mean more or less the same rights, and equal treatment involves more or less identical treatment. The principle of equality is therefore relatively easy to define and apply, and discriminatory deviations from it can be identified without much

disagreement. This is not the case in a culturally diverse society. Broadly speaking equality consists in equal treatment of those judged to be equal in relevant respects. In a culturally diverse society citizens are likely to disagree on what respects are relevant in a given context, what response is appropriate to them, and what counts as their equal treatment. Furthermore, once we take cultural differences into account, equal treatment would mean not identical but differential treatment, raising the question as to how we can ensure that it is really equal across cultures and does not serve as a cloak for discrimination or privilege (Bhikhu 2000:242).

To his question, of how we can ensure that different treatment is really equal across cultures and does not serve to discriminate or privilege one at the expense of another, there is no easy straight forward answer. A general rule or answer, however, would apply in the multicultural local churches. That different treatment of different individuals or cultural groups is equal only if they represent different ways of realizing the same right, opportunity, or respect and if as a result of the different treatment none of the persons in the local church is said to be better-off or worse-off compared to others. There is no definite way to resolve or answer this question conclusively, since multicultural application of equality in the local church will always remain vulnerable and questionable to the opposite charges of privileging or discriminating against others.

6.4.12 Skills for Advancing Multicultural Equality

One of the most important and most lacking quality in the South African local churches is the skill of handling the challenge of multiculturalism. In their discussion of the ten most important concepts for successful leadership in global management, Harris and Moran make mention of cultural synergy amongst others. They define cultural synergy as a concept that means to build upon the actual differences amongst the world's people for everyone's progress and to complete tasks by cooperation. It emphasizes similarities and integrates differences to enrich human activities and systems. By combining the best among the different cultures, a greater whole than the sum of the individual parts can be created (Harris and Moran 1991:11). The following skills are important in all South African multicultural local churches if they are to achieve equality in their specific contexts:

5.4.4.1 Respect

Certain cultures regard age as important for communicating respect. Among the Black people in South Africa, age is associated with knowledge and wisdom. When you refer to a person as old that is regarded as a compliment and shows respect. But to say the same thing to most White people means the opposite. In this regard, speech, silence and other gestures as well as the role of eye contact and personal questions need to be understood in their specific context. Many Black job seekers in this country have been treated unjustly due to lack of respect of their cultures by the employers. Take for instance, the interview situation. When an interviewee walks in to the room and sees an empty chair, he would sit down immediately being before offered the opportunity to do so by members of the panel. Throughout the interview he will look down so as to avoiding eye contact. Making direct eye contact amongst most Black people is regarded as a sign of disrespect. The interview panel members, who are Whites or Blacks who have assimilated the Western culture, would give him lower marks than his competitors for lack of respect or manners (sitting down without permission) and for not keeping or maintaining eye contact. This innocent soul would be thought as a person who is not honest and is hiding something.

5.4.4.2 Tolerance of ambiguity

This refers to the ability to react to new, different and at times, unpredictable situations with little visible discomfort or irritation. Lack of tolerance of ambiguity becomes clearer in the case of food, where those who come from the coast, for example, look down upon food like mopani-worms. They forget that food like snails and crabs are equally horribly to others who are not used to them. In a multicultural society we respond with calmness, knowing that we eat different foods to fulfill the same objective. Such situations are bound to occur in a multicultural context. What matters most are not the differences, but how we react to those differences and what we say about our brothers and sisters.

5.4.4.3 Being non-judgmental

This means the ability to withhold personal or cultural judgment and remain objective until one has enough information about another's opinion or action. In multicultural churches in South Africa things happen that can cause one to be judgmental and, therefore, offend others. A good example would be something like breast-feeding a baby in the worship service. It seems to be embarrassing to people of other cultures when a woman starts feeding a baby in or during the Worship service. It would seem as if breasts are associated with sexuality. From another cultural point of view breasts are associated with pride, especially amongst young maidens and nursing mothers. To the young maidens, their firm breasts are like a trophy of their virginity. Amongst the vhaVenda traditions there is a dance called "Domba" where young girls or teens walk a distance of about three kilometers to the chief's kraal with their breasts uncovered. In fact, they walk through the village. To the Western cultures, the way they dress themselves when they go to perform the domba dance is regarded as being 'half naked'. Yet amongst their people they are seen as properly dressed. Nursing mothers would take out the breast anytime, anywhere when the baby wants to suck. Sometimes if the baby is crying some men who are totally strangers would even suggest that the mother should feed the baby. In turn, the mother will comfortably feed the baby without being concerned about covering up her breast. This could happen in a taxi, during a public meeting, inside the store, in the bank queue and even during the worship service on Sunday morning. In this situation breasts have nothing to do with sexuality, but they are simply a feeding organ. In the former case of girls, it is the pride of young maidens to show off their firm breasts, which are a sign of her virginity. This also brings pride to her parents who will view this as an indication that their daughter has not brought shame to them by engaging in sexual intercourse before marriage. The former shows the pride of a woman who has born a child. This is so because barrenness is a sign of a curse, not only to her but her entire family. So, when one lacks this kind of information, it is very easy to judge and condemn others.

In general, we need to withhold judgment whenever we observe different deeds until we have enough information about other people, especially those of different cultures.

5.4.4.4 Personalizing one's observations

This is the ability to realize that one's knowledge and opinions are strictly personal and not necessarily valid for everyone else. We need to understand that some knowledge that we have acquired in life is relative and not absolute. Such knowledge cannot be universalized but it is important for local consumption. For example, in South Africa most if not all, White people use knives and forks to eat their food, whilst Blacks as well as Indians use their hands mostly. On the other hand, there some communities of Eastern origin would use chop sticks. None of this is better than the other, and no method should be said to be of business use because business is done with people of all cultures. The answer here is not to allow rigidity but to demand flexibility. This would mean using the right means at the right place at the right time with the right people.

5.4.4.5 Relating to people

This is the ability to be concerned about people as well as the task itself. There has been a tendency among the Christians circles to be more concerned with the task (the preaching of the Gospel) and a great deal less with people themselves. Here the witnesses of the Gospel message are only concerned that they have preached in so many places, to so many people. They are not concerned as to how to relate to the people first of all, in order to communicate the Gospel message in an effective way. Jesus did not go about preaching without relating to people. We have many examples of Jesus relating to people in the Holy Scriptures. He visited people in their private homes, ate their food, attended their weddings and funerals, attended their religious and social gatherings, healed their sick, fed their hungry, spent time speaking to prostitutes and tax collectors, and many more examples. On many occasions, He mixed with the crowds. Building or developing relationship with people of different cultures is an important and required skill in A multicultural local churches. If we do not bother to build relationships with people we preach to we are either using them as mere tools to, enrich ourselves or we regard them as inferior to ourselves.

5.4.4.6 Empathy

This is the ability to put yourself in another's shoes. This is well articulated by Bhikhu

when he says:

We can hardly be said to respect a person if we treat with contempt or abstract away all that gives meaning to his life and makes him the kind of a person he is. Respect for a person therefore involves locating him against his cultural backgrounds, sympathetically entering into his world of thought and interpreting his conduct in terms of its system of meaning (Bhikhu 2000:240-241).

5.4.4.7 Persistence

The ability to hang in there until the task is complete or the objective is reached. For any local church to go the way of multiculturalism great patience and perseverance is needed not only for members, but more so for the leaders who will now and then be misunderstood and criticized by those from within and those from without (Dadoo et al 1997:5-6).

5.5 The Challenge of Multiculturalism and Communication

The local church is a place where a lot of communication takes place. It is a place where people of different cultures come together to communicate both to God and their brothers and sisters in faith. Communication in the local church takes place at different levels and between different people of different backgrounds and cultures. It takes place between two people or a group of people, through the singing of songs and the preaching of the Word of God. There is verbal and non-verbal communication that also takes place between members of the same local church. For the local church to fulfill its mandate of preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all the people of God in its community and beyond, it must strive to be clear and competent on how to communicate, especially in a multicultural context. There must clear and well defined ways of communication. In order to achieve that, one needs to define what we mean by "communication."

Trying to establish a common definition of the term "communication" poses a mammoth task since paging from one book to the other in the field of communication reveals mostly different definitions. There are many definitions. It would be impossible to capture all of them in this research paper. In their book titled, *The Functions of Human Communication: A Theoretical Approach*, Dance and Larson mention that there Are 126

(one hundred and twenty six) definitions of the word communication (Dance et al 1976:4). Since then, many more people, particularly scholars of this field, have formulated many more definitions. Before one defines it, one should start by looking at the origin of this term.

5.5.1 The original meaning of communication

The word communication originates from the Latin word “**realizing**” which has two major significations (a) making common or imparting and (b) taking one’s audience into one’s confidence (Gepp et al 1935:102). On the other hand, Wederspahn says that the word comes from the Latin word “communicare” which means to share or make common (Wederspahn 2000:46). Hesselgrave says that it comes from the Latin word “communis” which means common. The three authors seem to differ on the original meaning of the Latin word. What is important is that they all agree on “commonness”. In this context cross-cultural communication in the local churches is far more challenging. The speaker needs to have skills to communicate the message in such a way that it will send a common understanding to all the people present. If the speaker of the Gospel message is able to establish a common cultural point of departure with the audience it will make communication flow relatively easy. In this view Steinberg says that:

The coupling of ‘making common’ implies not so much reducing to one, but achieving mutual understanding through ‘imparting’ ideas (Steinberg 2002:3).

5.5.2 Definition of Communication in a Multiculturalism Context

We shall endeavor to limit the definition of communication to the context of building relationships in a multicultural situation. Most of the time in Church is spent with people communicating with each other. Information is shared from person to person. Build relationships begins when information is shared by the preacher from behind the pulpit with the group or community of believers. Jowett says that communication is simply the sharing of information (Jowett’s 2000:878) Gowers agrees with Jowett when he writes that, communication is about the transfer of information (Gowers 1988:3).

We will do well in our desire to define communication if we keep in mind that

communication in the local church has to do mostly with the expression of the Bible message. Therefore, this means that the speaker or the preacher should be able to interpret the Bible message in such a way that he would be able to impart it to the listeners or recipients in a clear and understandable way. The preacher must bring all the listeners to a common and mutual understanding. If the end result is not common and mutual understanding, therefore, communication cannot be said to have taken place. This does not mean that the recipients must agree with the speaker, but that the message communicated should be clear to the listeners so that they can agree or disagree. Dance quoted by Steinberg articulates this view in his definition when he says that, the concept of communication is often reduced to mean the process of expression and interpretation of the message, the process of interpreting ideas between communicators by arriving at mutual understanding on a certain subject matter (cf. Steinberg 2002:3).

Steinberg gave three useful definitions of communication in her book of communication studies. She refers to them as technical definition, process or meaning centered definition and transactional definition. The three definitions are the **works** of different groups of theorists who emphasize the different views of communication. They all are useful in this context of communication in the multicultural local churches in South Africa. They are as follows:

5.5.2.1 Technical Definition

Communication from this point of view can be defined very simply as sending and receiving messages, or the transmission of messages from one person to another. The theorists who emphasize this point of view of communication are mostly concerned with how accurately and efficiently messages can be transmitted from one person to another or group through channels such as the telephone, television and radio. These theorists try to identify ways and means of increasing the clarity and accuracy of the message and to promote efficient communication. Communication is here seen as a linear or one-way sequence of events that goes from one person to another or group through channels such as telephone, the television and radio.

There is no doubt that the local churches make use of this means of communication. Some local churches own radio stations, television stations or perhaps just a channel or time slot in these media. Telephone communication is used by almost every local church today. Both rural and urban churches are now making use of this means, especially with the introduction of mobile phones a few years ago. Some counseling is also taking place over the telephone. The question that remains to be answered is whether the church users of these wonderful channels of communication are equipped or not, especially in the context of multicultural communication. It must be noted that this kind of communication goes beyond the borders of our local churches, even if our local churches are homogeneous. Things like tapes (both audio and visual) CD's and DVD's of preachers are now available almost everywhere.

The most unfortunate thing is that a large number of those that are using this channel are not even aware that they are being listened to by a large number of audiences that have or belong to different cultural backgrounds. If they are aware, it would be right to say that they do not care about their audience, but only with **what they** preach and the money that they make. This is justified by the kind of preaching that one hears on our radio stations or view on our television channels both the SABC and the privately owned stations such as Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN), God Channel and many others. Some of the messages that are broadcast from overseas for our consumption are not even worth listening to from the African point of view because they are only fit for the American or European cultures. This is not referring to the message or the word of God since it fits all contexts or cultures, but to the way in which the message is presented. It is preached in such away that it does not help but convert all others into becoming Western Christians when in fact they are Africans. Perhaps they do fit those Africans who believe that anything that has to do with Christianity should be communicated and done in a Western way and to those in the West that still believe that in order for one to be a Christian they should adopt the Western culture. If that is not the case, then the Church has an assignment to learn to communicate the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ using these channels of communication with accuracy and efficiency taking into consideration all cultural contexts, in order to bring meaning to all its members. This introduces us to

the second definition.

5.5.2.2 Process or Meaning-Centered Definition

Communication from this point of view is defined as a dynamic process of exchanging meaningful messages. In addition to the transmission and sending of messages, communication would also involve the interpretation and meaning of the same messages. In other words, the communicator is not only interested in sending or transmitting the message, but he/she also makes sure that they are interpreted so that the recipients would hear or receive what is intended or communicated. The theorists of this view consider communication as a human phenomenon and the central aspect of human existence. Human being ability to communicate distinguishes them from all other forms of life on the planet earth. Communication is fundamental to human beings (Hesselgrave 1991:27). The theorists of meaning-centered theory put their emphasis on issues such as what makes people want to communicate in the first place: how they give meaning to each other's messages when they receive them: what happens between the communicator and recipients during the communication process **and how** human language (both verbal and non-verbal) is used to create and exchange meaningful messages. In short, their main emphasis is in the interaction between those that are participating in communication.

The understanding of every message preached and received in every local church by individual members will be influenced by the cultural background of each person. In his definition of culture, Shaw points out that culture is the body of knowledge shared by the members of a specific group of people (Shaw 1988:25-26). When situations arise (good or bad) that knowledge takes the form of the rules (law) which govern the way in which individuals or the group relates to, interpret and give meaning to their environment (Spradley 1987:3-4). This definition of culture pays attention to the fact that this knowledge that is shared is used to interpret given meaning and evaluate every message that is received. The shared knowledge also regulates the way in which individuals and groups would relate to one another in the context of multicultural local churches, hence the need of the knowledge and understanding of different cultural groups by the communicators of the Gospel message in the specific given local churches. This tells us

that the meaning-centered view is even more important to those that are communicators in the Church of God and those wanting to fulfill the Great Commission in Matthew 28. The interpretation and the meaning that people give to the message they receive is culturally attached. This is so because they were not born in a vacuum. As much as the preacher has interpreted the meaning of the portion of Scripture that he/she is reading, which of course would differ from another preacher from another culture, so is the recipient.

We are not here referring to the truth of the word of God as it stands, but to the ways and means in which the truth is communicated. For example, if the preacher is preaching from the book of Ephesians where Paul wrote that:

Wives submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the Lord is the head of the church as Christ is the head of the church... Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her...

In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself...

However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband (Ephesians 5:22-33).

The truth of this text is that husbands must love their wives and wives must submit or respect their husbands. This message is very clear and understandable. No one would have a problem understanding what the Bible or the preacher is saying. A problem may arise when the preacher starts to explain how wives must submit or respect their husbands and how husbands must love their wives. This is because the "how" part of submitting or respecting the husbands and the "how" part of loving the wives differs from one culture to another. In a multicultural local church the words 'submit or respect' and 'love' would be interpreted and given different meanings by different people of different cultures. It would be so even though they all agree that wives must submit or respect and husbands must love. The moment the communicator of the Gospel message starts to say that, husbands must give their wives flowers, open the car-door for their wives, let them go through the door (in or out) first, look them straight in the eyes when they talk to them,

kiss them when they go out and when they come back. he is no longer communicating the 'Gospel truth' but 'cultural truth.' It must be clear that there is nothing wrong with such. but only when we start to impose it on others and judge those that do not do so. The Gospel truth is 'to love' but as to how to love comes from one's cultural background. Therefore, the respecting or the loving ways of all cultures represented in specific local churches should be expressed. There is no culture that is better than another. In the multicultural local churches there must be awareness and sensitivity for such things as this, otherwise one culture will be promoted above others.

So far we have focused our attention on meaning, but the point we are discussing here also makes mention of the term process. This is an interesting and challenging concept. Because it shows that communication is like a flowing river but not a dam. Communication is changing every time. It never stops to change nor does it remain the same forever. As communication continues to change, the communicator and the recipients also change. In the communication process, we change others as they change us. In her own words Steinberg articulates this view when she writes:

... Communication as a process means that it is not a fixed, static thing; rather, it is dynamic, never-ending and ever-changing. It does not have a beginning or an end nor does it follow a fixed sequence of events.

The use of the term process also tells us that communication is characterized by continuous evolution and change. We change others and are changed by them when we communicate. All the communication encounters you have had in the past, as well as all the information, ideas and opinions you have gathered, gradually change you and your behavior, and consequently the way you communicate with others (Steinberg 1999:5).

5.5.2.3 Transactional Definitions

Transactional communication is a process of exchanging messages and negotiating meaning to establish and maintain quality relationships (cf. Verderber 1990). Transactional communication is not only an interactive process of exchanging meaningful messages, but it is also a transaction between the participants, namely, the communicator and the recipients, during which a relationship develops between them. A transactional communication process is one in which the people communicating are mutually

responsible for the outcome of the communication encounter as they transmit information, create meaning and evoke responses. In this definition, a relationship between the participants is the focal point. The participants take responsibility in a way of being sensitive to one another. They make an attempt to know what the message they are communicating would mean to the next person. They take care to select words that convey their message, not only for their own purposes (the communicator) but for their recipients' sake. This is exactly how it should be with the communicators (preachers) of the Gospel message of Christ in the multicultural local churches. The Bible tells us not only to look after our own interests but those of others.

The focus is on the quality of relationship that develops between the participants, as well as on the transfer, interpretation and meaning of the messages. In this view communication becomes a reciprocal process in which meaning is negotiated through the exchange of messages. There is openness, in order to hear other people's views and the meanings they attach to the message being received. Here people are not afraid to listen to how other interprets the message nor do they intimidate others by demonizing their interpretation or meaning which differs from theirs. The way we communicate in the multicultural context will determine whether we build new relationships or maintain them once we already have (Steinberg 1999:3-6).

Reflecting on all the definitions of communication that we so carefully selected for the purpose of fulfilling the objective of this thesis, there is no doubt that communication is a big challenge that multicultural local churches face in South Africa and elsewhere in the world. This is so, especially to those churches that are responding to both the command of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ that the Gospel should be preached to nations, that is all people of different colour, languages, and cultures. They are also responding to the challenge that South Africa is no longer the same as it used to be during the apartheid era, which was reinforced by the pillars of apartheid government such as the Group Areas Act, whereby people were restricted to particular residential area against their own will only because of the colour of their skin. As people are mixing in almost all spheres of life in South Africa, the Church cannot remain an exception hence the challenge of

transactional communication. This challenge is well articulated by the words of Kraemer. writes:

One of the most important effects of this trend in motion by the attempt to rediscover the marching orders of the Church is the new awakening of evangelistic responsibility to the world in many churches. But here bewilderment begins. At the very moment a church commences to turn away from the introversion in which it is steeped by its acceptance of being primary established institution, and looks at its real field, the world, a new realism awakens. Innumerable questions immediately assail such a Church such question as: what am I? To what purpose am I? Am I fulfilling this purpose? Where and how do I live? In a ghetto, or in living contact with the world? Does the world listen when I speak to it, and if not why not? Am I really proclaiming the Gospel, or am I not? Why has such a wall of separation risen between the world and what I must stand for? Do I know the world in which people live? Or do I not? Why I am evidently regarded as a residue of a world that belongs irrevocably to the past? How can I find a way to speak again with relevancy and authority transmitting "the words of internal life" entrusted to me?

A midst the welter of such questions engendered by a newly awakened apostolic consciousness, communication has become a problem with which the churches everywhere are wrestling. Apparently one could express it as well in a different way and inquire after the best and most appreciate methods of evangelism. But that is not right. In that case we would have done better by giving to our discussion the title "The Problem of Evangelism." The word "communication" puts the problem in a far wider and deeper setting (Kraemer 1956:10-11).

The awakening of apostolic responsibility in the Church of Jesus Christ to both the universal and local churches brings the challenge of multiculturalism awareness and sensitivity into focus. As a matter of fact, these ministries cannot be fulfilled unless through proper communication. Perhaps, time has come when the Church needs to take seriously the gift of mankind, culture, because every communication takes place in and is influenced by culture. Communication sums up the task of the Church in the world. The Church is commissioned to communicate, that is to preach or teach the gospel message to all people from different cultures. Packer summarizes the communication of the Gospel by in one word 'teach.' He says that they should fulfill their ministry of communicating

the Gospel by teaching.

It is by teaching that the gospel preacher fulfills his ministry. To teach the gospel is his first responsibility: to reduce it to its simplest essentials, to analyze it point by point, to fix its meaning by positive and negative definition, to show how each part of the message links up with the rest and to go on explaining it till he is quite sure that his listeners have grasped it. And therefore when Paul preached the gospel formally or informally, in the synagogue or in the streets, to Jews or to Gentiles, to a crowd or to one man, what he did was to teach-engaging attention, capturing interest, setting out the facts, explaining their significance, solving difficulties, answering objections, and showing how the message bears on life. Luke's regular way of describing Paul's evangelistic ministry is to say that he disputed, or reasoned (dialegomai: RSV renders "argue"), or taught, or persuaded (i.e. sought to carry his hearer's judgments). And Paul himself refers to his ministry among the Gentiles as primarily a task of instruction: "unto me... was the grace given, to preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery ..." Clearly, in Paul's view, his first fundamental job as a preacher of the gospel was to communicate knowledge – to get gospel truth fixed in men's minds (Packer 1961: 48 – 49).

It is through this kind of communication that cultural differences are dealt with, unasked questions are answered and the Gospel message is shown to respond not only to be spiritual but also to cultural matters and practical issues of life.

5.5.3 Communicating in a Multicultural Context

Communicating the gospel in a multicultural local church is a serious challenge. A major part of the difficulty is that the focus and styles of communication are strongly influenced by the deeply held cultural perceptions and values. The parties involved in communicating with each other sometimes take it for granted and rely on naturally shared assumptions (which is very deceiving) about what to communicate to whom and when, where and how. In the absence of a common set of cultural values and assumptions, miscommunication is frequently the result (Wederspahn 2000:46). This problem is

caused because communication takes place in a particular and specific context. Communication does not take place in a void. People always communicate within a situation or setting (Steinberg 1999:67). Therefore, communicators of the gospel message need to take into account the situation they find themselves ministering in, they need to adjust their preaching or teachings of the gospel accordingly.

In the context of multicultural local churches, the communicator shows wisdom in acknowledging the fact that people from different cultural backgrounds have their own rules of the game and different expectations. This view is well articulated in the words of Steinberg when she writes that:

Each culture has its own rules and expectations about what is appropriate in communication. For example, too much familiarity or informality, such as calling people by their first names in public is simply not acceptable in some cultures and could result in the audience labeling you as an incompetent speaker. In South Africa as in many other parts of the world, many of the audiences you may be called upon to address will include people of different cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds. Consider the following possibilities: a minister giving a sermon to a culturally mixed congregation, a political candidate soliciting votes from a racially mixed audience, or a teacher addressing the parents of a culturally and racially diverse school. Public speakers cannot afford to overlook their listener's cultural values and customs. They also need to remember that not only do the meanings attached to gestures, facial expression and other nonverbal behaviors may vary from culture to culture, speakers have learned to their cost that it is not difficult to insult someone from a different culture by unintentionally using gestures which the other interprets as offensive (Steinberg 1999:69).

The overlooking of the cultural values of the multicultural local church by the preacher is a sign by intention or not by intention of ethnocentrism. Ethnocentrists are people who hold the belief that their own nation, culture or group is superior to all other nations, cultures and groups in the whole world. They identify with their own nation, cultures or group and also see its values, beliefs and customs as absolutely right and universal. In the Church, they also see their values, beliefs, knowledge, behaviour, attitudes and norms as being Christian and those of all other nations, cultures and groups as wrong and unnatural. They are also viewed as being demonic or devilish in practicing their customs

and cultures within the Christian cycles.

Fighting against the negative side of ethnocentrism will demand that multicultural local church members and the leaders within them must have a biblical view point of Christ and also of culture. Having the knowledge of only one of the two may result in disaster. We are not trying to put culture on the same level with Christ as some people may choose to read so. What is said here is simply that we need to recognize that every culture has some elements of the divine order of God and that at the same time there are satanic elements of rebellion. Each culture has potential for the revelation of God's truth in it.

This is a challenge for communicators of the Gospel message of Christ in the multicultural local churches of South Africa. We can all agree that calling people by their first names in public is simply not acceptable in some cultures. This is true for many cultures around the world. For example, you do not call people by their first names unless they are your peers or younger than yourself in the African culture. Among the Vhavenda ethnic group of South Africa in the Limpopo Province, to show respect you have to prefix the word "Vho" in front of the name of the person you are referring to or calling, especially if the person is your senior or is married. The word "Vho" is in plural form but it is used even if you are referring to one person, for the following reasons:

Firstly, it should be because the person you are addressing is married. Even if you are talking to him or her alone, you address him or her in plural form. This is so even in the absence of the other partner. He or she is no longer single but a married person. Therefore, if you address him or her you are also addressing the other partner. In other words when you speak or address one partner you also have to acknowledge the other partner even in absentia, hence the word "Vho" in plural form. This agrees perfectly with the scriptures. Jesus responding to the question put forward to him by the Pharisees in relation to divorce said that:

For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and the two will become one flesh so they are no longer two but one. Therefore what God has joined together let man not separate (Mark 10:7-9).

This would mean that if the person's name is Mashudu Mudau, from the day he or she gets married, to show respect, you stop calling him or her Mashudu or Mudau because that will be showing disrespect, not only to him or her, but to the other partner as well. From the day he/she gets married you start referring to him/her as Vho-Mashudu Mudau. You can also drop the first name (Mashudu) and only refer to him or her as Vho-Mudau (using the family name). In this way you are showing respect to both the person you are speaking to and the other partner present or absent.

Secondly "Vho" can also be applied to an unmarried person who is grown up, especially to persons who have assumed positions of responsibility. For example, this would apply to person enthroned as a chief of the village, ordained as a pastor of the local church, teacher at the school, to mention but a few. It is even more compelling if the concerned person is to exercise authority over you or you part of the group under his/her jurisdiction.

Calling someone by the family name is contrary to the majority of Western cultures. They prefer to call each other by first names to show or express that they are friends. To call someone by his/her last name (family name) indicates the distance between the two of you. For example, an employee would not call his/her boss by first name.

The important point here is that those who are labouring for the Lord Jesus, in the multicultural local churches, need to be sensitive to all different cultures represented in their context. They need to understand that the meaning attached to the name, first or last in their culture is not the same as in other cultures. This fact refers to negative or positive meaning. They also need to acknowledge that it is a fact that people are different as far as culture. This view is clearly articulated by Cleary when she writes:

The specific knowledge and beliefs that forms the context of a particular culture differ from those of other cultures. As a result different groups have different values and different patterns of behavior. The greater the differences the harder communication becomes and the more likely it is that there will be misunderstanding and misperceptions. The communicators are on unfamiliar territory,

and have to take greater risks in attempting to create common understanding. Strongly held attitudes and values may be challenged and may have to be re-examined. All of this is painful for the participants, as they attempt, through false starts, retracing of sentences and frequent misunderstanding to create a shared meaning (Cleary 2003:28-29).

It goes without saying that communication in the multicultural local churches will cause pains to the members as well as the communicators of the Gospel message. The pains of inconvenience, however, should not always be experienced by only one group of people in the local church context. All groups of people represented in the local church should, from time to time, feel that they need to make some adjustments to make the environment conducive to all other cultures. This would happen if the leaders take risks to challenge all cultures to realign themselves to the word of God, the Bible, so that there is some common ground of understanding in the Church. Some bible-believing people argue that it is not important to consider people's different cultures in the Church but only the Bible. They argue that this is because they view all different cultures as the products of the sinful nature of mankind. This argument presents itself in what is called the high view of the Bible and low view of culture. Others would argue that culture is very important and guides the preacher in his preaching. This view is what is called the high view of culture and low view of the Bible. Both arguments do not agree with the spirit of this research. The argument presented in this research focuses on both the high view of the Bible and high view of the culture. The other two views are not balanced in their approach.

In his book, *The Clash between Christianity and Cultures*, Mc Gavran addresses the problem of high and low views in a logical and biblical way. He mentions that for the average Christian, the question comes down to choosing one of the four possible options namely:

1. A high view of the Bible and a low view of culture.
2. A high view of culture and a low view of the Bible.
3. A low view of the Bible and a low view of culture.
4. A high view of the Bible and a high view of culture (Mc Gavran 1974:54).

“High view of the Bible” means that the entire Bible – the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments – is the word of God. It is authoritative and demands faith and obedience to all its declaration. High view of culture means that each culture is reasonable given the specific recognition and respect from circumstances in which it developed. This does not mean that all the components of a given culture should be regarded as right, but only one should understand that the situation in which it developed can be regarded as reasonable.

The clash that Mc Gavran is referring to is not necessarily between Christianity and culture as such, but between some specific (evil) components found in every culture against Christianity. There are good components in every culture around the world that fit well in the Christian faith as well as bad ones. Hence, it is important for the Christian Church and its leaders, particularly in the South African context, to take the fourth option from Mc Gavran’s list, high view of the Bible and high view of culture. The other three options will create serious problems in multicultural communication of the Gospel of Christ.

5.5.4 Barriers to Multicultural Communication

Going through a number of communication literatures one is forced to conclude that there are at least seven major barriers to effective multicultural communication. These barriers will negatively affect effective communication everywhere, and anywhere especially in the multicultural setting. These are the very things that the Church in South Africa should guard against at this critical time when people who had been divided for a long time are now coming together for the first time to worship their King and Lord, Jesus Christ. These barriers have the potential to cause some of us to even believe that it is not possible for people of different cultural backgrounds to worship together in one local church. If in the business world, in the political world, in different sporting disciplines, many people can live and work together, the Church, which should be the main agent of social change, must take a lead in this regard. The five barriers of effective multicultural communication are as follows:

5.5.4.1 Ethnocentrism

This refers to the tendency by some people to view their own culture as supreme in terms of priority and worth. Although it is important that people value and be proud of their cultural heritages, they must guard against a tendency to see their culture as being superior to all other cultures (Cleary 2003:30).

When this happens, a lot of dissatisfaction can arise amongst other cultures because they would have judged negatively on the basis of their culture. Ethnocentrists always think that their culture is always right and all others are always wrong. The Church in the African continent has first hand experience with this attitude. When the missionaries came to Africa, many years ago, almost everything believed and practiced by African people was judged to be wrong, condemned and associated with evil or evil spirits and the kingdom of darkness, while on the other hand, almost everything of the West was associated with light, godliness and good. This included the simple act of greeting, modes of eating, how marriage is conducted, and many things like names. Many of us ended up with English names such as John, Rachel, Prince or Princess because we were required to have the so called "Christian names" and because African names such as Ntshengedzeni, Hlangwani, Hulisani, and Nyimani were considered "Heathen names." However, today, things are different. There is no longer the issue of Christian names versus heathen names. The moment you introduce yourself by an African name, you hear people say "Oh, how am I going to remember this?" At the same time if your second name happens to be English, Afrikaans, Latin, Portuguese, you hear the same person saying "Oh that sounds better." That would mean that English or Afrikaans names are better than African names or the person concerned views it not necessary to learn to pronounce these names because they are from inferior culture compared to his/her. This tendency should be avoided at all cost in the Church of Jesus Christ, more so in the multicultural local churches. All people (believers) should see themselves as equals in the local church and before the eyes of God, irrespective of their different cultures.

5.5.4.2 Verbal Codes

This refers to a person from a particular culture that conceives an idea and “encodes” it in a verbal message and then transmits it to a person who has a different cultural background (Wederspahn 2000:46). Encoding involves the utilization of mind and body to construct the message, which previously existed only in the form of ideas and impulses within the source into some kind of a coded system (Hesselgrave 1991:41).

The encoding process includes considering the status and background of the recipient (friend, parents, boss, child, and so on) and selecting the words or gestures most likely to be understood accurately (Wederspahn 2000:46). This process is normally done without thinking consciously about it.

The challenge comes when the message is sent or communicated in a multicultural context, where the communicator’s message is filtered through a different set of beliefs, values, attitudes, perceptions and assumptions. In this case it is most likely for communication breakdown to occur. This is so because the second person will receive the message and decodes it, in order to fully grasp the idea and thought intended by the speaker. The problem is that both the encoding and the decoding are within the reference of one’s own culture. Therefore, through this process of encoding and decoding the message as intended by the communicator gets distorted. This can be a serious barrier of communication in the multicultural local churches.

5.5.4.3 Nonverbal Codes

The use of nonverbal codes is a major barrier to communication for they are a serious cause of misunderstanding. The second major barrier to cross-cultural communication is due to cultural differences in the use of “body language” (Wederspahn 2000:50). It is important to understand the impact of nonverbal communications on multicultural roles and relationships because a great deal of valuable information is sent and received on the nonverbal channel, especially in high context societies. How people feel about themselves and others, how they reveal their emotions, motivations and intentions and how they signal their status and power are mostly transmitted nonverbally. To understand these messages and respond to them accordingly, firstly, you need to be aware

of the nature of nonverbal communications. Secondly, you need to have adequate observation skills for detecting the unspoken words. Thirdly, you need to know the meaning of the culturally specific signals and gestures (Wederspahn 2000:50).

Ignorance or unwillingness to learn and observe cultural signals and gestures of others has become a serious stumbling block to the preaching of the Gospel in multicultural settings and in cross border preaching. Words of Jesus in Matthew 28:19-20 demand that we even learn difficult things such as cultural non-verbal codes.

5.5.4.4 Cultural Stereotypes

The word stereotype as defined by the Oxford Dictionary is an idea or character that is standardized in a conventional form without individuality (Howkins 1992: 801). In the cultural context, it is where an assumption is made that all members of a particular culture are alike. This results in failure to recognize the individuality of people, within a certain culture (Cleary ed. 2003:31). Simply because one has experience with one or two people of a specific culture, one should not conclude that every person in that culture is the same as the ones he or she has met before. This assumption will cause one to be prejudiced in dealing with others. In his definition of the word stereotype Jandt says:

... is the broader term commonly used to refer negative or positive judgments made about individuals based on any observable or believed group membership (Jandt 1995: 53).

Stereotypes as one of the barriers of multicultural communication hinder communication in at least three ways:

- i. They cause people to assume that a widely held belief is true when it may not be. For example, the belief that women are ornaments; Black people are dumb and lazy; Jews are cunning; Muslims are religious fanatics and South African Whites are racists.
- ii. That a widely held belief about a group in a particular culture is true of any one individual within it. For example, because in the time past Afrikaners dominated the South African politics by excluding others, it does not mean that every Afrikaners are oppressive although many of them were at one time.

- iii. Cultural stereotypes lead to negative assessments of innocuous events. For example, if you see any Jew and you become suspicious of treachery even if the person were to declare something faithfully (Dadoo et al 1997: 30).

5.5.4.5 High versus Low Context

In this case the problem in multicultural communication is caused by cultural differences in the focus of communication itself.

In high-context societies, the context (the external settings and the cultural commonalities) in which the communication is taking place carries most of the meaning. The location, the surrounding situation, the occasion plus the relationship status, and roles of the people involved determine, to a great extent, what can be said to whom and when and how. Messages generally are implicit, symbolic, subtle and indirect. They often rely on unspoken understandings, hints social rituals, and nonverbal cues. The focus on the context is analogous to a floodlight to broadly illuminate the scene in order to see all the surrounding details (Wederspahn 2000:48).

In this case, for one to answer the question at hand, one has to first of all narrate what happened before, what is asked (explain the background) and there after answer the question. If you are not acquainted to this form of communication, you might as well think that the person is wasting time. Statements such as "Do not beat around the bush," "What is the point?" or "Get to the point" and "What is the bottom line?" and many more are common to people who are involved in multicultural settings. If such statements are mentioned in the low-context situation, they carry a different meaning as compared to the high-context situation.

Wederspahn describes the low-context thus:

... low-context cultures focus intensely on the context of the content of the communication. In this culture, the facts, data, concrete information, numbers, dates, and unambiguous words carry most of the meaning. Communications generally are simple, explicit, precise and direct. Message content is usually organized in a logical linear way. Good communicators are clear and straightforward. There is much reliance on written documents and contracts. This type of communication is like using a spotlight to brightly illuminate a limited area in order to see small details (Wederspahn 2000:48).

This is probably the greatest barrier of cross-cultural communication. However, there is a serious danger in viewing cultures in this way that is, dividing them into categories. This is because this might mean that people in the high-context communication category are not organized in a logical and linear way. This would be misleading because communication in the high-context is organized and is logical in its particular context in a way that cannot be compared with another context in another culture. Take it out of its context, it becomes disorganized and lacks logic. How can any community of people have communication without facts, data, concrete information, numbers, and dates as is the case with Wederspahn who excludes them in his list of the high-context societies? All these points mentioned by Wederspahn are included in the high-context cultures only if they are viewed or listened to in that specific context and the meanings of such a specific culture.

4.11.4.6 Racism

In countries such as South Africa and the United States of America, racism can be a major problem in multicultural local churches because of the past histories. According to Jandt racism is:

... any policy, practice, belief or attitude that attributes characteristics or status to individuals based upon their race. Racism involves not only prejudice but the exercise of power over individuals based on their race. Racism can either be conscious or unconscious, intentional or unintentional (Jandt 1995:59).

5.5.4.7 Assuming Similarity Instead of Differences

In this case the communicator of the gospel message in the multicultural local church take it for granted or assumes that all people's cultures are the same or agree with his/her own.

In their words, Dadoo and his co-authors articulate this point when they write:

When this is done in terms of cultures, a person can be caught unaware of important differences. When there is ignorance about a new culture, similarities with one's own culture are often assumed, which can be misleading. The resulting shock can be disturbing if not shattering (Dadoo et al 1997:30).

Openness to the differences existing among people of different cultures is a vital ingredient for successful multicultural communication in the local churches in South Africa. An added advantage for the communicator of the Gospel message (as well as all the members of the local church) would be an awareness of the different values, attitudes, beliefs and behaviours of people of various cultural groups.

5.5.5 The Dimensions of Multicultural Communication in the Local Church

The local churches have been tasked with the responsibility to take the gospel message of Jesus Christ to people of all cultures in and around themselves. Therefore, they are required to understand and achieve a reasonable level of multiculturalism. This responsibility mainly rests with the local churches and not necessarily the hearers of the message.

Hesselgrave, writing about the missionary's responsibility in communicating the gospel message Cross-culturally says that:

...the missionary need to learn to communicate Christ to respondents in terms of their (the respondents) way of viewing the world, their way of thinking, their way of expressing themselves in language, their way of acting, their response to media, their way of interacting and their way of deciding future courses of action. These dimensions interpenetrate and impinge upon one another. They are separable for pragmatic purposes, but, of course, combine to form one reality (Hesselgrave 1991: 163 – 164).

In order to understand this better and what is entailed in communicating the Gospel message to the hearers of another culture, we need to consider the following:

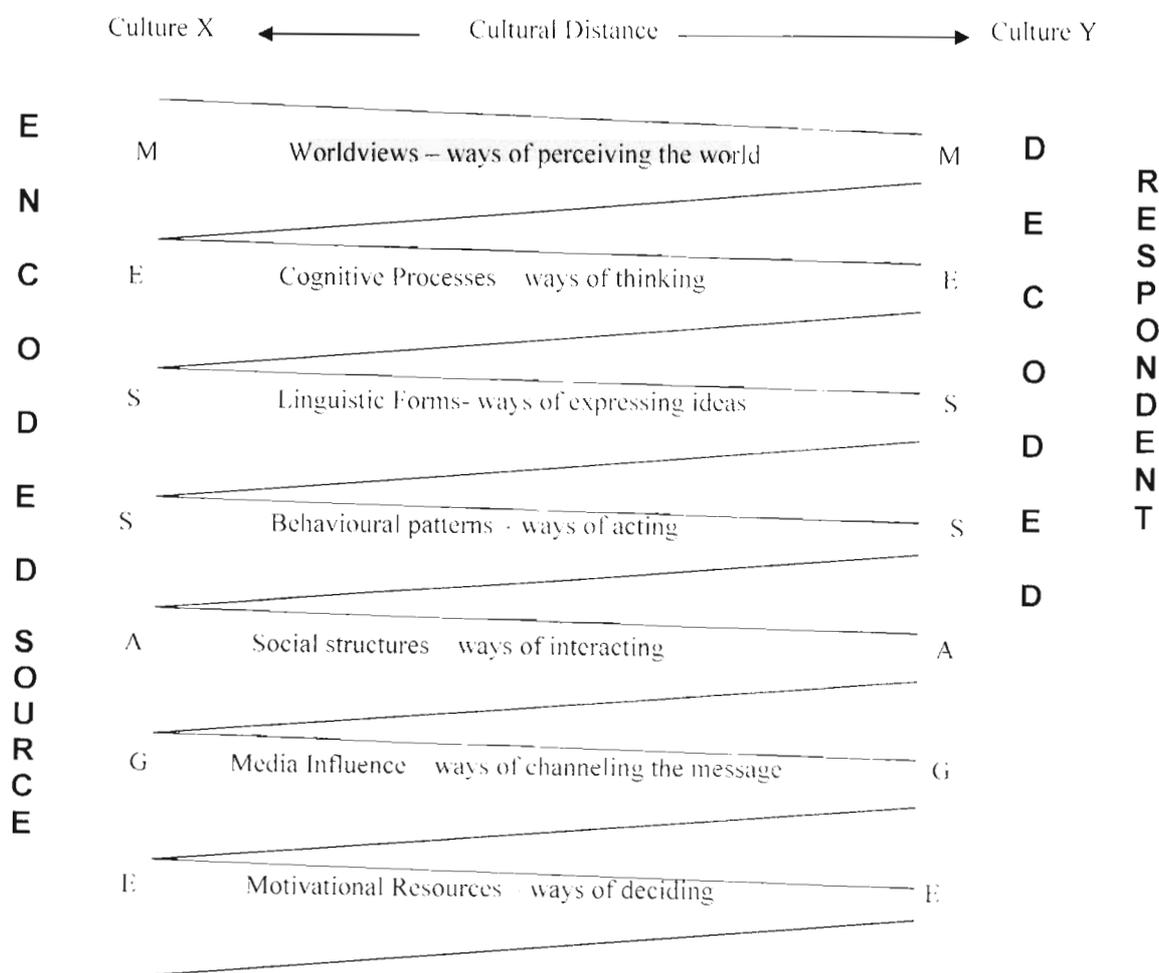
1. Worldview – ways of viewing the world.
2. Cognitive process – ways of thinking.
3. Linguistic forms – ways of expressing ideas.
4. Behavioural patterns – ways of acting.
5. Communication media – ways of channeling the message.
6. Social structures – ways of interacting.

7. Motivational sources – ways of deciding (Hesselgrave et al.1992: 203).

Hesselgrave (1991) has developed a very good model (diagram) to explain the concept of communicating in the setting of multiculturalism or cultural diversity context. The model includes all the seven points mentioned above (Hesselgrave et al. 1992). The model is designed to help those who desire to understand how and what happens in the process of multicultural communication.

Figure 5.2

Dimension of cross-cultural communication



When the source in “culture X” encodes a message, that message goes through a cultural grid or filter that largely determines the way in which that message will be decoded by the respondent or hearer in “culture Y.” This grid has seven dimensions that collectively influence the message and the way in which the hearer will decode the same message. No message can travel around it but only through it. Inevitably, it leaves its marks or prints on everything that goes through it (Hesselgrave 1991:163).

He continues to make a very important point as to how the respondent will decode the message from the source and how the source (the communicator) would encode the message to be sent to the other side. He mentions two important determining factors to this effect. He says that:

Two factors that are determinative of how much of the original message gets through are the respondent’s understanding of “culture X” and the source’s understanding of “culture Y.” In other words, to the extent that the respondent understands the worldview, cognitive process, etc. of the source and decodes the message in terms of that understanding, the original meaning of the message will be preserved. Or, to the extent that the source understands “culture Y” and encodes his message in terms of that culture, the original meaning of the message will likely be preserved in the decoding process (Hesselgrave 1991:163).

It is now clear that if the gap between the source and the respondent is wide or the greater the differences between the source’s (communicator) culture and the respondent’s culture, the greater the possibility of a communication breakdown or at worst, serious misunderstanding that can affect relationships in a negative way. This leads us to discuss the seven dimensions of cross-cultural communication and their practical implications in the local churches.

5.5.5.1 Worldviews – Ways of Perceiving the World

No one sees the world around him or her exactly as it is or like another person. Each one sees it through the tinted glasses of their own worldview or the influence of his culture. The concept of worldview has become commonplace in the world of anthropology.

theology and communication materials. Worldview is defined as the way we see the world in relation to ourselves and ourselves in relation to the world (Redfield 1957:35). Although much more is involved in worldview, perhaps it can simply be defined as a person's understanding of the supernatural, nature, humanity, space and time.

The point is that not many people carefully evaluate their own particular worldviews, or take time to interpret messages that come to them from the original sources with other worldviews. In fact, very few people take off the glasses of their own cultural worldview to examine or interpret messages. Perhaps, still fewer people decode "cross-worldview" messages in the light of or by "putting on the glasses" of the original source of the message.

Because of this lack of ability by the respondents to exchange their own glasses of their worldview, in order to decode multicultural messages correctly, it is then the sole duty of the communicator of the gospel message in the multicultural local church to assume the responsibility of encoding the message with the worldview of the respondents in mind. Someone has to own the responsibility for the message to be taken across this particular cultural barrier and, in this particular case, it has to be initiated by the leaders and especially those whose work is preaching and teaching the word of God.

5.5.5.2 Cognitive Process – Ways of Thinking

Against the popular ideology of apartheid, studies have proved that the ability to think clearly is a function of social and educational opportunity rather than of ethnic origin. All normal people of all colours and of all cultures have the ability to think. But they think differently in that they tend to arrive at conclusions through different thought processes. This is so because all people of different cultures have their own logic. It will be right again, perhaps for one to suggest that the logic the various people of different cultures is not all the same and cannot be judged on the same grounds.

The difference is explained by Smith when he explains the ways of knowing: the conceptual-cognition by postulation; the physical-cognition by intuition and the concrete

relational in which “life and reality are seen pictorially in terms of the active emotional relationships present in a concrete situation” – this is a “primitive” way of thinking (cf. Edmund 1958:99-102).

There is a serious danger in thinking this way because in the context of the countries such as South Africa, it is easy for other people to place another group in one particular way of thinking. For example, Black people are said to be pictorial and emotional implying that they cannot think but only feel and see pictures in their minds. Whites are seen as conceptual and factual, as though they do not feel or have emotions. Indians are perceived to be psychical.

However, Smith’s approach to this issue dispelled the naïve notion that there are only two ways of thinking. He does not only elaborate three ways of thinking, but he clarifies the relationship between them and insists that people of all cultures think in all these ways. The differences amongst the various cultures in this regard are due to the priority given to one or another type of thought. Since all people think in all these three ways if mutual respect and honour is in place for people different from us, cross-cultural communication and understanding can be achieved in the local churches of South Africa.

5.5.5.3 Linguistic Forms – Ways of Expressing Ideas

Out of all the seven dimensions of cross-cultural communication, this is the one that is the most obvious in terms of differences. Only few people, who find themselves in the multicultural local churches in South Africa, are best prepared or aware of this dimension or ready to cope with the challenge. Language is the most important element of every culture and goes deeper than many of us think.

Language reflects that which is very important in every given human culture. Languages differ from each other and the significance of those differences is a crucial one, since we can underscore several practical lessons that can be learned from them.

First, people everywhere like to communicate in their own language: in the language in

which they were uncultured. They also feel honoured by anyone outside their own cultural group who makes an effort to try to express himself in their language regardless of the mistakes he may commit in the process.

Second, though individual differences result in varying attitudes for language learning, almost anyone can learn another language, but the difference is how much importance an individual place on another's language. If there is no honour and desire another's language the language may sound difficult. Local churches in South Africa should take it upon themselves to recognize all the eleven official languages that are upheld by the constitution of our country. Local churches have a challenge to make use of all and not just one language in their worship meetings. For practical purposes, it may not be possible to run the worship service or preaching with eleven languages, but if two are used (one African and one Western) it will be very helpful and include almost all the people in the meeting. This attitude would also point at the respect the local churches accord to all its members across the language barrier. As much as most Whites in South Africa understand for example English and Afrikaans, so Blacks should also understand isi-Zulu and Sesotho. If these languages are made use of in multicultural local churches in particular in South Africa, one is certain that almost every person would be taken care of. They will feel welcomed and a part of the life of the local church. Intentionally or unintentionally, this will challenge the idea that one language is better or more important than all others.

Third, in learning the receptor's language we should remember that there is no one-to-one correlation between languages. No two words in different linguistic contexts mean exactly the same thing. Learning the language then, means more than learning enough of the receptor's language to transliterate English sentences into it. Every language constitutes a rich gold mine of information about the people and cultures that employ them.

By using more than one language, the local church enriches itself from various cultures and at the same time creates opportunities for individual members to learn and benefit

from others of different cultures. This also is a sign of welcome to all people inside and outside the walls of church. People will feel loved and accepted. They will also feel free to participate in the life of the Church of Jesus.

Fourth, not only can we learn a receptor's languages, but we can also learn a lot from it (Hesselgrave et al. 1992:206-207).

5.5.5.4 The Behaviour Pattern – Ways of Acting

Whenever newcomers from different cultures visit their neighbours the ways in which the host receive guests or gifts, introduction of one self, public behaviour especially with opposite sex, and many more such practices, may contradict with those of the newcomers. Countless practices are governed consciously or unconsciously by one's own culture and since they are learned informally for the most part, they are seldom pondered on and justified. They simply constitute ways in which people "ought" to act or behave.

Although to be a Christian will mean that from time to time, one might find that he is behaving incorrectly according to cultural definition, it is never an excuse for the local church not to learn how people of different cultures act or behave in different times. Behaviour which is unacceptable in the eyes of a particular cultural group may offend them in such a way that it closes the doors for the fulfillment of the very purpose for which we have met. This does not mean that behaviours of other cultural groups are justified more than others. In actual fact there is nothing inherently wrong with the great majority of cultural ways of doing things. It mostly depends on how cultural sensitive those that are involved are. William Howell says that, "the Ugly American award is won more often by failing to meet expectations of appropriate behavior than by misusing the local language" (cf. Hesselgrave 1991:166).

5.5.5.5 The Social Structures – Ways of Interacting

People not only have ways of acting in accordance with culturally accepted codes of conduct. They also have ways of interacting with each other on the basis of where they fit in the social structure. The conventions of social structure dictate which channels of communication are open and which are closed. In other words, who talks to whom and in what manner, and with what kind of effect, and when one communicates, which type of message is acceptable.

A good example in the African culture is of the chief or the king. If one wants a piece of land, one cannot just go into the presence of the chief as a commoner and present his request. An appointment is also not allowed in this case. You must go to a middle man or woman who works for the chief and knows him very well; a person who knows when is the right time to approach the chief. He then will tell you all the requirements before taking your request before the chief. There is also a saying in Tshi-Venda that, “Phanda ha ndau a hu iwi u songo fara tshikuni.” Which means you cannot appear before the chief “Ndau” (Lion) empty handed. Before the middle man goes to the chief to present your request, you have to give him something (the chief’s gift), mainly in the form of money these days. In the ancient days, it could be a sheep, cattle, leopard-skin or any other important item. Without these procedures, you may find yourself unsuccessful in your request all the time when others are met with the chief’s favour.

In the local church, people need to be equipped as far as knowing how to interact with people of different-cultures. In that way they will be able to start new relationships with people of different cultures and the local church will be strong and will grow in numbers. A “map” of societal arrangements is also a portrayal of communication. Communicators of the gospel in multicultural local churches should not think of communicating Christ in a society without a societal map, just like they would not think of motoring through a new country without a road map.

5.5.5.6 Media Influence – Ways of Channeling the Message

In the past, the emphasis in communication was on sources and respondents, the contexts in which the messages are sent and received and the messages themselves their content, organization and style. Recently, there has been an increasing awareness of the fact that the media that are used to transmit messages are by no means neutral. Marshal McLuhan challenged the notion that messages can be put into any medium and come out intact, untainted and untouched. According to McLuhan, not only do media affect the message, they constitute the message (cf. Hesselgrave et al. 1992:208).

In the multicultural local church, sensitivity as to which media would contribute to the effectiveness of the community should be given high priority. For example, worship in most of the white mainline churches involves using a hymn book whereas in Pentecostal and charismatic churches, they have moved along to the use of electronic projectors to show the words of the song being sung. Most Black people do not like singing from the hymn book or from the electronic projector but from the heart. This is so because singing involves hand clapping and dancing for the Black people. All these actions do not allow for holding the hymn book or fixing one's eyes on the wall. Moreover, they also enjoy singing, sometimes with eyes closed and focusing on God. Christians tend to think of media in a simplistic manner such as message availability, audience size and interest factors. Far more is involved.

5.5.5.7 Motivational Resources – Ways of Deciding

One reason for communicating Christ cross-culturally is to encourage people from different cultures to reach certain decisions which grow out of information and motivations which will be reflected in changed attitudes, allegiances and coerces of action (Hesselgrave et al. 1992:210). People of all cultures have to make many decisions, but the ways in which people of various cultures think and make decisions and the ways in which they arrive at decisions are very different.

Who is qualified to make decisions? What kind of decisions can they make? How are decisions made? What bases for decision making are legitimate? The answers to all such

questions are largely directed by one's culture (Hesselgrave 1991:168).

5.5.6 The Importance of Language in Multicultural Communication

Language is important for communication and building of relationships with others. One cannot understand other people's culture unless he is prepared to learn their language to a minimum degree. In making his point about the importance of language, Barker says that the significance of language for an understanding of culture and the constitution of knowledge has moved to the top of many agendas within cultural studies and human social sciences. He continues to say that the whole reason is based on true causes, which are the following:

Firstly, language is the premium medium or primary channel by which cultural meanings are formed and communicated.

Secondly, language is the means and primary medium through which we form knowledge about the social world and ourselves.

According to Barker, language is not a neutral medium for the formation and transference of values, meanings and knowledge that exists beyond its boundaries. Rather, language is constitutive of those very values, meanings and knowledge. Thus, language gives meaning to material objects and social practices, which are brought into the visual and made intelligible to us in terms of the intentions of language users. Language constructs meaning. It structures which meaning can or cannot be deployed under a particular culture and explores how meaning is produced symbolically through the signifying practices of language. This has been the main focus of semiotics, broadly understood as the study of signs, and developed from the pioneering work of Saussure (Barker 2000:66).

Language is of utmost importance to human beings, be it psychologically, socially or spiritually. When we first meet other people, the power of speech is the first expression we come across. In the Bible, we see this truth coming to life. The first people we meet

have the power of speech. It was an integral part of their entire experience with God. They received the commands of God. They communed with God, and they were sought out by God all by means of language. Adam's superiority over the lesser creatures (animals and birds) around him was demonstrated in his authority to name them, which he did through the use of language (Hesselgrave 1991:345).

The local churches in South Africa need to pay special attention to the importance of the use of language(s) in their worship meetings. This is so if they want to be the home of worshippers from all the people of this country, who form the eleven official languages as per our constitution. This leads us to the definitions of the very word "language".

5.5.7 Definition of Language

Language is defined by many people and documents in many and different ways. According to the World Book Encyclopedia, language is human speech, either spoken or written. Language is the most common system of communication. It allows people to talk to each other and to write their thoughts and ideas. The word "language" comes from the Latin word "lingua" meaning tongue. The word language may be loosely used to mean any system of communication (World Book 2000:62).

Hesselgrave and Rommen take the definition further when they say that language is a purely human and non-instructive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of voluntarily producing symbols (Hesselgrave et al. 1992:159). If we agree with this definition, then language is not primarily an expression of ethnicity but rather a convenient means of expressing the content or thoughts of a given or specific culture. Hesselgrave and Rommen continue to say that cultural and linguistic content are divided from the science of human experience and that the latent content of all languages and cultures can be considered universal. "Culture may be defined as what society does and thinks. Language is a particular how of thought (Hesselgrave et al. 1992:159)." In their own words Hesselgrave and Rommen define language thus:

Language is a means of expressing and disseminating the content of culture. As such it functions as the key to, and primary vehicle of, the reflective processes which generate the pool of shared

knowledge that defines a given culture. Language is also determining factor in the way in which its users perceive the world. As such it is the interface between individual thought and the "real world" (Hesselgrave et al. 1992:161)."

The fact of the matter is that the real world is, to a large extent, unconsciously built upon the language habit of the group. We see and hear and otherwise experience the world largely as we do because the language we speak and the habits of our language from our community give us choices of interpretation. Dadoo and his co-authors agree when they say that, it is clear that beliefs, values, and needs of society are reflected in the language. The vocabulary and style of a language tells us what is culturally important in a particular society (Dadoo et al. 1997:67).

Reflecting on all the definitions of language mentioned above, there is no reason why one cannot agree with Malina when he says that, language is the most important aspect and perhaps the best example of culture (Malina 1981:12).

It is difficult to separate language from culture or culture from language. Language is actually a vehicle of culture. Through language people of a specific group are able to communicate, co-operate and also interact or form relationships. Every society has its own distinctive language and as a result they have their own distinctive culture that influences things such as how people, whether young or old, speak to each other; when to do certain things or not; allocation of status to different people. The status of the speaker or the respondent will also influence the use of language in different ways in different cultures. Anthionisse and Kaschula articulate this view when they write that:

One cannot learn language in a vacuum. It will become clear that communicative competence implies both cultural as well as grammatical competence (Kaschula et al. 1995:26).

They go on to give a practical examples of people drinking a traditional beer in a place called Qunu in the rural areas of Umtata in the Transkei, now known as Eastern Cape Province. They say if you participate or attend a Xhosa beer drinking ceremony you would not only have to know the rules that govern the Xhosa language, but also the rules

that govern the whole ceremony. This means the cultural practices that accompany this ceremony. In other words, it would be necessary to know certain cultural rules such as where to sit, who may use which “bekile” “beaker”. It is also necessary to possess knowledge of certain cultural rules which dictate the use of language in such a situation. This will include what to say and at the same time to whom, how to address individuals who are older or younger than yourself (Kaschula et al. 1995:26).

South Africa is a home to people of many languages and cultures and consequently local churches need to be prepared and equipped to house worshippers from every culture and language within the country. These languages and cultures are protected by the constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

5.5.8 Language and the Constitution of South Africa

It seems as if multicultural local churches in South Africa need to be reminded or perhaps introduced to the constitution of the country, in particular the Bill of Rights. One earns the right to say so because most of the multicultural local churches make use of one language at the expense of all others in the same church. Quoting from the Bill of Rights, De Waal, Currie and Erasmus say that:

Language and Culture

6.4.13 Everyone has the right to use the language and to participate in the cultural life of their choice, but no one exercising these rights may do so in a manner inconsistent with any provision of the Bill of Rights.

Cultural, religions and linguistic communities

31.(1) Persons belonging to a cultural, religions or linguistic community may not be denied the right, with other members of that community-

(a) to enjoy their culture, practice their religion and use their language; and

(b) to form, join and maintain cultural, religions and linguistic associations and other organs of civil society.

(2) The rights in subsection (1) may not be exercised in a manner inconsistent with any provision of the Bill of Rights (De Waal et al. 2001:470).

Every person, by the law of this country, has the right to use a language of his or her choice. This provision and the protection of the constitution also extend to church meetings. The local churches need to see that they create and provide enough space for all languages and cultures for the enjoyment for all their members in the service and worship of their God.

De Waal and his co-authors continue to elaborate on the right to use a language of one's choice by saying that, specific protection of the individual right to speak a language of his or her choice is unnecessary, since the protection of a right of enjoyment of culture implies the protection of the linguistic medium through which that culture finds expressions and through which enjoyment takes place. Nevertheless, a right to use a language of one's choice, along with a prohibition of discrimination on grounds of language, appears in all the principal international, minority protection clauses (De Waal et al. 2001:479). It is interesting to note that both international human rights law and the constitution of South Africa accord great importance to the right of language use of one's choice in this particular aspect of cultural life.

De Waal and his colleagues refer to Section 6 of 1996 of the Constitution of South Africa. In this section there is the provision for the use of the eleven official languages in our country. In regard to the issue of the eleven official languages, Devenish has this to say:

Provision is made in section 6 for the following official languages: Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, Sepedi, Sesotho, siSwati, XiTsonga, Setswana, Tshivenda, isiXhosa and isiZulu. Therefore, as far as a language is concerned, section 6 recognises eleven languages and subject to the provision of this section "all official languages must enjoy parity of esteem and must be treated equally." All these languages must officially enjoy equal treatment and deference furthermore, the state is authorized in terms of section 6(2) to take practical and positive measures to elevate the status and advance the use of indigenous languages, which in the past have been subject to neglect (Devenish 1998:39).

It is expected from the constitution that all the eleven languages will receive equal treatment from all organs of society. It is not so, however, with many if not all multicultural local churches. In many multicultural local churches in South Africa only one language gets preference and is elevated above all others. In most cases, the English language is used to dominate others. Sometimes, Afrikaans is also used in a few multicultural churches. By so doing, the local churches are acting against the spirit of our constitution. This is so because other people are discriminated against on the basis of language. In other words, one cannot be a full member of a particular local church if English or Afrikaans are only the languages used. The individual may not understand the languages used. Because of the languages used the person is disqualified from membership regardless of how close he lives to the local church and how he loves to fellowship there.

Since it is not possible to make use of all official languages simultaneously in one church meeting, section 6(3) provide some guidance as to how to deal with this challenge from a pragmatic point of view. From this section, the multicultural local churches can learn a great deal even though this was said in relation to government organs. Devenish have this to say, in relation to Section 6(3):

In this regard, therefore, any language can be used, taking into account usage, practicality, expense, regional circumstances and the balance of needs and preferences of population as a whole or in the province concerned. "There is, however a proviso in this regard. This subsection stipulates that the national government and each provincial government must use at least two official languages." It is therefore categorically clear that no government may use only one language (Devenish 1998:39).

Just like provinces, multicultural local churches are found in regions, cities and towns populated by more than one language group. Why then use one language? As said before in this thesis, there is no need for local churches to try and make use of all eleven official languages. This will be impractical, time consuming and very expensive.

Multicultural local churches need only to study the circumstances around them and meet

the need or balance the need. For example, if the multicultural local church is situated in the Durban area, English and isiZulu would meet and balance the provincial and the local need as far as the language is concerned. If it is in the Eastern Cape, isiXhosa should be one of the official languages used in the meeting. In Bloemfontein, Afrikaans and Sesotho should be some of the languages to be used. In places such as Johannesburg and Polokwane just to mention few, that will present a bigger challenge compared to other provinces, cities or towns. Still the need can be met or balanced as long as there is a desire to make the kingdom of God a success in the context of multicultural local churches. In places such as Johannesburg if a meeting is conducted in English and isiZulu or Sesotho (Sepedi or Setswana) almost all people in the meeting will be ministered to.

If the government can use two languages to cover its citizens, what stops the church from starting this good practice and getting away from using one language that discriminate against other children of our God?

The Constitution of South Africa **promotes unity** among the citizens of this country, even in its opening statement, the preamble. The Constitution opens with the following profound and inspirational declaration:

We, the people of South Africa,
I the injustice of our past,
Honour those who suffered for justice and freedom in our land:
Respect those who have worked to build and develop our country:
Believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our
diversity (Devenish 1998:27).

In the multicultural local churches, we need to see each other as equal citizens of the Republic of one and united democratic South Africa. In doing so, we must also not forget or down play our ugly past. The church especially needs to recognize this fact. The church seems to be one institution that does not accept and take responsibility of the injustices of our past. What is more disturbing is to hear almost all Bible believing Christians say, "I never supported apartheid." Although one cannot argue that the question remains, then, who supported apartheid that was in operation for more than forty years? Who benefited from it? Why did we have it for so long? Perhaps if the local

churches could realize the injustice of our past, the local churches will then start embracing the use of at least two languages in their meetings. By so doing, they will be honouring those who suffered and respecting those who have worked to build and develop our country. By so doing the local churches will also be declaring that they believe that the new South Africa belongs to all who live in it.

The Constitution opens with the uniting words, "We, the people of South Africa," and the last word of the preamble is written in six languages again to demonstrate the unity of languages and cultures. The last part of the preamble of the Republic of South Africa reads:

May, God protect our people.
Nkosi sikelela Iafrika. Moena boloko seshaba
sa heso. God Seën Suid-Afrika. God bless
South Africa. Mudzimu fhatutshedza Afrika.
Hosi katekisa Afrika (Devenish 1998: 27).

The country has set an example for the church to follow. There is no excuse for the local churches not to use more than one language except individual convenience and selfishness or one group of people wanting to continue to dominate all others. However, it should not have been the Constitution and the parliament setting an example for the church, but the church setting an example for the government. If the church does not wake-up and put its house in order, it will not be long that the state will fulfill its mandate to protect the marginalized, or rather the discriminated, on the basis of language in this case.

The church should always remember that its purpose here on earth and, in particular South Africa, is to be a healing community. In other words, the Church is to facilitate the healing and the reconciliation process of our country from our divided past. To fulfill this, the multicultural local churches of South Africa must bear in mind that they have the golden opportunity firstly, to become the healing centers of the divisions of the past and to establish a new society based on the love of God set forth or explained in the Word of God, the Bible.

Secondly, the church should be concerned with the creation of a new order, where one is accepted unconditionally for who he is (created in the image of God) and not the colour of his skin or his language and culture. This argument is based on the perfect will of God, revealed in the Scriptures and manifested in Jesus our Lord. This is affirmed by the democratic values and local churches that are open for every person who desires to fellowship therein.

Thirdly, the church in South Africa is to be involved in improving the quality of life of all people of this country. This should include social life and economic justice.

In other words the church should encourage people of different colours, languages and cultures to form and maintain relationships. The multicultural local churches should demonstrate this in their daily programs and worship meetings. The church should also stand up to support the government where it is trying to improve the economic life of the poor. However, it should not hesitate to condemn where the government is not showing concern for the poor. The church should concern itself with the economic injustices of the past if those are perpetuated, especially if the majority of the people are getting poorer and poorer.

Fourthly, the church in South Africa, especially the multicultural local churches, must embrace and show unwavering commitment to build a united South Africa. This will be tested now and then as there will be disappointments and hurts to those committed to this course. It is important to remember there is no commitment that will go unchallenged. These challenges would be there until some of us betray the faith and choose the easy compromising route of homogeneity.

5.5.9 The Use of one Language in Multicultural Local Churches

The use of language becomes even more important if we remember that the ideology of apartheid, which was mainly supported by the Church, used language as one of the elements to advance itself. Therefore language is still a major element in turning things around, this time for a good course. Devenish articulates this view when he writes that:

South Africa is par excellence a kaleidoscope of cultural, linguistic and religious heterogeneity which is a source both of infinite richness as well as intense historical, contemporary and potential conflict. The acute problem of accommodating and protecting ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities in a democratic body of politics operating according to the philosophy and practice of constitutionalism and a justifiable Bill of Rights, eclipsed all the other issues both in relation to the interim and 1996 Constitutions. The dominance of this particular issue is understandable since racial, language and cultural cleavage has been the most divisive political issues in the historical and constitutional evolution of South Africa from the inception of colonial settlement to the rise and unlamented demise of apartheid (Devenish 1998:249).

The link between language and culture is often very close. This becomes clear whenever there is a debate about language problems. People tend to be very emotional. The use of Afrikaans language at all levels of communication in the apartheid era in South Africa is a perfect example. Afrikaans speakers or those that use Afrikaans as their home language supported the idea. On the contrary, the compulsory use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in all schools, including black schools, was opposed and became instrumental in the Soweto student uprising of 16 June 1976. In general, Black people felt that Afrikaans was the oppressor's language a result it had to be opposed and rejected. Now in democratic South Africa, there are two views going on in relation to Afrikaans as a language. Some of its mother-tongue speakers fear that the language might gradually be phased out by the new dispensation, which supports the use of eleven official languages. However, others argue against this view, saying that the language is spoken by many ethnic groups in South Africa (Dadoo et al. 1997: 63).

Certainly this problem occurs in many other countries, including overseas countries and in around Africa. When a single language is given preference above all others or becomes official in an organization such as a local church, in a multicultural local environment, it can be a serious barrier for communication. In either case, if the multicultural local church is failing to meet the language needs of its people so as to embrace all people in and around itself, the most powerful (which is the most common trend in South Africa) group of members, in most cases the economically strong and with

decision making will powers, end up enforcing the use of their own language ahead of others. It has to be borne in mind that the spread of a language as it becomes of common use in the multicultural local church, is also accompanied by the spread of the influence of its culture. It, therefore, goes without saying that the most used language group will dominate even culturally. In other words, if the most powerful decide to use Afrikaans only as the "official" language of a multicultural local church where there are Zulus, Tsongas, Pedis, English and many others, at the end of the day you will end up having a Zulu person being forced to acquire the Afrikaans by culture. The same can be said of the Tsongas, Pedis and English speakers. This case demonstrated by the dominance of Afrikaans in apartheid era. Going through the township streets you will hear young men and young women speaking an African language mixed with Afrikaans and it is called "Tsotsi-taal". Words such as, "Zwakala", "Xafa" "Vrou ya ka" meaning "come" "Give or pay", "My wife" respectively were commonly used. Most of these words were drawn from Afrikaans. Moreover people started referring to each other as "Oom" and "Antie" or "Broer" and "Sister". People could not help but to use Afrikaans words because it had penetrated their every day existence above all their culture.

Many local churches today use English only on the basis of the fact that it is widely used as the language of trade or education internationally. Dadoo and his co-authors share the same feeling about English when they write that "...English is the language of international business." (Dadoo et al. 1997:64). It is true that English is the language of international business and education. It has been made so. If one reflects on the history of racism and the Church in South Africa one will note that what made English the language of commerce is its involvement with the evil of imperialism and colonization. As much as we agree that English today is spoken in many countries of the world and is one of the official languages in South Africa and that this thesis is written in English, we cannot continue to suppress other languages and deny other people access to our churches on these grounds that grew from evil intents. If English could be promoted to this level it occupies today, as did Afrikaans during the apartheid era in South Africa, it means every language can be promoted to the same level. Then, what stops the local churches from making use of local languages to advance the gospel to all people? The possible answer is

that the indigenous local languages are denied an opportunity because they are the languages of the poorest groups of people of South Africa. The question is, should we have continued to support the system of apartheid in South Africa because it was working for the good of other people even though it was hurting many others? No. The same applies to English as a language now used in multicultural local churches above all others. We cannot continue to use it for the benefit of a few at the expense of all others.

Many nations and people around the world are shifting from seeing English as the only international language. Nations are going back to their local languages, in order to promote their cultures and preserve their national heritages. People around the world are starting to believe that their languages are as important as any other language. Hesselgrave has this to say:

There is still another aspect of the use of English in the modernizing nation that merits our consideration. In earlier stages of their development many of these countries put a great emphasis on the teaching of English as a second language in order to appropriate the scientific learning of the West. Since the late 1950s', however, there has been a significant shift of emphasis back to their local languages in order to preserve their respective national heritages. Some nations have introduced national or regional languages into their primary educational programs, thus giving them precedence over the languages of international communication such as English.... In such countries overdependence of English as the language of Christian communication serves to heighten the feeling that Christianity is a foreign, accretion to the indigenous culture. Missionaries from the United States should remember that the Bilingual Education Act of 1963 upholds the right of children to receive their secular education in their mother tongue. Do not all the peoples of the world have a right to learn of Christ in their primary languages?

The missionary should ask himself whether he can in effect say to the people of his respondent culture, "Before you can learn the ways of God from me, you must learn my language and more, you must learn it well. Is this not laying a yoke on respondent people that would have been too heavy for us or our fathers to bear (Hesselgrave 1991:354)?

This presents a big challenge to the multicultural local churches in South Africa where

the ability to speak or at least understand English is becoming a dominant qualification for one to be a member. If some of us can stop and reflect on this challenge we will definitely see changes in multicultural local churches. English speaker should be sensitive to others feelings about the use of English only during the worship meetings. However, it is not easy for them to ask such questions because they think they can do without the rest of the South Africans. It is important to also note that the majority of English people do not fit in the poor group of South Africans. This is not to say that they are all rich, but many of them fit into the middle class economically. One is not suggesting that economical position is the reason why other groups want to fellowship with others but it can be used as a reason to exclude others.

However, one cannot agree with Hesselgrave on his assumption that other nationals learnt English, in order to appropriate the scientific knowledge of the West. This is because there is a fallacy that other nationals only learned science from the West. Archaeological finding prove that countries like Africa had practical sciences even before the arrival of the Western people. For example, the discovery of Mapugubwe near Musina in Limpopo Province now declared world heritage site, bears witness to this fact. African people knew how to make fire, melt iron, and heal the sick without help from the West. The fact that many countries put emphasis on learning the English language as their second language was forced on them by the system rather than the act of will. For example, people were forced to have English names. They were also forced to learn English because it was the language of the politically and economically powerful. In Mozambique they do not speak English but Portuguese and in Angola not English nor Portuguese but mostly French. Why, because they were imposed languages of the most powerful, especially the economic power. The same applies to English in the multicultural churches. English is the language of the economically powerful in the South African context. Political power means nothing unless one has economic muscles. This is true of the South African situation. Black people have won their political freedom but are still far from economic emancipation, hence, no one takes them seriously, including in the Church.

To balance these injustices of the past that are still perpetuated in local churches in South Africa, there is a need to introduce the use of other languages as well as a willingness to learn each other's languages.

5.5.10 The Importance of Introducing Another (second) Language in the Multicultural Local Church Context

The importance of communicating with people in their own language or the language of their preference cannot be denied. People feel honoured, respected and wanted or appreciated whenever they are communicated with in their language of preference or local language. Aspina argues that respect for cultures, as well as communication in the language of the local inhabitants, are key measures to successful business development (Ospina 1994:18). Dadoo and his co-authors argue that, one of the best ways of showing respect for people with whom we associate is to communicate with them in their own language of preference (Dadoo et al. 1997:64). Both Aspina and Dadoo share the same view about communicating with people in their own language or the language of their preference. In other words, if we imposed a language to communicate with, it can be the first sign of disrespect for those people even if it is done unintentionally.

This brings a major challenge to the local churches in South Africa, especially those that are homogeneous and those that are heterogeneous in membership. For those that are homogeneous, perhaps other racial or language groups are not coming because they do not feel respected in their meetings. Their absence from our local churches, even if they are well represented in our neighbourhood, could be because the church preaches to them in an unfamiliar language. To the multicultural local churches, the challenges are to stretch themselves out of their comfort zones. There is need to start introducing the use of other local languages in and during the worship meetings even if it is inconvenient. There is also need to start showing respect to other people as much as we expect them to do the same to us. This should be encouraged to take place on two levels.

Firstly, showing respect by trying to also make use of other people's languages must take place at personal level that is on a one to one basis. Local church members should be

encouraged not to take it for granted that other people can or must speak their language, for example, English. They must be encouraged to try to learn to greet at least in other people's languages.

Secondly, worship meetings must also reflect the same attitude of respect towards other people's languages. This should be done through the singing of songs and the preaching of the word of God. There is a great need to sing worship songs in other languages and not just in one language. The most important would be to conduct the preaching in at least two local languages.

The same applies to the cross-border ministry. We cannot cross the border into another sovereign country and expect all the local people to speak or hear our language. If we insist on doing so we will face unvoiced criticism. In articulating the same view Hesselgrave says that few people have faced less criticism than contemporary Americans. There are undoubtedly many reasons to this effect, some good, some bad, and some indifferent, but two factors cannot be overlooked:

1. The tremendously large number of Americans working or traveling abroad, and
2. The unbelievably small numbers of Americans who have succeeded in learning even the simple "pots and pans" language of other peoples with whom they associate. The truly amazing aspect of this sad state of affairs is that only a small percentage, if any, of those who are engaged in the sensitive area, for example, of international diplomacy and the preaching of the gospel can speak the language of the local culture in which they labour or reside (Hesselgrave 1991:349).

He continues to quote some of the early writers of America, William Lederer and Eugene Burdick from their widely read book entitled *The Ugly American* published as early as 1958. Lederer and Burdick writing about the unwillingness of Americans to speak, communicate or learn other people's languages say that:

It would seem a simple fact of life that ambassadors to at least the major nations should speak those languages. Yet in France, Italy, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Norway and Turkey our

ambassadors cannot speak the native tongue (although our ambassador to Paris can speak German and our ambassador to Berlin can speak French). In the whole of the Arabic world – nine nations – only two ambassadors have language qualifications. In Japan, Korea, Burma, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia and elsewhere, our ambassadors must speak and be spoken to through interpreters. In the entire communist world only our ambassador to Moscow can speak the native language (cf. Hesselgrave 1991: 349 – 350).

This challenge to the nation of America also applies to the South African Church, especially to the local churches in this context. If they called Americans, “The ugly American” because of their unwillingness to speak, communicate or learn other people’s languages, perhaps it is appropriate to call the South African Church “The Ugly Church” for the same attitude displayed towards other languages. Perhaps we should even say we are worse than Americans, because these words were spoken, in this context of their attitude towards foreign languages, that is, outside the borders of their own country. In the Church in South Africa people show this ugly attitude to their own fellow country men and women. Above all, they display this kind of attitude to their brothers and sisters in the Lord.

However, one does not understand Lederer and Burdick when they say that, it would seem a simple fact of life that ambassadors to at least “the major nations should speak those languages, because by so saying it might mean that “minor” or “small” nations are excluded, which may mean that they are the ones expected to learn the languages of “the major” nations. In fact, what makes one nation major and another minor? Each nation should be judged on its own merits and not be compared with the other. If what Lederer and Burdick say is to stand, perhaps the Church in South Africa has believed the lie that the minority must learn the language of the majority members. The language that is used in multicultural local churches is deemed to be of “the major” group of people as compared to all others. What makes it superior to all other languages?

They continue to say that in Japan, Korea, Burma, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia and elsewhere, American Ambassadors speak or are spoken to through interpreters. They do not seem to support this idea. However, this thesis would like to take an opposite view in

consideration of the South African situation of multicultural local churches. Interpretation would seem to be one way of dealing with the challenge of languages, especially during preaching or teaching. Preaching and/or teaching should be conducted in at least two official languages. As to which languages are to be used, it would most depend on which province city or town the local church is located. In other words, no one size fits all. It is a situational or contextual consideration. In this way people from all racial groups, cultural groups and languages will feel loved, accepted, respected and valued. If we only use one language, we imply that one language is superior to all others, because everybody must learn and know it, hence the apartheid policies of superiority and inferiority. This view is well articulated by Mohabir when he writes that:

Learn a language. There are possible people within your area who can communicate as far as work or shopping are concerned, but it is amazing the difference it makes to communicate the gospel in the language of the heart. If business people do this in the interests of increased profit and foreign missionaries do it in order to make a success of their job, then why should we not take the pain and trouble to learn some other people-group language so that we can reach these people with the gospel? I agree that we do not have to wait until we master the language, we can seek to communicate with them the best way we can either through an interpreter, tapes or literature, but if we want to ensure long-term results then let us find the time, money and people to learn the languages of the people we are reaching. I realise that not every church has within its locality people of different languages; however whenever this is applicable, lets do it (Mohabir 1992:78).

It is true that if local churches in South Africa can start communicating with more than one official language, they will be even more effective and make more of an impact than they are currently doing. The challenge to communicate in the local people's language is further imposed on local churches by the business community. They have the desire and willingness to take the pain and all troubles it costs them for profit, while on the other hand the church is nursing self-pity and indulging in self-interest. The business community is spending millions of Rands and a lot of hours (time) in meeting this challenge. They are far ahead of the Church as far as the issue of multiculturalism is concerned. They are not waiting to master all the eleven official languages, but they use interpreters during their business meetings. They are spending money and time to train

their staff members on issues of multicultural sensitivity. Mohabir says that, "... not every church has within its locality people of different languages". In South Africa, since 1994 this would only apply to local churches in deep rural areas. For those in towns and cities, there is no excuse. People of different cultures and languages have moved to every town and city within the borders of South Africa. The local churches that have not had people of other races, cultures and languages coming in their midst have chosen to ignore them either by intent or through ignorance.

In their book, *The Ugly American*, Lederer and Burdick continue to give statistics that are most sobering, of how few Americans are willing and can speak or communicate in other people's languages, while people of other countries serving in America can speak, read and write American English. They wrote that:

In his masterful analysis of the foreign services, John Osborne states that most important element in good Foreign Service officer is "the faculty of communication."... "fifty percent of entire Foreign Service officer corps do not have a speaking knowledge of any foreign language. Seventy percent of the new men coming into the Foreign Service are in the same state." These figures represent those who can speak no language other than their own-not even French, Spanish, German or Italian. The number of Americans in the Foreign Service who can speak any of the more difficult language is minuscule...

On the other hand, an estimated nine out of ten Russians speak, read, and write the language before they arrive on station. It is a prior requirement. The entire functioning staff of Russians embassies in Asia is Russian, and all the Russians – the officials, stenographic help, telephone operators, chauffeurs, servants-speak and write the language of the host country (cf. Hesselgrave 1991:350)."

This is a daunting situation because what has been said above would imply that, when an American is in his embassy in Russia, the Russian would be expected to speak the American language. In other words, the Russian is expected to speak a foreign language in his own country. On the other hand, when the Russian is on duty in America and an American walks in, the Russian is expected to speak an American language. Does this not explain exactly our situation here in South Africa? The Black men are expected to speak English at work and in Church. When his White friend or colleague visits him in

the townships, he speaks English. Furthermore, when he visits his White friend in the suburb, he is still expected to speak English.

This situation is wrong even in secular situations, but even more so when it occurs in the church of God. When a White preacher visits a black local church he is at liberty to preach in his mother tongue, however, a Black preacher is not permitted to preach in his mother tongue when he visits the white local church. He must preach in English and is expected to have a good command of this foreign language. In the multicultural local churches, all people are expected to hear and/or speak English; otherwise they do not qualify for the "main meeting" and, therefore, are relegated to the so called "African church services". The basis of this church service is nothing else but language.

Lederer and Burdick make a statement which is very familiar to those of us who are involved in multicultural communication. They refer to the few Americans in the Foreign Services who can speak other languages as those "... who can speak any of the more difficult languages..." This statement is problematic because how is it determined which language is difficult and which one is easy? The implication here is that English is an easy language. Along the same line of argument, one is tempted to say that English is one of the most difficult languages, if ever there are difficult languages. Again it should not be people like Lederer and Burdick who judge other people's languages to be difficult without even trying to speak, read and write them. Perhaps, in this case the Russians and the Black people of South Africa are more qualified to say that because after learning English for many years at school through writing and reading and also through speaking or communicating in English for many years, they have still not come to the point of mastering the language. Those who only try one word or one statement of another language after a long period of time are not in a position to jump to conclusions that other people's languages are difficult.

One of the leading figures in cross-cultural communication, Nida says that, as long as we maintain a cultural isolation, we cannot expect to learn other people's languages (Nida 1954: 325). We tend to put ourselves in isolation by the words we speak, such as, "that

language is difficult". The moment we say this, we create a mental block to learning and appreciating other people's languages. All the creativity that we could explore in learning the other people's languages disappears.

The introduction of other languages in the multicultural local churches would open up the doors wide for more people to come in. It will also bring in a wider perspective in dealing with issues and also in the decision making processes. What is more interesting this would be one way of moving towards the New Testament pattern of how to run a church? We see this in Acts 2: 9-11, where at least 14 different languages or dialects were spoken on the day of Pentecost. This thesis is far from suggesting the use of such a large number of languages in and during the worship meetings, but at least two. Bryant, as quoted by Varathan explains the 14 languages spoken in one meeting on the day of Pentecost:

1. Parthians – they formed part of the group that was present in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost according to Act 2: 9. "They were a people of North West Persia (Iran), who lived in the general region South East of the Caspian Sea (Unger 1957: 828). "Known for their prowess in war, instead of arts and sciences, they never developed a literature of their own. But it is certain that the apostles of our Lord preached the gospel among them."

2. Medes – they are the inhabitants of Media (Unger 1957: 707). "There are more than twenty references to these people and their land in the Scriptures, which show their importance. They spoke a Persian dialect. II Kings 17:6 refers to their cities. The book of Esther reveals us to their binding laws, which cannot be amended, Esther 1:9, Isaiah 13:17 and Daniel 5:26 tell of their power against Babylon."

3. Elamites – they were the descendants of Shem, the son of Noah as recorded in Genesis 10:22. Elam was also a country situated on the East of the river Tigris opposite Babylonia. They were the first people to inhabit this country (Unger 1957: 294), hence, named after them. They were some of the earliest civilized people. They are among the

people brought over to Samaria by force by the Assyrians army as recorded in Ezra 4:9.

4. Mesopotamians – Mesopotamia means “the country between the rivers.” In ordinary Greek rendering of the Hebrew Aram-Naharaim, meaning ‘Aram’ or ‘Syria of the two rivers’ Genesis 24:10, Deut 23:4, Judges 3:8. Mesopotamia is where the present Iraq is situated. The great rivers in this region are Tigris and Euphrates. “The term Mesopotamia refers to the upper part of the valley of the two rivers known today by Arabs as Al Jazira or “*the island*” (Unger 1957: 717).”

To add to this point Varathan said,

In the New Testament, the mention of Mesopotamia as one of the regions from which the Jews of the Diaspora had come to Jerusalem (Acts 2:9) “residents of Mesopotamia in the RSV” probably has reference to that part of the Near East included in modern Iraq and may refer to the fact that the call of God came to Abraham, while he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran (Acts 7:2). This will suggest that Southern Iraq is in Mesopotamia, for the reason that Abraham was then in the city of Ur (Genesis 11:31). The southern part of Mesopotamia, including Ur and a number of other cities was known as **Sumer: the central section was called Akkard** and later named Babylonia after the city of Babylon gained the ascendancy; the northern division along with Tigris was Assyria, the land of Asshur (2003: 59 – 60).

5. Judeans – the Judeans were part of the people that formed the group that was in Jerusalem on that special day of Pentecost. Judea is the name of the most Southern part of Roman division of Palestine. In size Judea is a very small country. It is said to be fifty-five miles long and about twenty-five to thirty miles long. About her borders, on the East it was Jordan, on the West it was the desert and the hill country. On the North it was sharing the border with by Samaria and finally on the South it was the desert (Unger 1957: 617).

Judea is a geographical term that first appears in the Bible in the book of Ezra 5:8, where it designates a province of the Persian Empire. Under the Persian Empire, Judea was a district administered by a governor who was usually a Jew (Haggai 1:14; 2:2). With the banishment of Archelaus, Judea was annexed to the Roman province of Syria, but its governors were procurators appointed by the Roman emperor (2003: 60).

6. Cappadocians – “Cappadocia was a province in the East of Asia Minor: its people were the Aryans (Acts 2:9). The Aryans spoke an Indo-European language. These were the people who invaded northern India in the second millennium B.C. According to the Nazi ideology, Aryans were of the Caucasians race and not of the Jewish descent. Peter the apostle addressed the Cappadonians as well as others.”

7. People of Pontus – Acts2: 9, 18: 2 and 1 Pet 1: 1 all these passages of Scriptures concur in showing that that there were many Jewish people living in this large district of Pontus. It was under Nero that the whole district was made a Roman Province, also bearing the name of Pontus (Unger 1957: 875).

Varathan concurs with Unger when he wrote that,

Pontus means “sea”, which was a large province of northern Asia Minor. It lay along the Black sea (Acts 2:9). Luke mentions in Acts 18:2 that a certain Christian Jew name Aquila was born in Pontus. So far as we know, Pontus and the Northern provinces were not evangelized by Paul. The Holy Spirit did not permit him to preach in Bithynia (Acts 16:7), which was in the region of Pontus. However, Peter the apostle, addresses his first letter to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus. This idea supports the tradition that Peter preached in Northern Asia Minor rather than in Rome after Pentecost (2003: 60).

8. Asians – according to Varathan there are at least three references to Asia namely:

Firstly, it refers to the biggest continent of the six that is east of Europe and Africa. He agrees with Unger when he said, “a name of double origin, which, as a designation along with Europe and Africa, came into use in the 5th century B.C. (Unger 1957: 99).”

Secondly, “it refers to Asia Minor, otherwise Anatolia, and the great western promontory of Asia partially bounded by the three seas: Black, Aegean and Mediterranean.” “In the New Testament the word is used in this narrow sense, sometimes for Asia Minor (Unger 1957: 99).”

Thirdly, “it also means the proconsular Asia, the Roman province in the New Testament times, which contained the South Western part of Asia Minor. The Lord Jesus Christ has a message for the “seven churches of Asia Minor” in the first three chapters of

Revelation.” Unger further says that, “... and sometimes for Proconsular Asia, which latterly included Phrygia, Mysia, Caria, and Lydia (Unger 1957: 99).”

9. Phrygians – Phrygia was a province in South West Asia Minor, inland which once it seemed to include the greater part of the peninsula of Asia Minor, and then it was divided into Phrygia Major and Minor. After obtained by Rome in 133 B.C. they again divided it into three parts, namely Phrygia Salutaris on the east, Phrygia Pacatiana on the west, Phrygia Katakekaumene, which literally means ‘the burnt one’ in the middle for this part was volcanic. “The country was fertile, and its rich pastures made it famous for its breed of cattle (Unger 1957: 863).” Paul crossed through and preached there twice in his second and third apostolic trips (missionary journeys as traditionally known) as recorded in Acts 16:6; 18:23).

10. Pamphylians – Pamphylia means of every race (Unger 1957). “Pamphylia was one of the coast regions and a small Roman province in the Southern Asia Minor extending along the Mediterranean coast about 100 kilometers and 50 kilometers in land to the Taurus Mountains at the time of Paul. It also has Cicilia on the east and Lycia on the western side (Unger 1957: 823). The tiny country is first mentioned in the New Testament in Acts 2:10. Paul visited this territory on his first apostolic trip or venture when he preached at Perga, its chief city (Acts 13:13; 14:24). “It is said that most of the inhabitants of Pamphylia were backward and illiterate. Christianity never flourished there as in other places of Asia Minor.”

11. Egyptians –They too were part of the crowd in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost as mentioned by Luke in Acts 2:10. “Egypt is situated in the North East of the African continent.” According to Unger the ancient Egypt was known and referred to by its inhabitants by the term “Kemet” which means “the black land,” from its dark-coloured Nile mud in contrast with the red sand of the desert (1957: 288). “Egypt is watered by the river Nile, which is one of the longest rivers in the world, about 4000 miles long.” The most common designation to Egypt was “Toui” referring to the two countries, because it was divided into two, the Upper and Lower Egypt. The Lower Egypt was called Mizraim

by the Israelites. Their rulers were called Pharaohs. Their history seems to have begun at about 3000 B.C. Egypt was the centre of civilization of the ancient world and a powerful empire in the Old Testament times. It was also known as the 'granary of the world' and of the Roman Empire. It was also known as cultural and civilization centre of the New Testament times.

12. Libyans – Libya is a country situated in Northern Africa. West of Egypt. "The country of the Lubim (Gen 10: 13), the tract lying on the Mediterranean between Egypt and Carthage (Unger 1957)." Lubim is an African race or the indigenous people of Libya, the Libyans. In the Scriptures they are always mentioned with Egyptians and the Ethiopians. For example, they are mentioned together in II Chro 12: 3, II Chro 16: 8, Dan 11: 43 (Unger 1957: 669). Libya is mentioned a number of times in the Scriptures, such as Ezek 30:5, 38:5, Jer. 46:9; Dan 11:43. Cyrene was one of its cities (Acts 2:10) The Libyans spoke one of the North African dialects.

13. Cyrenians – Cyrene was one of the cities of Libya, founded by the Greeks, upon a beautiful tableland in northern African. It was a Greek city, but contained many indigenous people as well as many Jews (Unger 1957). Cyrene means 'a wall.' A native of Cyrene, Simon is mentioned in the New Testament, helping Jesus by carrying his cross in Luke 23:26. It is also mentioned on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2:10. Its Jewish population warranted a synagogue in Acts 6:6 Lucius also from this city is mentioned as one of the leaders of the multicultural local church in Antioch in Acts 11:19-20: 13:1.

14. Romans – in his writing Luke makes mention of Romans in Acts 2:10 who were also present in Jerusalem on that great and historic day, the day of Pentecost. According to Unger Romans may refer to three different groups of people namely:

1. A citizen of the Roman Empire
2. Inhabitants of Rome
3. Those that represent the Roman government

"These are Roman-born Jews now living as foreigners in Jerusalem and considered to have Latin as their mother tongue (2003: 62)."

15. Cretans – Crete is a large island in the Mediterranean. It is now called Candia (Unger 1957: 226). It forms a natural bridge between Europe and Asia Minor. “It lies midway between Syria and Malta. Anciently it possessed a great civilization. The Cretes (Acts 2: 11: “Cretians.” Titus 1:2 A. V.) are now called Cretans(Unger 1957: 226 – 227).” “Paul and Titus planted a church in this place (Titus 1:5-14). The Cretans are referred to as Cherethites in the Old Testament as recorded in I Sam. 30:14. and Ezek 25:16. According to Paul they were not of a high moral character (Titus 1:12).” Unger agrees with Varathan when he said that. ““The Cretans are always lies, evil beast, slow bellies” (literally, idle gluttons) (1957: 227).” It seems that there was an early relationship between the Cretans and the Jews, hence their mention among the people that were present on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2: 10).

16. Arabians –originally Arabia did not refer to the whole peninsula between the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf, only to the northern part, neighbouring Palestine. See Jer 25: 24; Isa 21:13; Ezek 27:21). In the same manner “the Arabian” (Isa 13: 20; Jer 3: 2) does not refer to the Arab in the general sense, but only to the inhabitant of the northern land, treeless but full of grass and desert. Acts 2: 11 denote the Arabs in the general sense. See II Chro 21: 16; Neh 2: 19, 6: 1; Gal 1: 17, 4: 25. In these books the Arabs are spoken of together with the Ethiopians (Unger 1957: 75 – 76). “Their mother tongue was Arabic (2003: 63).”

17. Jews – Literally, would mean the descendant of Judah, one of the early patriarchs of Israelites.

“Originally it denotes one belonging to the tribe of Judah or to the tribe of Judah or to the two tribes of the Southern Kingdom (II Kings 16:6 and 25:25), but later its meaning was extended, and it was applied to anyone of the Hebrew race who returned from captivity. As most of the exiles came from the main historical representatives of ancient Israel, the term Jew came finally to comprehend all of the Hebrew race throughout the world (Esther 2:5 and Matt 2:20). As early as the days of Hezekiah the language of Judah was called Jewish (2003: 63).

18. Proselytes – the Greek word for Proselytes is “proselutos” which mean “a newcomer.” In Hebrew language the word is “ger” which mean “a stranger” (Unger 1957: 894). From the time God made a covenant with Abraham, and the Hebrew nation was born, there were at all times people (Proselytes) living among them. According to Varathan, “A proselyte was foreign resident often rendered ‘stranger’ (Exo 20:10 and Deut 5:14). The word only occurs four times in the New Testament. Jesus on one occasion made mention of ‘compassing sea and land to make one proselyte’ (Matt 23: 1-39).” Luke mentions them in Acts 2:10 Nicolas one of the ‘seven’ selected in Acts 6:1-6 was a proselyte from Antioch. Finally a great number of people that followed Paul and Barnabas, after the former preached in the synagogue at Pasidia Antioch are said to be Jews and devoted proselytes in Acts 13:14 – 41 (cf. Varathan 2003: 58-64).

Commenting about the day of Pentecost and the use of language Hesselgrave says that.

By the same taken, some of the great miracles of human history have involved the potential for good inherent in language. One thinks immediately of the miracle of Pentecost when, “Jew living in Jerusalem, devout men, from every nation under heaven” were bewildered, because they were each one hearing them (the Christian spokesman) speak in his own language (or dialect)” (Acts 2:5-6). Of course, this incident is just part of the longer miracle that is God patiently communicating his truth to fallen humanity down through the ages – communicating it through the use of language (Hesselgrave 1991:345).

5.6 THE CHALLENGE OF MULTICULTURALISM AND LEADERSHIP

The term leader or leadership has been discussed and studied in great detail in almost all spheres of human life. The more it is discussed, studied and thought about, however, the less clear. The critical question is whether a true leader is born or made. Whether do race contribute. Where one can be trained to be a leader and what makes a good and a successful leader?

Questions of this kind are answered in different ways by different people not least of all

because there are plenty of misconceptions which people have embraced about leaders and leadership. When people hear that someone has an impressive title or an assigned leadership position, they assume that he is a leader. Sometimes that is true, but most of the times it is not true because titles do not have much value when it comes to the actual leading. True leadership cannot be awarded, appointed, or assigned. True leadership comes only from influence, and that cannot be mandated. It can only be earned. The only thing a title can buy is a little time – either to increase your level of influence with others or to erase it (Maxwell 1998:13-14).

Multicultural local churches in South Africa need to realize that awarding people of different cultures or colours with positions does not make them true leaders. We need to be open minded and realize that people with an ability to influence others, irrespective of their cultural backgrounds and race, ought to be brought into the local leadership structures, so that they may be helped to increase their sphere of influence. If more people with leadership potential are recognized and are brought into leadership positions, one believes that more multicultural local churches in South Africa will emerge.

Maxwell continues by quoting Bill Hybels, the pastor of Willow Creek Community Church in Barrington, Illinois, one of the largest churches in North America, saying that the church is the most leadership-intensive enterprise in our societies (Maxwell 1998:18). It is possible for everyone to be surprised by Hybels statement. What does he mean when he says that "...the church is the most leadership-intensive enterprise in society." We must all remember that church leadership is not positional leadership like in business and in the army. Positional leadership does not work in the church, because leaders in the church do not have leverage. In business or in the army, the leader has incredible leverage. In the military, the leader can use his power of rank to get people to do what he wants them to do. Likewise in business, bosses have tremendous leverage in the form of salary and benefits. It is because of this leverage that people in all other spheres, except the church, will cooperate. The church, however, is the only institution where leadership works out in its purest form. Leaders have only their influences to help them. As Maxwell says, "Leadership is influence – nothing more, nothing less (Maxwell

1998:17).”

This leaves us with the assumption that church leadership is faced with the biggest challenge in South Africa. Other leaders in business and the military can rely on leverage while church leaders have nothing to take on the challenge of multiculturalism in local churches except their influence, and their followers’ understanding or belief in the Holy Scriptures. The challenge is for the present crop of leaders to bring multicultural local churches out of previously divided communities. Although business leaders do have leverage to drive changes in their world, they have left the church so far behind that the luxury of division on the basis of colour, economic status or culture can no longer be allowed. Church leadership has a role in breaking these barriers and bringing about multicultural local churches. Schein has this to say on the role of leaders and culture:

...as its environment changes to the point where some of its assumptions are no longer valid, leadership comes into play once more. Leadership now is the ability to step outside the culture that created the leader and to start evolutionary change processes that are more adaptive. This ability to perceive the limitations of one’s own culture and to develop the culture adoptively is the essence and ultimate challenge of leadership (Schein 1992:2).

There is no doubt in the mind of any believer in South Africa who is serious about the Church and its condition that one has reached a place where one needs revolutionary change, especially in leadership. If leaders are to fulfill this challenge, they must first understand the dynamics of different cultures of different people in their local churches and in South Africa as a whole. Since leadership and culture are two sides of the same coin, Schein says that:

The most important message for leaders at this point is to try to understand culture, give it its due, and ask yourself how well you can begin to understand the cultures in which you are embedded (Schein 1992:2).

5.6.1 The Leadership Challenges of Multiculturalism

Most of us in our role as teachers or preachers of the word of God and in advancement of His Kingdom will agree that we have crossed paths with many and varied people. Yet,

we still find it difficult to understand why people act and behave as they do. Too much of what we observe in people seems to border on irrational behaviour, although the people being observed would rarely describe it as such. Our senior leaders, especially those from different cultures, often frustrate us or disappoint us by the way they communicate or give instructions. Leaders, as well, are frustrated and disappointed by followers who act seemingly incomprehensibly. As though that was not enough, we see communication problems and misunderstandings between members of different cultures that should not be happening between people of the same faith, or even between reasonable people.

Leaders should spend time understanding the cultures of other leaders and of local church members, rather than focusing on production or output. If we continue to ignore these cultural issues they can work against our effectiveness. They can threaten the very life issues we as the Church of God exist for: caring and loving. This is because quite often, cultural misunderstandings or tensions can rapidly raise the level of conflict. Schein articulates this point when he says that:

If we are leaders who are trying to get our organizations to become more effective in the face of severe environmental pressure, we are sometimes amazed at the degree to which individuals and groups in the organization will continue to behave in obviously ineffective ways, often threatening the very survival of the organization. As we try to get things done that involve other groups, we often discover that they do not communicate with each other and the level of conflict between groups in organizations and in the community is often astonishingly high (Schein 1992:4).

Many local churches have been exposed to this effect: where their members show different behaviour to people of their own culture, compared to those of another culture. Sometimes leaders only become aware of this when members start leaving the local church because members of another culture are increasing in number. As a result, they leave and join local churches, where their homogeneity is protected. This kind of behaviour cuts across the very message of the kingdom of God and the love of Christ who died for people of all cultures. It is unfortunate that this kind of behaviour or lack of cultural tolerance seems to be tolerated and perpetuated by leaders in the South African local churches. Many times, local churches are composed of members of different

cultures only in and during the church meetings, yet they still struggle to communicate cross-culturally. This destroys the very spirit of community that we are committed to building and experiencing.

The challenge here is with leaders to learning and trying to understand people and their different cultures, in order for them to bridge the gap. The leaders of local churches need to understand the dynamics of culture, in order to lead their people and churches in this critical environment of South Africa. If leaders are leading with a positive attitude in this area, it will help to ensure that no cultural group dominates others. Instead there will be better understanding of one another and more effective interaction among the groups. In most local churches in South Africa, one can feel these differences even as one walks inside the church building on Sunday morning. Schein adds:

The concept of culture helps explain all of these phenomena and to “normalize” them. If we understand the dynamics of culture, we will be less likely to be puzzled, irritated and anxious when we encounter the unfamiliar and seemingly irrational behaviour of people in organizations, and will have a deeper understanding not only of why various groups of people or organizations can be so different but also why it is so hard to change them. A deeper understanding of cultural issues in groups and organizations is necessary to decipher what goes on in them but, even more important, to identify what may be the priority issues for leaders and leadership (Schein 1992:4-5).

5.6.2 South Africanisation of Local Churches’ Leadership

It is most striking and shameful to visit local churches in our towns and cities and find that the leadership is far from resembling the new South Africa that is talked about. In most cases you still find the local churches’ membership composed of both Black and Whites, yet the leadership of the church is predominantly White. In this case, it will be fitting to use the word of Albie Sachs when he says that:

The most striking thing about the legacy of apartheid is its tangibility. Just as no aspect of daily life was too grand or too petty to escape the system’s active attentions, so today its heritage pervades every aspect of daily existence, and does so in a most concrete way (Adams ed. 1993:107).

The church's leadership should be shared amongst all people irrespective of their cultures, but as things stand today, this is true of very few multicultural churches in South Africa. One cannot hide by blaming apartheid, although many do not like it. If it was not because of apartheid would the Church in South Africa be so divided today? Apartheid has so entrenched in us the inferiority and superiority complexes that we have, hence, the need to South Africanize the leadership of the Church in South Africa. In his words Sachs says that:

By South Africanizing South Africa we mean acknowledging its full dimensions as a country and actively recognizing the value and worth of all its people. To achieve this, we have, all of us, to break through the laws, habits and assumptions that restrict participation in the country's public, economic and cultural life. The full and varied richness of all South Africans has to be able to express itself.

To the extent that the African people have been the main victims of exclusion in the past, so they will be the main beneficiaries of inclusion in the future. Yet the objective will not be to replace one form or race rule or hegemony with another. Rather, it will be to get rid of the system of race domination altogether (Adams ed. 1993:110).

The local churches in South Africa need to start recognizing and acknowledging people of all different cultures. Our local churches will only be true South African churches when they start to include all races and cultures which are coming in and making them a part of the life of the church in all the leadership levels. This, however, does not mean giving them empty positions, but it means giving them leadership positions with authority to make decisions that determine the direction of the local church. The South Africanisation process is a challenge to leadership because it must start with the present crop of leaders having a desire to change and being proactive. If the present crop of leaders has no desire to change and is not proactive in bringing through leaders of different colours and cultures, this will remain a dream. There is a need to see local churches in South Africa comprising of members and leaders of different cultures working together and every day becoming a symbol of reconciliation and peace, which constitutes the kingdom of God.

Part of the challenge of South Africanisation of local churches is because others see this

process as affirmative action. This term is very disturbing to some people, especially the previously advantaged groups. They tend to view this as a way of disadvantaging them or the lowering of standards in order to accommodate the unqualified on the basis of colour. Still others see it as “window dressing.”

The background of affirmative action is well articulated by Wingrove when he says that:

Affirmative Action is an American term first introduced by President Kennedy in 1961, but only legislated for the first time in the United States by President L.B. Johnson in 1965 (Wingrove 1995:5).

Wingrove then explains what affirmative action is all about, when he says that:

Affirmative Action is an anti-discrimination measure that is reinforced by legislation and judicial intervention. It finds its roots in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights formulated in the 1940's by International Labour Organization which states that everyone is entitled to pursue his material wellbeing and to spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity without discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political views, national extraction, social origins, property, birth, or any other status (Wingrove 1995:5).

If affirmative action is “anti-discrimination measures” then the Church in South Africa should go beyond practicing affirmative action by not discriminating against people on the basis of their colour or their culture when considering leadership positions. It is true that the Church cannot try to please the people and the government of the day by being politically correct. What if the Church is not practicing what is biblical and in this case discriminating on the basis of colour and culture? If the Church is not moving forward or reversing the evil legacy of apartheid, those outside will demand that there be affirmative action. They will not call it a biblical principle because it is not in their language. This might cause those in the Church to defensively respond by saying “we do not want to be politically correct.” Political correctness is not the issue, however, adherence to the Bible is. The question is what is the Church in South Africa doing about the biblical message? It seems that if we had moved on as God wanted us to, terms such as “Affirmative Action” would not have created problems, especially in the Church. We would have been

doing what they, in politics and business, call affirmative action without calling it affirmative action.

Wingrove continues to define affirmative action in a manner that seem to align to the Scriptures. He defines it in the following words:

- 1 It concentrates on development and promotion of the disadvantaged group
- 2 It readdresses imbalances. It identifies positions or roles that were previously inaccessible to the disadvantaged group by denying them special training and development.
- 3 A range of compensatory and preferential programmes for the disadvantaged.
- 4 To remedy the continuing consequences of past wrongs and future consequences of present wrongs.
- 5 Accelerated advancement of the previously disadvantaged.
- 6 A process of creating mechanisms to ensure equal opportunities based on existing potential capabilities of the previously disadvantaged population groups.
- 7 A set of procedures aimed at pro-actively addressing the disadvantages experienced by sections of the community in the past.
- 8 It addresses the disadvantages caused by poor education, prejudice, segregation, job reservation, racism, lack of political rights and unequal distribution of wealth (Wingrove 1995:5-7).

From the above definitions, it is clear that affirmative action in the business world is a pro-active and a conscious effort to redress disadvantages of the past, such as those caused by poor education, prejudice, segregation, racism, lack of political rights, unequal distribution of wealth and the whole of the apartheid system that has impacted tremendously the country and the Church to this day. If the Church of South Africa were to borrow this meaning it would mean to accelerate the advancement and representation

into leadership positions of the previously disadvantaged and the now marginalized cultural groups of the population. Repentance is not passive, toward God and on the side of the sinner himself. It is proactive from both sides. God acted before we even loved Him through Jesus' death on the cross to make salvation possible for us. For us to receive this salvation, we need to actively respond. James said that, "Faith without action is dead." Although we receive our salvation by faith, our faith must show works of repentance. There must be action on the side of the local churches and the present leadership in South Africa, in order for us to realize true multicultural local churches and leadership. This must start mainly with leaders in those local churches wanting to see leaders emerging from other cultural groups, especially the previously disadvantaged.

This will result in a leadership that is culturally diverse. The kind of leadership values every individual for his/her cultural uniqueness and allows them freedom to bring in their special talents and gifts without fear of prejudice from the local church members or other leaders. Talents and gifts which come into our local churches through individuals from different cultural groups should be utilized to benefit the whole church. In this way, our churches would be seeking to explore individual cultural values and give them due respect irrespective of their differences. By so doing, in our multicultural local churches, we will reject assimilations, but seek to expand and draw from all cultures present and those that will come in the future to accommodate the diversity of members and leadership and encourage individuality the within community (Wingrove 1995:8).

5.6.3 The Causes of Failure for Multicultural Leadership

There are many reasons being given for the failure of multicultural leadership in the local church context. This is after many local churches tried and found themselves hurt and disappointed. Many of those attempts took place just after the democratic election in 1994. With the desire to be biblical and relevant, many local churches opened their doors for the first time to all races and cultures that are found in South Africa and their neighbourhood. Within the first few months or even years it seemed a good and wonderful idea. However, as time went on, reality confronted those local churches and

many believers and leaders were left hurting, disappointed and with false conclusions about multiculturalism.

The following have been found by a number of researchers to be the causes for failure in promoting a cultural diverse leadership in the local churches in South African:

- No commitment or visible support for the process of a new multicultural leadership from the original **homogeneous** leadership of the local church. The leadership of local churches **has** to show their support and desire to see leaders of other cultures and races emerging and coming through their ranks. This process should proceed in a way that demonstrates the benefits, not only to the leadership but also to all the members of the local church, communities at large, and above all the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- The objectives and success criteria were not established and clearly communicated to all the members in the local church concerned. This happens when leaders assume that their followers will simply understand what they want to introduce because it is in the Bible. Leaders need to communicate the truth and the benefits about multiculturalism from the Scriptural point of view and out of their own personal conviction just as they do with other subjects such as finance (tithe and offerings), justice, salvation, love for each other and many more. In other words, this subject of multiculturalism must be taught or preached to our people or in the local churches even before we start with the process itself. This does not mean that we have to wait for everyone in our local church to agree with us about what God wants from His Church as far as multiculturalism is concerned. It is the duty of the leadership to keep on reminding members about the love of Christ for all the people of all cultures, irrespective of our discomfort with them. They may not all agree at the end because some of them are still deeply trapped in the apartheid way of thinking, and are not even aware of it. However, that does not change the truth that the Church of Jesus Christ is for all the people from everywhere, anywhere at anytime.

- The process of multiculturalism was not part of the local church's strategic plan. It was also not regarded as an important and biblical strategic issue or vision to unify the body of Christ in the specific community. Bringing through leaders of different races and cultural groups is a strategy that sets the local church on course to winning, because it opens up the doors of the local church to all people. The local church will be able to communicate and reach people of different cultures with the Gospel message of Christ. If the leadership is limited to one cultural group of people in our country or community the local church will, therefore, also be limited in its attempt to reach out people. In its decision making, it will not cater for a multicultural local church, which is demanded by the change to a multicultural society we have seen since the dawn of the new democratic South Africa.
- The pressure to have other population groups in leadership positions of the local church often creates a situation of tokenism, that is, a leadership position without any real decision making power! This situation is seen in the areas of direction and finances. A true leader must have powers to suggest the direction in which the local church should go and know how finances are coming in and how they are spent and on what. Otherwise, the so called leader is set to failure because he is not informed of the very issues that pertain to the life of the local church.
- The issues of managing and valuing cultural and racial diversity are not entrenched through orientation and cross-cultural communication programmes and the local church climate do not encourage these values through its leadership. You always find that one cultural group, obviously the dominant and powerful one always wants things to be done in a way that fits and endorses its culture. For example, singing. All songs are composed and sung in a way that fit one cultural group. The rest are setup to fail because of a lack of spiritual fulfillment during worship. The other group lacks fulfillment because no song is sung to meet their cultural expectation. Instead they always have to fit into the others' way of

singing. To overcome this, there should be cross-cultural training from time to time in the local churches. This will help the members, as well as the leaders, to be aware and sensitive of other people's cultural values.

Wingrove articulates this point when he says that:

In looking at the challenges we face with black/white integration in South Africa, it becomes evident that past apartheid practices have created major difficulties for speedy, easy acceptance of total racial equality and the abolishment of centuries of prejudice (Wingrove 1995:27).

The challenge we face in the South African local churches is to avoid obstructing the picture of what the true Church of God is to be. The challenge is the responsibility of both Black and White people in the Church. This is so because what is done in the Church today, in South Africa, especially when it comes to leadership positions, is done in an environment that is conducive to reinforcing the old and ugly myth of Whites being superior and Blacks inferior. This results in the rejection of the whole integration process by all the people.

In the same vein, Wingrove goes on to make a point on how this challenge and lack of acceptance of each other in the local church affects us when he says that:

This is not difficult to understand. How can a White be reasonably expected to summarily accept the fact that there are Blacks who are his equals when he has never been exposed to one?

How can a Black be reasonably expected to feel equal of a White when he has never been exposed to a situation where he was treated as one?

We will all have to be sincere and completely honest when dealing with these sensitive issues. All South Africans will have to make major adjustments and undergo a complete mind shift if complete integration and a true culture of equality is to be achieved (Wingrove 1995:27).

5.6.4 What Multicultural Leadership is not

The process of leadership integration envisaged in multicultural local churches should be owned by all believers. The implementation and success of this process is based on how

the present crop of leaders of the Church will communicate with the entire local churches.

Multicultural leadership in the local churches should not be “window dressing”. Outside pressure from the political arena for demographic representation should be avoided in the Church. Instead, the Church should be guided by the Scriptural principles in its desire to succeed in this process. It is not merely replacing leaders of one skin colour with another. That must be avoided at all cost to protect the identity of the Church of God, which is guided and governed by His will revealed in the Holy Scriptures. The focus must be His will, which embraces all people and discriminates against none. This should involve training, developing and empowering each other, especially the previously disadvantaged groups. These should be viewed as brothers and sisters in the kingdom of our God. This, of course, should not be limited to any specific culture and the four walls of the church buildings.

It is not just about training and bringing through Black people to leadership positions in the local churches. The whole process must be holistic. This would mean that you welcome the people as well as take into consideration their culture, which will include the way they show respect, how they communicate with each other, their way of singing, their way of dressing, their body language, and many other things that we can learn from each other over time as we live and serve God together. This must focus on specific biblical approaches and strategies, in order to achieve a reasonable change in the local churches’ value system, so as to bring about acceptance and integration of all people in the life of the local churches.

It is not a “quick fix” solution to all ills. It must be remembered that these ills have been entrenched in our people over a long period of time. There will be many complex changes and sacrifices that will be required in the local churches. Many of the leaders, believers or members included, will not be prepared for these. This demands that the local church leadership and membership not focus exclusively on the short-term, but view the bigger picture of the kingdom of God, which is far bigger than our local

churches and our own cultures.

A multicultural leadership of the local churches should not be viewed as a “nice to have” thing in today’s South African Church, but should be taken as an imperative process for every local church in South Africa, especially those in our towns and cities. It is the only way of meeting the demands of our changing communities and facilitating their migration into multicultural societies of the future. Local churches will not continue to make sense in the future if they avoid this process or challenge.

The process is not about change to “fit in” system. It is not a process whereby we turn White people into black skins or Black people into white skins. It is about valuing and acknowledging each other’s cultures with due respect. It involves creating an atmosphere whereby each group from a specific culture is able to bring its unique flavour to the local church, without fear of being looked down upon or criticised.

It is not about giving everyone equality, but it is about giving everyone an equal chance to succeed. As the wise man, the author of the book of Ecclesiastes says:

I have seen something else under the sun:
The race is not to the swift
or the battle to the strong,
nor does food come to the wise
or wealth to the brilliant
or favour to the learned:
but time and chance
happen to them all (Ecclesiastes 9:11).

Many of us who love the truth and speak the truth would agree that this was not the case in the old apartheid South Africa. Black people were denied opportunities. It is the hope of this research that the Church will level the playing field for all cultures by providing for every one an opportunity to be full and participating member without being discriminated or marginalized on the basis of (language and) culture. The church should avoid retaining the status quo by merely ensuring that all races come together on Sunday morning services and/or during the national church conferences. Instead, it should challenge the system with the intention of changing it for the good of everyone. It is about bringing the new and the biblical order in the life of South African local churches.

Accusations of racism were leveled against Marthinus van Schalkwyk, the South African minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, for challenging the status quo of keeping the Marine and Coastal Management (MCM) in the hands of Whites only. His opponents claim that van Schalkwyk is appointing black managers to receive favour from the ruling party, the African National Congress in Parliament. He had just announced in Parliament that Monde Mayekiso was going to be appointed as the new head of MCM, taking over from Horst Kleinschnedt from the 1st of May 2005. Macleod quotes van Schalkwyk's words challenging the status quo when he says that, he is making a conscious effort to groom black scientists and make environmental conservation an area where we involve everyone. The reality is that to a large extent this is still an area where there are not enough blacks participating (MacLeod 2005:2).

It is not a politically motivated strategy to write about the ills of past injustices, but a bona fide effort to challenge and prepare the Church of God in South Africa, to meet the demands of current and future realities, in order to continue to be relevant and prophetic. It is not a process that is only focused on advancing or adding Blacks in the leadership positions of the local churches. Instead, it is a fully dedicated effort that also re-orientates Whites to be able to understand and fully accept Black believers in the Lord Jesus and to see Black leaders as equals.

There is a deeply entrenched tendency to stereotyping others that needs to be dealt with in the Church, not only in the South African context, but worldwide. This became clear after the death of Karel Wojtyla, the well known Pope John Paul II. The Sowetan newspaper carried an article entitled, "Black pope unlikely." This was when millions of faithful Catholics were pondering who might take over the leadership of the Catholic Church.

The Western world is not yet ready for a black pope Psychologically and spiritually. The West is not ready to welcome a black pope. There is no exclusion to speak of but it is people's mentality. It will take time for people to get used to that.

(An African pope) would be quite a revolution but would be a great challenge for the black pope, for the church and for the world's media (Reuters 2005:10).

The issue was well articulated by a spokesman for the Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference (SACBC) Archbishop Buti Tlhagale when he said that:

In Rome the cardinals enjoy a huge number of Africans becoming Christians but they don't think they are ready (for high positions) ... they fear paganism might come through the back door (Sapa 2005:6).

Tlhagale expressed little hope of Pope John Paul II's successor coming from Africa, saying that:

...because the church in Europe looks on its African congregation as living half in a pagan world. (Sapa 2005:6).

A multicultural leadership in the local churches is not a short-term policy or merely a current fad. It is a long-term, costly, and time-consuming process which will require total commitment from all leaders and members. This will only happen if they are well lead. Then the Church in South Africa will be able to make a very positive contribution to the future of our beautiful rainbow nation.

The big challenge remains that the leadership is the key in building strong and successful multicultural local churches in South Africa. If it cannot work for leaders, the likelihood is that it will not work among the church members. In other words, if the leaders work tirelessly to integrate other cultural groups in their leadership structures, they will find themselves learning how to lead and be sensitive to other cultural groups. At the same time, this will provide them with the opportunity to be urgent in supporting transformation in our country. They will be facilitators in their local churches, promoting the progression from homogeneous local churches to multicultural local churches.

5.6.5 Multicultural Local Churches Leaders as Learners and Facilitators

This is a great challenge for local churches leaders, especially those that accept the Great Commission of Jesus Christ our Lord, to preach the Gospel of His Kingdom to all people.

The challenge is to be a learner and a facilitator at the same time. True leaders cannot lead their people to something they have not experienced themselves. The only way leaders can lead their people in transforming their local churches into multicultural entities, is to be learners themselves.

The leaders must have courage to invite people different from themselves into their leadership team. This will provide them with the opportunity to learn before they start to bring transformation into the local church and act as facilitators. As facilitators, leaders are needed to help the church members during this process of transformation to absorb and deal with anxiety. Even though leaders may not have all the answers at this stage, because they are still learners as much as they are facilitators, they should try to provide stability and emotional assurance to the members. Schein articulates this point when he says that:

In a changing world, the learning leader must not only have vision but must be able to impose it and to develop it further as external circumstances change ... The culture creation leader therefore needs persistence and patience, yet as a learner must be flexible and ready to change.

As groups and organizations develop, certain key emotional issues arise. These have to do with dependence on the leader.

Leadership is needed to help the group identify the issues and deal with them. During this process leaders must often absorb and contain the anxiety that is unleashed when things do not work as they should. Leaders may not have the answer, but they must provide temporary stability and emotional reassurance while the answer is being worked out. This anxiety-containing function is especially relevant during periods of learning, when old habits must be given up before new ones are learned. However, if the world is increasing changing, such anxiety may be perpetual, requiring learning leaders to assume a perpetual supportive role (Schein 1992:375).

It is obvious that during this process emotions will run high, especially when things are not working as members and even the leaders thought. This is so because every time a group of people venture into a journey of transformation, the future may not be as clear as it is to the leaders. It should be borne that the local church members would still be at the first stage of this process while leaders have gone past this first stage into the second

stage of facilitation. It is during this stage that it is imperative that the leaders of the local churches create order out of chaos. It is also during this stage that a multicultural leadership is expected to provide its biblical assumptions as an initial road map into the uncertain future. The more aware and experienced leaders are in this process of transformation, the more consistent and effective they can be to implement it (Schein 1992:376).

As the process continues, people of different cultures will start to see the door of opportunity open for them in specific local churches, which has a multicultural leadership prepared to juggle with challenges so as to accommodate all sorts of people. This, of course brings yet other challenges or opportunities for the constructive use of cultural diversity. The problems of integrating both become greater. The leadership of the multicultural local churches must now pay special attention to cultural diversity and how much of it is potentially dysfunctional and assure their people that this is a useful development for the church. To put this matter straight Schein says that:

The leader(s) at this stage must be able to detect how the culture influences the strategy, structure, procedures, and ways in which the group members relate to one another. Culture is a powerful influence on member's perceptions, thinking, and feeling, and these predispositions, along with situational factors influence members behaviour. Because culture serves an important anxiety – reducing function, members cling to it even if it becomes dysfunctional in relationship to environmental opportunities and constraints.

Leaders at this stage need diagnostic skill to figure out not only what the cultural influences are, but also what their impact is on the organization's ability to change and learn ... To help the organization solve evolve into whatever will make it most effective in the future. Leaders must also have culture management skills. In some instances this may mean increasing cultural diversity, allowing some of the uniformity that may have been built up in the growth stage to erode. In other instances it may mean pulling together a culturally diverse set of organizational unit and attempting to impose new common assumptions on them. In either case the leader(s) needs (1) to be able to analyze the cultures in sufficient detail to know which cultural assumptions can aid and which ones will hinder the fulfillment of the organizational mission and (2) to possess the intervention skills to make desired changes happen (Schein 1992:377-378).

However, Schein says that leaders need the insight and the ability to help the organization “evolve into whatever will make it most effective in the future.” Other organizations like business companies can be changed to be “whatever” the leaders think will make it successful into the future but not with the Church of God. Sometimes the church leader has to do or say things that are not popular. This might include not giving the church an indication of a better future. The success of the Church is not measured with the same instrument as business or politics. The Church’s success is in doing and saying God’s will, even in the face of danger but in accordance with His Word, the Bible

Cape High Court Judge Nthupeko Yekiso was quoted by Mpumelelo Mkahabela speaking out against the rumours that surfaced from the court’s corridors that his president, John Hlophe, wrote a judgement on his behalf and that he failed to “properly read” the worst records of the cases.

The rumour about Judge Yekiso relates to a case pitting the State against the Pharmaceutical Society of South Africa and New Clicks, who are challenging the government’s price regulations for medicines.

In his response to the Cape High court, Judge Yekiso stated his position in the same way that the multicultural church leaders at this time in South Africa should maintain do. He said he would not be deterred from executing his public function, which includes making judgements that may be both popular and unpopular depending on people’s interests (Kabuli 2004:7). Judge Yekiso knows his duties and he is not prepared to be deterred from them in order to buy people’s favour. He is not going to say whatever people want him to say, but what his office or position requires him to say. This should be the unshakable position of the Church and the leaders: to say and do things that are unpopular, but biblical in such as condemning the separation of the Church on the basis of culture. The church should promote the need for multiculturalism in the Church in South Africa. The local churches and the leaders that will venture into this course should not expect praise but criticism from within their own ranks and from without because

they are doing something that is not popular in the South African context. By so doing, every little mistake that will take place in the local church or within the leadership will be exaggerated by their critics. Criticisms become very vicious if they are related to anything that has to do with cultural diversity or people of different cultures, as if in the mono-cultural local churches there are no problems amongst the members and their leaders.

Judge Yekiso said this after Judge President Hlophe and himself in August 2004 concurred in their judgement and found in favour of the government, rejecting the application to amend or set aside the regulations. Some of the White judges, including Judge Jeanette Traverso, differed with them (Mkhabela 2004:7).

It takes special qualities for the leaders of the local churches to assume the status of learners and thereafter of facilitators. Once people see themselves as leaders and others regard them as leaders, it is very difficult for them to learn or be learners again. This is notwithstanding that many people agree that good leaders are always learning. It is never easy to learn as a leader. It will be easier to be a facilitator than a learner because in the former you act like one who knows and sometimes as an expert to those who do not have the knowledge you possess, no matter how limited your knowledge may be.

5.6.6 Effective Leaders of Multicultural Local Churches

It is not every leader that can lead a multicultural local church, especially in the South African situation, where you find different cultural groups even amongst White and Black people. For example, amongst the Black people, you find that there are Zulus, Tswanas, Vendas, and many others that have different cultures. The same applies to the Whites. You find that there are Afrikaners, Scottish, Americans, Germans, and many more others with totally different cultures. On top of all the abovementioned differences between Black and White, or as it is commonly said, Africans and Westerners, it will take effective leaders who can harness three forces, of knowledge, trust and power (Zand 1997:3)

The first force for effective leadership in the triad is knowledge. Effective leaders are not just doers or just practitioners, but they should know or find out what should be done in their local church context. In other words, the leaders develop a vision and they also know how to fulfill that vision by eliciting knowledge from others. They set clear challenging goals that would not necessarily discourage their people. They know what needs to be done to reach the goals. Effective leaders do not claim to be omniscient – all knowing or all-wise. They are wise enough to reserve that for their God only, but they know how to gain access to the knowledge that others have and they know how to work with people of different cultures and to put their knowledge, plus that of others into action or for the benefit of all different people in the local church. They are not threatened by new knowledge or other people's knowledge, which is different from theirs.

The second force of effective leaders in the triad is trust. In other words effective leaders trust other people and their cultures as they do their own. Because they trust others, people will in turn give them loyalty and commitment. Triadic leaders earn trust by disclosing relevant information, sharing influence, and competently using knowledge received from others. They are not insecure. They trust others and earn trust through dealing with others fairly. Effective leaders will always try to fulfill the spirit of their agreements, share rewards and hard times and not abuse the power vested on them by God and their people. They are not necessarily loved or liked for their sayings and their doings, although they may be loved by some. This is so because effective leaders are not angels without human failings or shortcomings.

The third force in the triadic leadership of effective multicultural local churches leaders is power. Effective leaders use their power more appropriately. They know when and how to be directive or to delegate. They know how to review and evaluate constructively. Effective leaders in the multicultural local churches know how to be consultants, and how to provide guidance rather than issuing commands. When dealing with different cultural groups they are flexible in their exercise of power (Zand 1997:3-4).

5.7 Conclusion

The world is shrinking to what many people would call 'global village.' This is the result of many people moving from one country and one continent to the other. On the other hand, many South Africans are traveling from rural areas to urban settings. People are moving in areas that use to be of a certain population of the country. As a result of people settling in different towns and cities of South Africa without being segregated on the basis of colour, people are also seeking their spiritual homes. They are moving in the local churches, hence the challenge of multiculturalism in the local churches. The challenge is how do these people with different cultural background relate to one another and how should the leadership address them and be relevant to each culture without being bias and/or compromising the gospel message. This challenge is further imposed on the local churches in South Africa as it is recorded by all three authors of the gospels of the New Testament. They all agree that this gospel is to be preached to people of different races and cultures.

The new dispensation of democracy has presented the Church in South Africa with a reality that cannot be denied. The local churches do not have to go and cross the borders to experience multiculturalism. We have learnt in this chapter that multiculturalism has come into the local churches. The arrival of people of different cultures has also brought challenges in the local churches.

There are five challenges that we learnt that they come with people of different cultures coming together to worship in a local church. The challenges are as follows: the challenge of multiculturalism and community. Community is more than the sum of its parts or its individual members. We come to learn that community is integrative. It incorporates people of various cultures, ages, sexes, life styles and stages of development. Also that true community does not obliterate individuals or diversity but rather embraces the opposites and welcomes other peoples' perspectives. It also seeks to see the other side of every issue that has arisen within itself. A community has characteristics that make it to be true to its members. The characteristics are inclusivity – the community is and must be inclusive to all its members. Commitment – willingness from the members to coexist. Realism – dealing with every issue from a realistic point of view. Contemplation – increased awareness of the world outside oneself; the world inside one self; and the

relationship between the two worlds. A safe place – community must constitute a place of real safety to its entire people. A laboratory for personal disarmament – a local church should be a safe place to experiment people’s new relationships. A group that can fight gracefully – these are people that are able to resolve their conflicts through consensus without physical or emotional bloodshed. A group of all leaders – people are delegated responsibility of leadership as a need arise. And the spirit of community – this is when the community has reached the atmosphere of love and peace.

Secondly, is the challenge of multiculturalism and contextualization. This is the art of making the gospel relevant to all the listeners without compromising the truth of the message. “It is letting theology speak in and through the context.” Contextualization is a way of doing theology by considering the word of God and the people’s context seriously. In other words, it is doing justice to both the gospel and the hearers of the message.

Thirdly, is the challenge of multiculturalism and equality. Equality refers to treating all people in the local church with fairness and with justice. We have also learnt that the Bible teaches us that we are all created in the image of the same God regardless of the colour of the skin and culture. The theology of incarnation reminds us of how God chose to come and identify with us who are sinners. That through Jesus God become equal to us. This does not suggest that he ceased to be God. Equality can be achieved when others stop imposing their culture on the other members of the local church by using the Bible. Members of the local churches should also learn not use the ‘us’ and ‘them’. The weak and the vulnerable should be protected in the Church.

Fourthly, is the challenge of multiculturalism and communication. The local church is a place of communication. People communicate to both God and their fellow human beings. Communication takes place in many different forms. There is verbal and non-verbal communication that takes place between members and also between the preacher and members of the local church. Communication in this thesis may mean sharing of information from one person to another. The challenge of communicating in the multicultural context is that communication does not take place in a void. People always communicate within a certain context. Therefore, communicators of the gospel need to take into account the situation they find themselves ministering in and seriously make

adjustments in their preaching accordingly. In the context of multiculturalism, if the preacher does not take into account different cultural setting he or she may be guilty of ethnocentrism. The context of multiculturalism demands that the communicators of the gospel should have a good biblical view of the Bible and also of cultures. Language is an important element of culture. Language can be used to both include and exclude people in the local church. It can also be helpful in building a multicultural community. There is a need in South Africa to use at least two languages in the local churches especially during the preaching.

The fifth and the last challenge identified in this thesis is the challenge of multiculturalism and leadership. Leadership plays a big role in the promotion of multiculturalism in the local churches. If the leadership is composed of people of one particular culture may be bias in favour of their culture. This may not be done intentionally but the point remains. Leadership need to represent it community. The leaders should work to raise other leaders from people of different cultures from their own. Leaders should also play a role in fostering integration and good relationship among people of different cultures in the local church. In other words, they should play the role of bridging the gap and make sure that the whole process of multiculturalism becomes a success.

The five challenges of multiculturalism lead us to the interpretation of data that was gathered to check and verify if the findings of this thesis as found in the different literatures is supported by evidence in the local churches in South Africa.

CHAPTER SIX

PRESENTATION OF DATA AND ANALYSIS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

To further explore the challenge of multiculturalism in the local churches of South Africa, this study was taken beyond the literature research. Three workshops were conducted in the three major cities of South Africa, namely, Cape Town on 10 June 2006 at Friends First Church International, Durban on 11 February 2006 at Hillside Church and Johannesburg on 27 May 2006 at the Junction Church. The letter of invitation was sent to the three churches that were facilitating the workshops. They then sent the letter to different local churches in their communities. See an example of the letter of invitation attached herein. It is the conviction of the researcher that the local churches in these cities may be faced with the challenge of multiculturalism more than those in other areas, such as the rural areas. People of different cultural backgrounds immigrate to these cities from around the world for all sorts of reasons. The main reason, of course, is economic although one cannot push aside education and tourism.

The three provinces, namely, Gauteng, Kwazulu-Natal and Western Cape have shown massive population growth from 1996 to 2001. Gauteng grew from 7 348 423 to 8 837 178, Kwazulu-Natal from 8 417 021 to 9 426 017 and Western Cape from 3 956 875 to 4 524 335 (Stats SA: 013). The largest increase in population size over the five year period between censuses was in Gauteng with 20, 3%, followed by the Western Cape with 14, 3%. Kwazulu- Natal showed a growth rate of 12, 0%. The three provinces have topped the population growth list in the last few years of democratic change in South Africa. All over South Africa, people are relocating mostly to these three provinces. Internal migration of people from the less industrialized to the more industrialized provinces may in part explain these differences in population growth (Stats SA: 015). These facts explain better why the workshops were conducted in these provinces, in particular, the three major cities in South Africa.

Workshop participants came from different local churches in and around the three cities. In each workshop the participants represented different denominational backgrounds. It is exciting to report that the workshops included, amongst others, people from different cultures and different racial groups, leaders and members of local churches. More than eleven languages were represented in the workshops. The participants were gender balanced because there were both males and females ranging between 17 and 65 years in age. Students and post-graduates scholars of different fields of study, more specifically those in the fields of theology, religion and culture were also represented.

This chapter seeks to present the findings of the workshops conducted and thereafter, the final results from, which we will make deductions and a number of recommendations as to how to deal with the challenge of multiculturalism in the local churches in South Africa.

The following are the questionnaire and the letter of invitation samples. These are the instruments used by the researcher to reach the objectives of this thesis. The letter was used to invite people to come and participate during the workshops. On the other hand, the questionnaire was employed to solicit information from individual participant.

6.1.1 Letter of Invitation Sample

This sample would be sent to a local church that would be helping to organize the workshop. They would in turn make more copies and sent them to local congregations in their areas. The letters of invitation would be sent in a form of a hard copy or an e-mail.

Enq: 072 197 4944

Ref. No: 11/02/06

P.O. BOX 3113

MAKHADO

0929

11 February 2006

To Whom It May Concern:

I. Ntshengedzeni John Mphaphuli pastor of Harvest Church International (relating to New Covenant Ministries International – NCMI) in Limpopo Province at Matidza Village and a PhD student (student No. 204000048) of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. hereby invite you to come and make your contribution by participating in the workshop that will be conducted in your area. Workshop details are as follows:

Facilitator: Mphaphuli N.J

Research topic: The Changing Face of South Africa: The Challenge of Multiculturalism in the Local Churches and the Early Church

Who can attend: Any member and leader of a local church but not more than 10 delegate per one local church

Venue: Hillside Church

Date: 11 February 2006

Time: 9h:00 – 12h:00

Admission: Free

May you please be informed that although it is not a requirement for you to attend you will be asked to complete a questionnaire towards the end of the workshop. Please stay for refresh after the workshop.

Thank you in anticipation for your positive response and contribution in this thesis seeking to address this important and challenging issue in the local churches of our country as we all work toward fulfilling the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ in the gospel of Matt 28: 19 – 20.

May you please help us by responding seven (7) days before the workshop and inform us

how many people would attend from your church. This is to help us for catering purpose. This respond must be communicated to the local church organizing the workshop. Only queries that seek to understand something about the workshop should be directed to me

Yours truly, in His service

.....

6.1.2 Workshop Procedures

One delegate from the organizing local church would take the podium to well come all the delegates present and introduce the workshop facilitator that is the researcher. He would then make the introduction by explaining the purpose of the workshop. That is for him to fulfill the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. He will continue by mentioning the research topic: The Changing Face of South Africa: The Challenge of Multiculturalism in the Local Churches and the Early Church and the objectives of the study. In his address the facilitator would not allow himself go or drawn into discussions that would later influence the completion of questionnaire by participants. When he has finish doing the introduction, which will be aimed to last for thirty (30) minutes maximum time, he would then ask the participants if there is any question that seek further explanation for clarity and understanding. Not all questions would be entertained by both the facilitator and delegates. Some questions would be regarded as both irrelevant and not going to contribute anything for this study purpose. Through the facilitator the participants would agree that the question be left out.

The facilitator would then remind the participants about the completion of the questionnaire. And that it is not compulsory but important for ever one to complete it. There was no time limit in completing the questionnaire. Participants would discouraged to discuss with each other while they are busy filling in the questionnaire. After completing the questionnaire delegates would hand it to the facilitator and proceed to another room for refreshments.

6.1.3 Questionnaire Sample

The questionnaire is divided into two sections, that is, section A and section B. Section A provides the biographical data of the participants. Section B explores and checks the knowledge and views of the participants as far as the status and the challenge of multiculturalism in their local churches.

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DEGREE: Doctor of Philosophy
SUPERVISOR: Dr. I.S Meko

RESEARCH TITLE:

THE CHANGING FACE OF SOUTH AFRICA: THE CHALLENGE OF MULTICULTURALISM IN THE LOCAL CHURCHES AND THE EARLY CHURCH.

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE:

FEBRUARY – JUNE 2006

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR LOCAL CHURCHES' LEADERS AND MEMBERS

AIM:

TO EXPLORE THE VIEWS OF CHURCH LEADERS AND MEMBERS OF LOCAL CHURCHES ABOUT THE CHALLENGE OF MULTICULTURALISM

THE INSTRUMENT EXPLORES THE FOLLOWING DIMENSIONS:

Section A: Demographic Data

Section B: Knowledge and views about the challenge of multiculturalism in the local churches

METHODS: SEMI-STRUCTURED QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE NUMBER: ____ ____ ____

DATE OF THE INTERVIEW: ____ ____ / ____ ____ / ____ ____ ____

SECTION A
BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

1.1 GENDER

- A. Male _____
- B. Female _____

1.2 RACIAL GROUP

- A. Black _____
- B. Coloured _____
- C. Indian _____
- D. White _____

1.3 HOME LANGUAGE

1.4 CHURCH NAME AND AFFILIATION

- A. _____
- B. _____

1.5 POSITIONAL STATUS

- A. Leader _____
- B. Member _____

SECTION B

Knowledge and views about the challenge of multiculturalism in the local churches in the South African context.

1.1 What do you understand about the term multiculturalism in the local church context?

1.2 Do local churches in South Africa promote multiculturalism?

- A. Yes ____
- B. No ____

1.2.1 Briefly explain your answer.

1.3 Is there a need for multicultural local churches in South Africa?

- A. Yes ____
- B. No ____

6.4.14 Briefly explain your answer, why?

1.4 What should local churches do in South Africa to promote multiculturalism and How?

1.4.1 Mention at least three and give a brief explanation on each.

A.

B.

C.

1.5 Is there any relationship between multiculturalism and Christianity?

- A. Yes
- B. No

1.5.1 Briefly explain your answer

1.6 Does the Bible say anything about the issue of multiculturalism?

- A. Yes
- B. No

1.6.1 Briefly explain your answer taking into consideration the following scriptural references:

- A. Acts 2 – the day of Pentecost
- B. Acts 10 – Peter and Cornelius
- C. Acts 13 – the church in Antioch
- D. Others specify

1.7 In what way will the practice or promotion of multiculturalism in the local Churches in South Africa benefit the leaders and the members?

A. Leaders

B. Members

1.8 What language/s is used as a medium of communication in your local church?

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____

1.9 Do you consider your local church to be multicultural?

- A. Yes _____
- B. No _____

1.9.1 If yes, indicate the demographic breakdown in percentages.

- A. Blacks _____ %
- B. Coloured _____ %
- C. Indians _____ %
- D. Whites _____ %

1.9.2 If yes, what could be the possible reason?

1.10 What is the demographic composition of the leadership of your local church?

- A. Blacks _____ %
- C. Coloured _____ %
- D. Indians _____ %
- E. Whites _____ %

1.11 Describe the general state of the local churches in relation to multiculturalism in South Africa today.

1.12 Comment on the challenge of multiculturalism in the local churches with specific reference to the following:

A. Multiculturalism and community

B. Multiculturalism and equality

C. Multiculturalism and communication

D. Multiculturalism and contextualization

E. Multiculturalism and leadership

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION.

GOD BLESS YOU.

SECTION A

6.2 Biographical Data

6.2.1 Gender

Table 6.1 Gender representation

Gender	Number	%
Males	73	53.28%
Females	64	46.72%
TOTAL	137	100%

Table 6.1 provides gender representation at the workshops. This table also shows that the majority of participants during the workshops were males, who made up 53.28% of the participants as compared to females who formed only 46.72%. These figures show both males and females of ages between 17 and 65 that attended the workshops and completed the questionnaires.

6.2.2 Racial Group

Table 6.2 distribution of racial groups

Racial group	Number	%
Blacks	42	30.66%
Coloured	01	0.73%
Indians	09	6.57%
Whites	85	62.04%
TOTAL	137	100%

Table 6.2 provides the distribution of racial groups of participants. According to table

6.2, there were more White representatives compared to all the other racial groups put together. They were followed by Blacks, with Indians in third place followed by Coloureds. Consequently, it is assumed that Whites still represent the majority of South Africans who reside in our cities and towns even after more than a decade of democracy in South Africa. This point is based on the fact that most of the local churches in the cities and towns are still whites as proved by this research. This is against the demographic pattern of South Africa as a country. According to Census 2001 conducted by Statistics South Africa, Black South Africans are 35.4 million, Coloureds 3.9 million, Indians 1.1 million and Whites 4.2 million(STATSA 2004: 013).

6.2.3 Home Language

Table 6.3 home used language

Home Language	Number	%
English	90	65.69%
German	03	2.19%
Tamil	01	0.73%
Sotho	12	8.76%
isiZulu	17	12.41%
Afrikaans	01	0.73%
isiXhosa	04	2.92%
Tumbuka (Malawi)	01	0.73%
Ndebele (mostly Zimbabweans)	04	2.92%
Tshivenda	02	1.46%
Tsonga	01	0.73%
Shona (Zimbabwe)	01	0.73%
TOTAL	137	100%

Table 6.3 provides us with the different languages that are used by the participants in their homes. From the above table, it is evident that English is the most used language in the homes of the participants. However, it should be made clear that all White people indicated that they use English as their home language, except for three that showed that they use German. On the other hand, all Indians indicated English as their home language except one who said that he uses Tamil. There were also a few Black people who indicated that they make use of English as their home language. Table 6.3 does not necessarily refer to the mother tongue or one's vernacular language. From this table one can draw the conclusion that most people staying in our cities and attending the local churches make use of English followed by isZulu as their home languages and not necessarily as their mother tongue.

6.2.4 Church Name and Affiliation

There were about sixty eight (68) local churches represented during the three research workshops held in Cape Town (Western Cape Province), Durban (KwaZulu-Natal Province) and Johannesburg (Gauteng Province). These local congregations are affiliated to about twenty two (12) denominations, ministries and/or different church organizations around South Africa at large.

6.2.5 Positional Status

Table 6.4 positional status of participants

Positional Status	Number	%
Leader	91	66.42%
Member	46	33.58%
TOTAL	137	100%

Table 6.4 gives us a breakdown of the positional status of participants in different local churches represented during the workshops. According to table 6.4, more local church leaders responded and participated in this research as compared to members. Since the

invitation letters stated the topic of this research one might assume from the above figures that the leaders of local churches in and around the cities and towns are starting to see the great need and value of multicultural local churches. Perhaps, it is because some of the leaders have started experiencing the challenges of multiculturalism in their specific local churches as more and more people of different races and cultural backgrounds are moving into their local churches. Furthermore, this should be seen as a desperate desire on the part of church leaders to learn and promote multiculturalism in their local churches.

SECTION B

6.3 Knowledge and views about the challenges of multiculturalism in the local churches in the South African context

6.3.1 What do you understand about the term multiculturalism in the local church context?

Many people do not understand the term multiculturalism, especially in the local church context. They tend to mix multiculturalism with multiracialism. To them their local churches are multicultural if there are people of different races represented.

Multiracial may simply mean the mixture of different races. According to McLead the word 'multi' means "combining form" of races or "more than one" races coming together in one place (1986: 556). Multiculturalism goes beyond that. "Multiculturalism adheres to a philosophy of cultural synthesis and is a pluralistic method, seeking to represent diverse cultures (Mazrui ed. 2006: 23)." In the local church context, it would mean a local church that welcomes and treats people from different cultural backgrounds without racial prejudice or a consideration of their economic situation. It also means the local church would endeavor to create an atmosphere that allows Christian life to be expressed in different ways by different people as long as it does not violate scriptural principles. It will also mean a local church which is becoming a learning centre or a workshop where people learn about each other and serve God together.

Since this was an open ended question which allowed respondents to express their views without clues being given by the interviewer, the respondents had much to say in response to this question. There were many different answers although they can be summarized in the following sentences:

- It is the existence of a plurality of cultures in one local church.
- It is the embracement of all people and all cultures in the full life of the local church.
- It is when people from different cultures come together in one congregation and is faced with the challenge of finding ways to fellowship and worship together in a way that includes them all.
- It is when all different cultures within the local church are recognized as equals and that no one culture overshadows or dominates others to the detriment of other cultures.
- It is a local church that thrives to become home for all people and maintain a body which recognizes and respects all cultures represented within it as long as those cultures do not violate the Christian faith as articulated in the Bible.
- It is the ability or level of understanding at the local church which make it possible to minister to different cultures. The local church becomes a safe place for members of different cultural backgrounds to express themselves without fear of criticism or being looked down.

6.3.2 Do local churches in South Africa promote multiculturalism?

Table 6.5 promotion of multiculturalism by local churches

Respondents	Number	%
Yes	48	35.04%
No	89	64.96%
TOTAL	137	100%

Table 6.5 gives the views of participants about the promotion of multiculturalism in and

by local churches in South Africa. More than fifty percent of the respondents say that local churches in South Africa do not actively or consciously engage themselves in the promotion of multiculturalism. However, it must be made clear that those respondents do not deny the fact that most of the local churches do have people of different cultures during their Sunday church services. The point, however, is that people from other cultures are not recognized nor allowed space to be themselves. In this case, an assumption can be made that most of those who responded by saying yes, they are generally looking at people of different cultures coming together irrespective of how they are treated by those in the majority. In this sense proximity of cultures would in their view mean multiculturalism, which is not always the case.

Promotion of multiculturalism by local churches would mean more than proximity. It would mean a conscious decision by the local church leaders and members to engage in this crucial challenge. It would mean that the church's programmes of outreach is not simply focusing on reaching one group of people in the community, but all sorts of people. It also means that the worship style would change to embrace people of other cultures represented in the local church. Preaching should also be done in such a way that it addresses all the people not one particular cultural group. It would also mean that the local church does not expect all other cultural groups to conform to one dominant cultural value systems because they are preached as though they are the biblical truth:

There is something that we need to keep on reminding ourselves something we cannot avoid in South Africa is that it will be very difficult to define multiculturalism outside race references.

"Diversity in SA also remains defined largely in terms of race and gender – necessary due to the nation's past – but firms should also be aware that diversity includes other differences, such as in national origin, ethnicity, ability and even geographic origin" (Breen 2006: 26).

The majority of respondents that answered "Yes" are referring to a situation where people of the same race come to worship together even if they are of different cultures. For example, Bapedi, Vhavenda, Amakhosa, Amandebele, that is, Black people on their own or Afrikaners, Portuguese, Italians, Britons, French, which is White people only.

Before 1994, we had this problem but never in this magnitude that we see today.

Taking all this into account, this study would suggest that local churches in SA are not promoting multiculturalism in a way they are supposing to. If there are some which do so, they would seem to be too few to comment about and are less invisible. Much of what we see today in South Africa are local churches with people of different cultures, but with one cultural group dominating the others. This would not qualify the accepted definition of multiculturalism as far as this thesis is concern. When one dominant culture is promoted from the beginning of the church service to the end it renders the local church monocultural. This is done through music (singing/worship), preaching and almost all church activities. This is further highlighted the whole church service is conducted in one dominant language. In the South African context, it is mostly English. According to Statistics South Africa English is used by 8. 2% of the people of this country as a home language (Stats SA 2003: 14).

6.3.3 Is there a need for multicultural local churches in South Africa?

Table 6.6 the need for multicultural local churches

Response	Number	%
Yes	136	99.27%
No	01	0.73%
TOTAL	137	100%

Table 6.6 shows how respondents feel about the need for multicultural local churches in South Africa. From the above table it is evident that the overwhelming majority of the participants agree that there is an urgent need for multicultural local churches in South Africa. A number of reasons were given to qualify why we need multicultural local churches in South Africa. The following are some of the reasons:

- Multiculturalism is in God’s heart for all his people.
- Diversity is God’s gift to humankind. We should celebrate and nurture it.

- South Africa cannot call itself a rainbow nation unless it is reflected in the local churches.
- Because we live in a multicultural country and communities.
- Because of the integration that is taking place in our communities or change of demographics.
- Local churches need to be a true reflection of our local communities.
- To advocate the gospel in South Africa we need multicultural local churches.
- Sustained and successful relationship between different cultures in the local churches will be an effective witness in spreading the gospel Jesus Christ.

The local churches in South Africa cannot afford to be islands. South Africa as a country is faced with the challenge of multiculturalism in almost every level of life. To make this point clearly, Mazrui and Kariuki said that, it is imperative for South Africa to focus its eyes on multiculturalism (2006: 23).

6.3.4 What should local churches do in South Africa to promote multiculturalism and how?

This question sought to find out from the respondents as to what and how local churches in South Africa should do to promote multiculturalism. Different but useful suggestions were provided. The following are some of the suggestions that were advanced by the majority of the respondents:

THEOLOGY: the local churches should be theologically convinced that multiculturalism is God's will and that it is at the top of His agenda. They should spend time expounding the Word of God, the Bible. They should see, believe, live, preach and propagate multiculturalism as God's design for His own pleasure and the good of His people. Multiculturalism must be seen and thought of from the biblical viewpoint in the Church and not just as another good idea. Matt 28: 19 would be a good portion of Scriptures to base a theology of multiculturalism when it says, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations. ..." John in the book of Revelation has much to say about this point "...and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and

nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God (5: 9 – 10).”
“After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb (7: 9).” Again John said, “... and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth – to every nation, tribe, language and people (14: 6).”

TRAINING: another way of initiating and sustaining multicultural local churches is by training first the leaders and then thereafter, the members. Leaders should be trained on how to counsel, comfort and motivate their congregants. Similarly, members should be trained on issues of relationships with people of other cultures. Basically they should be trained on cultural sensitivity.

Training can take many forms. It can be done formally or informally. In a formal way, local churches can organize multicultural workshops and ask experts in this field to come in and help. They can also invite or visit local churches that have walked this road before and learn from their experience.

The informal way of training would include having social gatherings across cultural lines. People of different cultures could be encouraged to share their experiences of what, how and why they do certain things. Sometimes it would be helpful to organize cultural events. These are things like asking members of different cultures to prepare their main dishes to be shared amongst different people of different cultures. The people could also be encouraged to taste different foods and also to learn to eat them in the way of the concerned culture. If the concerned culture uses hands, knives and forks or chop sticks everybody involved should try to do so without fear of being criticized or judged if they cannot do it right.

Training can be a powerful tool when introducing a new concept, especially if people are prepared to learn because they see the benefit. This approach was employed in Germany during the preparations for the 2006 FIFA World Cup. Speaking about the hotel staff and cross cultural training, Reuters said:

We are following some basic do's and don'ts. The whole staff is taking cross cultural training sessions to make them aware of the differences between Germany and Saudi Arabia."

Prokop, who lived in Egypt for two years, said all 123 hotel staff members have been taking eight-hour courses in sensitivity training and are learning some basic Arabic phrases such as "Hello", "Welcome" and "Have a nice day."

"Among the things they're learning is about dress codes that skirts should not be too short ..." (Reuters 2006: 18).

LANGUAGE: many respondents see language as a key element in facilitating multiculturalism in the local churches in South Africa. Language reflects and acts as a crucible or embodiment for the culture of a people. Culture is so interwoven with language that language is culture and culture is language. Language is a tool and vehicle of culture (Kofi 2005: 142). Most respondents say that people from local churches should be encouraged to learn another language. In most cases it should be the most spoken language in the community or province. If the person belongs to the most spoken language, he/she should learn the next most spoken language.

Respondents also say that language is also crucial during worship services. Local churches should conduct their worship services at least in two languages. First of all, this would refer to preaching. Worship (singing and prayers) should also be done, not only in one language but in more than one language. Songs should be sung in different languages and different cultural tunes. This is simply to say that Sunday or weekly services should be translated or interpreted into at least one more official language per meeting. This will help other people to enjoy the service, understand better and feel welcome to participate in the real life of the local church.

LEADERSHIP: many of the respondents say that no matter what is done to be multicultural, if the leadership is not changing, the whole exercise will be useless. They say that the leadership must grow from all cultures represented. It is perhaps more of the responsibility of the leaders to see that they raise leaders from other cultural groups in the local church. They continue to say that this can be achieved if the leaders spent more time with those from other cultural groups with potential leadership qualities. It does not

matter whether they are not rich or educated men and women, as long as they have the call and the potential. The good example should be that of Jesus. He spent quality time with man like Peter, a simple fisherman and turned him into a great church leader. "When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and took note that these men had been with Jesus (Acts 4: 13)." A similar attitude to that of Jesus is disparately needed in local churches today.

We saw from the previous question (1.3) that the majority of church leaders and members believe that there is a serious need for multiculturalism in the local churches of South African. They see the need of the local churches to be a true reflection of our local communities and that diversity is God's gift to humankind which, we should celebrate and nurture.

As to how multiculturalism should be promoted by local churches the following suggestions came through:

- Local churches should recognize and work towards reflecting the demographics of their area.
- Promote community spirit within the local church by providing forums for the people of different cultural backgrounds to interact with one another. Members should be encouraged to actively build or pursue close relationships across cultural lines in the local church. We should make sure that, social events of the local church appeal not only to one but all cultural groups.
- There is a great need for local churches to receive teaching and instruction on the subject of multiculturalism. There is a need to keep seeking to learn and understand other cultures, especially those represented in our local churches and communities.
- Cultural sensitivity and respect for other cultures should be encouraged. We should also promote worship and fellowship in ways that celebrate cultural diversity. We should also seek to use culturally applicable illustrations. However, these should not be racial or cultural offensive.
- Have different cultural forms and styles of music during worship services.
- Try to find ways to include other languages in our church meetings. For example,

we could translate sermons and sing songs of other languages represented in our local churches.

- Strive for growing a multicultural leadership team.
- Make effort to involve people of all cultural backgrounds in all spheres of the life of the local church.

6.3.5 Is there any relationship between multiculturalism and Christianity?

Table 6.7 the relationship between multiculturalism and Christianity

Response	Number	%
Yes	130	94.89%
No	07	5.11%
TOTAL	137	100%

Table 6.7 shows us of what participants think about the relationship between multiculturalism and Christianity. The distribution of respondents in the above table shows that, except seven out of one hundred thirty seven respondents, the vast majority say that there is a relationship between multiculturalism and Christianity.

There is a general agreement amongst the respondents, as well as the church at large, that when Jesus said to his disciples, “Therefore go and make disciple, of all nations...” he was sending them to people of all different cultures around the whole world. If that is the case, there is a serious relationship between multiculturalism and Christianity. However, if there was no relationship, how would Christ, the founder of Christianity, send them to people of different cultures? Christianity relates to every culture and cannot be limited to one culture. This view is well articulated by Paul, the apostle when he said that:

To the Jews I become like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I become like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law... To the weak I become weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men

so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings (1 Corinthians 9:20-23).

Paul said he had become all things to all men. This statement clearly suggests that the Christian message is to be preached to all people despite their tribe, language and colour.

6.3.6 Does the Bible say anything about the issue of multiculturalism?

Table 6.8 the Bible and multiculturalism

Response	Number	%
Yes	133	97.08%
No	04	2.92%
TOTAL	137	100%

Table 6.8 provides the views of participants on whether the Bible does say something about multiculturalism. From the above table it is clear that almost all the respondents answered yes to this question. As Bible readers, nearly all of them agree that the Bible says something about multiculturalism and its challenges.

Multiculturalism and its challenges are not new to the church of Jesus Christ. It has been around since the early church (Acts 15, the issue of circumcision) and it was even so during the time of Jesus (Mark 7, the issue of washing of hands before eating food). This is a reality of biblical history. This is something that the Church of today cannot deny, particularly the South African local churches that have been divided for more than four hundred years on the basis of colour and culture.

The following three scriptural references were provided on the questionnaire to stimulate respondents to think on the issues of multiculturalism and the Bible:

- a. Acts 2 – the day of Pentecost**
- b. Acts 10 – Peter and Cornelius**

c. Acts 13 – the church in Antioch

It is clear from the respondent's answers that all three references, and others besides them, take into consideration the different cultures represented in a particular context. Different languages were spoken, different foods were eaten, different views were included and possible different attires and yet the people worshipped the same God together.

At Pentecost people from the whole world as it was known by then were in Jerusalem. Different languages were spoken in one place. This seem to be the first coming together of many different languages since they were last scattered in Shinar or Babylonia in the book of Genesis. Genesis 11 is the beginning of the division of people on the basis of language (culture) and Acts 2 is the reverse or the creation of unity in the Church. In Genesis the Lord scattered his people by means of using different languages but in Acts (Pentecost) He united them by speaking different languages. In the Church of God, different languages should be a starting point of unity in diversity and not of division.

In Acts 10 respondents generally agree that God challenged Peter to break out of his cultural stereotype and exclusivity. It took heaven to challenge Peter, one of the great apostles of Jesus, to recognize that the Church of God should include people outside his own culture and race. It was only after Peter saw the Holy Spirit coming to Cornelius and all that had gathered in his house, that he said:

I now realise how true it is that God does not show favouritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right (Acts 10:34-35).

Peter was a main speaker on the day of Pentecost, yet we see him later on still struggling with the challenge of cultural diversity. Perhaps it will be right here to classify Peter as a slow developer when it comes to change. These late developers are skeptical and suspicious when it comes to change even if it is for their benefit. They will only follow the change when most of the others have done so. Sometimes it even takes pressure for them to change. We see this in Acts 10. God spoke to Peter to eat all unclean creatures.

However, the positive thing about these people is that once they have accepted challenge, it will be hard to make them change their minds. This point comes out clearly in chapter 11 of the book of Acts. Peter strongly urged his people (the Jews) to accept Gentiles as God did.

In Acts 13 the participants agreed that the church in Antioch is portrayed as a cross cultural community of believers, from which the gospel was first sent out to the Gentiles and the world, following the great command of our Lord Jesus in Matt.28:19-20. There was general agreement that the leadership of this church was composed of people from different cultural backgrounds. This even went beyond different cultures into different races. With that in mind, an assumption was reached that the membership of this church could also be composed of believers of diverse races, cultures and languages.

Multiculturalism was said to be God's will and that local churches in South Africa will be living outside God's will if they are not promoting and striving for multiculturalism wherever they are.

There was a space provided beside the three scriptural references for respondents to give other biblical references in relation to multiculturalism if they so wished. One scripture that was quoted by a number of participants read as such:

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility (Ephesians 2:13-16).

6.3.7 In which way will the practice or promotion of multiculturalism in the local churches in South Africa benefit the leaders and members?

Very interesting responses to this question were offered by respondents. All respondents generally agreed that both the leaders and the membership of the local churches stand to

benefit by the practicing or promoting of multiculturalism. Although this was an open ended question, it is easy to summarize the respondent's answers since they said nearly the same things only in different words. The following is what they had to say in response to the above question:

LEADERS: there is an agreement that leaders will continue to be equipped to lead and guide their people much better and with greater understanding and personal experience. It will further help them to understand and reach out to more people with the gospel of Christ. The South African Church leaders will be equipped with multicultural skills and ready to fulfill the great commission of going to all different people around the world because they have the whole world at their door step. The practice of multiculturalism will help them gain greater influence and respect of all levels and across communities. As a result, leaders will be more outward focused and have a bigger vision than before.

In response to this question it is clear from the respondent's answers that the practice or the promotion of multiculturalism in the local churches will be of great benefit to both leaders and members in the Church in South Africa. This is what the respondents had to say about the benefits to leaders:

- People of different cultural backgrounds will be developed into leadership positions by existing leaders.
- They will experience a wider and deeper understanding of God and as a results, this will impact on more lives.
- They will be able to relate to and understand different people better, not only in the church but in other circles of life and thus, make wiser and broader decisions.
- Variety will come into the leadership teams, resulting in new ways of witnessing the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- Their areas of influence will be extended and they will be able to speak to a wider community than leaders of mono-cultural local churches.
- They will acquire different leadership skills as they enrich one another.

MEMBERS: they will all feel validated and accepted. They will also learn how to live,

not just for self, but for the extension of the kingdom of God. At the same time, they will enjoy the vibrancy of the expression of many cultures in the local church. For example, spontaneous African worship and community life styles which are more biblical than what we see and do in most churches. More gifts and talents will start to flow from the people who cannot reveal them now for fear of being criticized. This means a high quality and rich Christian life as believers learn much from those different from themselves. As a result, there will be fuller experience of God's kingdom.

About the benefits to members of the local churches they said the following:

- Multicultural local churches will prepare their members for life in the new democratic South Africa.
- It will provide them with opportunities to build bridges of relationship with people of other cultures.
- It will give them a better understanding of different cultures in South Africa and as a result, fears and mistrust may eventually be broken down.
- It may help to fast track and deepen reconciliation and the healing of the nation.
- It will deeply enrich their lives with new concepts and greater faith. They will be exposed to completely new ways of praise and worship of God.
- Members will learn what it means to love unconditionally, as Jesus commanded that believers must love one another just as He had loved them. They will grow in relationships with people of different cultures and will feel loved and respected.
- They will experience the blessing of celebrating each other's cultures.

6.3.8 What language/s is used as a medium of communication in your local church?

Table 6.9 language/s used in the local churches

Used languages in local churches	Number	%
English	92	67.15%
Zulu and English	26	18.98%
English, Germany and Zulu	03	2.19%
German and English	02	1.46%
Afrikaans and English	05	3.65%
Sotho and English	08	5.84%
Sign Language and English	01	0.73%
TOTAL	137	100%

Table 6.9 shows the language/s that are mostly used in the local churches in South Africa. It seems clear from the above table that the English language is the most used language in local churches in our cities and probable in the towns. In most local churches in South Africa, one would qualify for membership if he/she can speak English or at least be able to understand it. If you do not understand English you may simply be left out. This is the case in almost all local churches that claim to be multicultural. This is interesting when one considers the location of the local churches be it nationally, provincially and locally. We shall here concentrate on the three provinces where the workshops were held, namely, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape. This will be in respect of the languages that are mostly spoken by the church members.

In the province of KwaZulu-Natal there are more isiZulu speaking people than all languages put together in that specific province. According to census 2001 there were 7 624 284 speaker of isiZulu in KwaZulu-Natal followed by English with 1 285 011 (Stats SA 2003: 15). Yet, you may find more local churches that claim to be multicultural communicating the gospel message in English more than isiZulu or isiZulu and English put together. The same applies to Western Cape. The most spoken language in the province is Afrikaans with 2 500 748 speakers followed by IsiXhosa with 1 073 951

(Stats SA 2003: 15), yet English may be the most used language in the local churches. Gauteng is the most multi-lingual province in the country this is, because it is the economic centre of South Africa. It is also because people from all other eight provinces are moving to Gauteng for better economic opportunities. Perhaps the most difficult province to say which language is the most spoken. Again Census 2001 provides us with the answer. isiZulu is spoken by 1 902 025 followed by Afrikaans with 1 269 176 speakers and yet English is probably the most used language in the local churches that claim to be multicultural. To give the figures in percentage Statistics South Africa recordings as per the results of Census 2001 says the most spoken languages in Kwazulu-Natal are IsiZulu (80. 9%) followed by English (13. 6%) and IsiXhosa at (2. 3%). In Gauteng IsiZulu is spoken by (21. 5%) followed by Afrikaans (14. 4%) and Sesotho at (13. 1%). Afrikaans is the most spoken language in the Western Cape. Afrikaans is spoken by (55. 3%) followed by IsiXhosa (23. 7%) and English at (19. 3%) (Statistics South Africa 2003: 16).

The issue of **English being used as qualifying** criteria for membership in most local churches as well as the dominant language transcends race. For example, during the KwaZulu-Natal workshop, it was clear that primarily nearly all Indian local churches used English as a medium of communication during their worship services. They do not translate from English to one of their indigenous Indian languages. On the other hand more than half of the local churches, with a majority of Black people or even 100% membership of Black people, use English or English and isiZulu. The same applies to Gauteng and the Western Cape. In Gauteng most Blacks, Coloured and Indians dominated local churches, also make use of English during their church services.

By comparison, it is easy to walk into the local church service and find Blacks, Coloureds and Indians using English and sometimes with another language. It is rare and most probably impossible to find an English language dominated local church using or translating into another South African language. If they do, it will most probably be into one of the European languages. This point is confirmed by the fact that two participant in KwaZulu-Natal workshop said they use German and English and five said Afrikaans and

English (see table 6.9). These will in most case be done for a few Europeans compared to the majority of Africans. On the other hand, Africans would take the initiative to translate even if there is one English speaker.

It should be remembered that language carries culture in itself. The local churches are promoting the Western culture far more than other cultures. They are using English songs: they read English Bibles: preach in English or translate into English and as a result, interpret the gospel message using the Western culture. There is a challenge for South African local churches to recognize other languages. Local churches need to be reminded that the South African constitution takes into consideration the eleven official languages. It does not stop there. It also gives room for other languages outside the eleven to be spoken and perpetuated.

Language can be used as a cultural tool to unite people. It can also be used as an ideology to divide people. It seems it will not be wrong to suggest that the local churches in South Africa, in most cases, are using language to divide people.

6.3.9 Do you consider your local church to be multicultural?

Table 6.10 leaders and members perception about multiculturalism in their local churches

Response	Number	%
Yes	55	40.15%
No	82	59.85%
TOTAL	137	100%

Table 6.10 shows us how different people both leaders and members perceive their local churches as far as the issues of multiculturalism are concerned. As indicated in the above table, more than half of the respondents do not see their local churches as multicultural. It is interesting when one takes a closer look at the number of people that view their local churches as multicultural. Many of those who answered “Yes” say that their local

churches are multicultural because there are different races represented. They say that there are Black, Coloureds, Indians and White people in their local churches. Of course, considering the history of this country one would agree with them. The history of racial discrimination can cause the local churches to narrow down the definition of multiculturalism to just tokenism of multiracialism. But when it comes to what multiculturalism is all about, one is forced to totally differ from this idea. The point is that most of the local churches that are said to be multicultural are not so in the true sense of the word, but are actually multiracial.

To many South Africans, a multicultural local church is a place where people of different races come together once or more than once a week to hear the word of God and worship together. This, unfortunately, is done with another section of the congregation being relegated to passivity or second class membership. This group of people does not participate in the true life of the local church. They are not allowed to express themselves and to be themselves. Their languages are not used. Their customs and values are looked down upon and discouraged, whereas on the other hand, one group of people is dominating **culturally every activity** of the local church.

In this case, all the others have to change to be like the dominant group in the local church. As long as there is one cultural group dominating others or given preferences over and above others, we do not have multicultural local churches. With this in mind, one wonders how many local churches in South Africa can claim to be truly multicultural.

Another factor to be dealt with in the local churches is the language of "us" and "them". The true multicultural local church members will change from using the language of us and them to the language of "we".

Even if race was to be used as a measurement of multiculturalism in the local churches of South Africa, most local churches would still be seen to be falling far short of the mark. When one looks at the demographics of local churches in major cities and towns, whilst considering the percentage that believes that their local churches are multicultural, the

numbers paint an unfortunate picture. For example, KwaZulu-Natal workshop, the respondents showed that Black membership ranges as from little as 0.05% to 10% in the former White people local churches. When it comes to Indian membership in the former White local churches the respondents further indicated that it ranges from 5%-30%. If you reverse the situation as to how many White people are moving or joining Black or Indian initiated churches in the former white suburbs, the numbers are so low that they are not worth mentioning.

The demographics of local churches, again shows the socio-economic classes of our country. In KwaZulu-Natal there are more Indians joining the White local churches than Blacks. The same is happening in the Western Cape. More Coloureds are joining White local churches than Blacks. Indians in KwaZulu-Natal and Coloured in the Western Cape seem to be better off economically compared to Black people of the same province. This is made clearer by few Whites joining Indians and Coloured initiated local churches compared to Black local churches in the same city or town.

6.3.10 What is the demographic composition of the leadership of your local church?

This question seeks to establish whether the leadership of local churches in South Africa is changing in the same manner as the membership. The research has found out that very little change is taking place as far as leadership positions in local churches are concerned. Most of the local churches are still maintaining the leadership status quo. Thus, the leadership positions are still by and large occupied by people from the same racial and cultural groups irrespective of the change of the demography of the membership. In almost all the local churches represented during the three workshops, it was evident that leadership is still in the hands of whites as compared to blacks, Coloureds and Indians. This is indicated in the table below. The term 'blacks' in the next table, would be used to refer to the three groups, namely, black, Coloureds and Indians.

We all know that during the struggle against apartheid, the term "black" stood for a collective signifier referring to a composite political identity which deliberately eschewed any distinctions between black Africans, Asians or "coloured" (Mbembe 2006: 23).

Table 6.11 leadership demographic in the South African local churches

Sampled Questionnaire No.	Membership Demography		Leadership Demography	
	Blacks %	White %	Blacks %	White %
06	45	55	10	90
16	31	69	0.7	99.3
26	18	82	2	98
38	11	89	0	100
70	10	90	3	97
74	3	97	0	100
78	15	85	10	90
82	10	90	0	100
83	8	92	6	94
90	21	79	0	100
97	10	90	1	99
101	4	96	1	99
123	20	80	0	100
137	50	50	5	95

From the above table, it seems clear that although Blacks (Black Africans, Coloureds and Indians) are moving into the former white suburbs and finally into the local churches in big numbers, however, they are not making inroads into the leadership positions. The fourteen (14) questionnaires which were randomly sampled represented more than 10%

of all the respondents.

Something very important to take note of from the above table is that the membership percentage of Blacks is always very high as compared to the leadership percentage. On the other hand, membership of whites is always lower as compared to the leadership percentage. For example, (Questionnaire No.38) shows that there are 11% Blacks and 89% Whites in membership of a particular congregation. However, when it comes to leadership in the same local church, there are 0% and 100% for Blacks and Whites, respectively.

Yet, most of the respondents of the above sampled questionnaires claim that there was multiculturalism in their local churches as indicated by their responses to question 1.9. One can, therefore, suggest that they were wrong to claim multiculturalism in their local churches. Unless the question read, "Do you consider your local church to be multiracial?" Multiculturalism would demand a comprehensive leadership representation to make decisions that are wider and more inclusive.

This is a serious challenge to local churches to grow a leadership which includes people from all cultures represented in their congregations. This is even more imperative because the membership demography is changing face. The challenge is more particularly to the local churches in South African cities and towns. The majority of people in South Africa are black Africans numbering 31.1 million in 1996 and 35.4 million in 2001. They constitute the vast majority of the population (Stats SA 2004: 013). This is important, especially if we realize that in 1996 and 2001 the population of South Africa was 41 million and 45 million respectively.

6.3.11 Describe the general state of the local churches in relation to multiculturalism in South Africa today?

Most respondents feel that local churches are struggling as far as the issue of multiculturalism is concerned. The present leadership and membership are nervous of other races and cultural groups. Local churches are afraid to change and accept different

ways of doing things. The leadership of rich white local churches is afraid that the rich will leave if they are not kept happy and take their money with them. They will go and join the church next door that offers them the comfort of monoculture. As a result, generally there is little movement to actively and consciously try to transform local churches from mono-culture to multi-culture.

Respondents generally agree that the Church, as manifested through local churches in South Africa, it seems way behind. This is a sad reality. The Church of Jesus Christ should be a witness and guiding light. Instead, the church is following behind the worlds of politics, economics, sports and education. If the situation will remain like this for a long time there is little hope for this country. The Church must rise and take its position, especially in times like these. There is much confusion. Some people think that cultural and racial integration is happening at a snail pace others believe it is happening too fast. The Church has to lead the way through the local churches that are close to the people.

However, more and more individual believers seem to be realizing that before God we are all the same and at the same time we have different cultures. The big challenge seems to be when the same believers come together into the same local churches. They tend to compromise what they believe for fear of rejection. This kind of hypocrisy lead Paul to confront Peter, in his own words Paul said,

“When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong. Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray (Gal 2: 11 – 13).”

There seem to be a repetition of things in the Church in South Africa. During the apartheid era some Christians spoke against apartheid but today almost everybody claims that they never supported it. If that was the case, apartheid would not have lived for more than four decades. In the case of multiculturalism, let all the believers speak with one voice, without compromising the faith and belief of one Church of Jesus Christ and about

the need to change the status qua in the local churches in South Africa. The local Church needs to move out of her comfort zone not for her own sake but for Christ sake.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1. SUMMARY

7.1.1. This research thesis entitled: “The Changing Face of South Africa: The Challenge of Multiculturalism in the Local Churches and the Early Church” is sub-divided into seven chapters. They are as follows:

- Chapter One: Mapping the Landscape
- Chapter Two: The Challenge of Multiculturalism in the Early Church
- Chapter Three: The Historical Background of the Church and Racism in South Africa (18th – 19th Century)
- Chapter Four: Understanding the Nature of Culture According to Various Scholarly Perspectives: A Case Study
- Chapter Five: Challenge of Multiculturalism in the Local Churches
- Chapter Six: Presentation and Analysis
- Chapter Seven: Summary and Recommendations

7.1.2. The background and information on the study, the research problem/problem formulation, aim and research objectives of the study, assumptions, research methodology (qualitative method), critical research questions to be answered by this study, the relevance or key concepts, proposed dissertation outline and literature review were developed.

7.1.3. South Africa shall never be the same again. Since the down of democracy, South Africa has embarked on a journey of no return. The challenge of multiculturalism has become a reality for most people to deny it. Its impact is far reaching. This research has revealed that most of the areas of public life in South Africa is facing the challenge of multiculturalism. For example, the political arena has had what many people call a

“miraculous transition”. It has change from the minority rule to the overwhelming majority of the people. People are no longer judged and respected on the basis of the colour of their skin but because they are human beings, created in the image of God. South Africa has become a home of all its inhabitants. The business community is also going through changes. Workers of different cultural background are sharing offices perhaps for the first time. They service and serve clients of different cultures. Educational institutions are going through similar challenges. Teachers are teaching pupils from various cultural backgrounds. These pupils respond to the same stimuli in totally different ways. The scrapping of the Group Areas Act added to the speed changes and the challenge of multiculturalism. The neighborhood is also continuing to change face. All these changes are leaving the local churches in South Africa with very little choice if there is any. People of different cultures are coming together in the local churches to worship God. The coming together of people who have been divided for more than four decades by apartheid laws leaves much to be desired, hence the importance of this study.

7.1.4. It has become clear that the challenge of multiculturalism as faced by the local church in South Africa today is not something new in the Church of God. The Early Church faced the same problem. The challenge of multiculturalism is as old as the Church herself.

The purpose of studying the Early Church in the book of Acts adds value to this research and to the local churches in South Africa. It is puts clear that the composition of the Early Church, which is the leaders and members was multicultural. Acts chapter 6 is a good prove to South African local churches that multiculturalism is not racialism and that its challenge reaches beyond people of the same race but different culture. It also helps to show how the monocultural leadership dealt with the problem by incorporating leaders of a different culture so as the leadership may be multicultural. This is further confirmed in Acts chapter 13 were the leadership of the Antioch church is multicultural. It is clear that not only the members in the Early Church were multicultural but the leadership also. This chapter makes mention of the leaders of the church at Antioch by names and further mention their country of origin. This point was very helpful in this research in realizing that those leaders were from different places and were of different cultures.

Another lesson drawn from the study of the Early Church is that cultural interactions have its own challenges. This becomes clear by reading Acts chapter 15 the account of the Jerusalem council. Galatians chapter 2 also provides another side of the challenge of multiculturalism. The Early Church wrestled with these challenges and survived. They did not allow these challenges to divide them forever. They neither adopt 'wait and see' attitude. instead they confronted this issue that threatened to divide the Church of God in its tender age.

Another lesson learnt is that the Jerusalem church failed to fulfill the Great Commission, which is to "go and preach the gospel to all nations" because of their tolerance to monoculturalism as opposed to the Antioch church. The multicultural Antioch church was the first to purposeful go and preach to people of different cultures. They achieved much more than the Jerusalem church in taking the gospel to the nations.

7.1.5. The history of the church in South Africa teaches us that although the Church has contributed a number of good things in this country she has also done lot of damage. The missionaries were used to confiscate the land from the indigenous people, to promote and protect the economic segregation against the Black people and to justify the politics of White domination against the rest of the population. To achieve domination by the Whites the missionary would go out to meet and teach the subjects of the chief new life style and values that undermine his authority. On the land provided by the chief they will build a missionary station that will be used again to fight him or her. Missionary stations would be used as military basis by the colonists. The missionaries were betraying the trust of the chiefs. The chiefs would give them the land because they would show them what they wanted to do with land, which is development. The mission station that includes hospital and school that were discussed with the chief would be developed and the same place would then be used as a military base to attack the same chief. Racial discrimination also become evident in the church. Black people were discriminated in the public life and in the church.

This led to the Black people leaving what they call "missionary churches" to form the "African Indigenous Churches." The reasons they were leaving the missionary churches to form their own was the spirit of nationalism that was sweeping all over across the

African continent. Here at home political parties such as the African National Congress were calling national unity and freedom. The racial attitude in the missionary churches also played a pivotal role in the formation of African Indigenous Churches. African people felt that they were being denied their God given freedom in the political and economic life and the same thing was happening in the Church. They left the missionary churches to find their freedom to worship and express themselves as want as long as the Bible was not against what they do.

7.1.6. It was clear that some how it is difficult to come with one common definition of the word culture. To find the definition that would be suitable for the purpose of this research many scholarly literatures were consulted. It the general understanding that culture for this study will be defined in the following terms: that culture is not created by agreement but springs out from within a specific community of people at specific times to meet a specific need. The need could be a material, moral or spiritual (Niebuhr 1951: 31). It further refers to knowledge and values that are passes on from one generation to the next generation of one social group. It comprises language, habits, ideas, beliefs, customs, social organizations, artifacts and values (Coleman et al. 1990: 13 – 14). In his own words Wederspahn said that “Culture shapes what people believe and value, how they think and feel about themselves, others and the world, and why they act towards each other the way they do (2000:32).” Adoption of these definitions was supported by learning the chief characteristics of culture.

There are six chief characteristics of culture. Culture is always social, culture is human achievement, culture is a world of values, cultural values which are human achievements are predominantly those of the good of man, culture is concerned with the temporal and materialization of values and finally pluralism.

This thesis is more about multiculturalism than just culture. This led the research to search literatures by different scholars as to what they say and understand about multiculturalism. It was learnt that there are a number of terms that are anonymous with word multiculturalism. The following terms apply: cross-cultural, multicultural, trans-cultural, intercultural and cultural diversity. For the purpose of this research multiculturalism refers to two or more people of different cultures coming together to

form, or existing within one society in order to produce, a new community for all of them (Tulloch 1993: 998). It is a political or social philosophy that promotes cultural diversity (Fain 2000: 918). Finally multiculturalism adheres to a philosophy of cultural synthesis, is a pluralistic method, seeking to represent diverse cultures and is also an inclusive quest for diversity (Mazrui et al. 2006: 23). Understanding culture and multiculturalism led to seek the challenges of multiculturalism as this is the main theme of this research.

7.1.7. The world is shrinking to what many will call 'global village.' This is due to increased human mobility. The same thing is happening in South Africa. People are moving from one province to another. More and more people are relocating to cities and towns. When they get to these places they look for a place to worship. They end up in the local churches of their own choice or the one near their place of residence. This results in the local churches having to service people of different cultures who comprise the membership of a local church.

This research has identified five challenges that the multicultural local churches in South Africa are currently facing or will face in the near future. They are the challenge of multiculturalism and community, the challenge of multiculturalism and contextualization, the challenge of multiculturalism and equality, the challenge of multiculturalism and communication, and the challenge of multiculturalism and leadership.

7.1.8. This research was taken further than the literature research in order to explore more in the area of multiculturalism. There were three workshops conducted in the three major cities of South Africa. The cities are Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg. There is an assumption that there are more people moving in the context of these three cities in South Africa. People are moving in these cities from across the country and some are from the neighbouring states. They move in for many reasons. The majority of people move in there for financial reasons. One of course cannot push aside education and tourism as other reasons of attraction.

The largest increase in population size over the five year period between censuses was in Gauteng with 20.3%, followed by the Western Cape with 14.3%. Kwazulu-Natal showed a growth rate of 12.0%. The three provinces have topped the population growth

list in the last few years of democratic change in South Africa. All over South Africa, people are relocating mostly to these three provinces. Internal migration of people from the less industrialized to the more industrialized provinces may in part explain these differences in population growth (Stats SA: 015). These facts explain better why the workshops were conducted in these provinces, in particular, the three major cities in South Africa.

To complete this satisfactory the researcher used two instruments. The first instrument was the letter of invitation. The letter served to invite people to come and participate during the workshops. It was mainly directed to local churches and not individuals. There is a sample copy attached herein. The second instrument was the questionnaire. It was used to solicit information from the workshops participants.

About 137 people attended the three workshops. There were 73 males and 64 females. These were people of ages ranging between 17 and 65. These people represented the four racial groups that are found in South Africa. One would not claim that in racial connotation that the group was balanced. There were twelve languages represented in all three workshops. This figure includes languages that are spoken outside the South African borders. There were 68 local churches represented. Of all the participants 91 of them were leaders in their local churches and 46 are just members in different local churches.

7.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The study of scholarly literature and conducting of the three workshops has produced some knowledge that is worth to share. Multicultural local churches can be built, developed and sustained in the new South African democratic context. The following are the conclusions and recommendations the researcher would like to suggest to those local churches in South Africa that have the desire to be multicultural. This also applies to those local churches that are already feeling and experiencing the challenge of multiculturalism:

7.2.1. The local churches in South Africa must first be theologically fully convicted that

multiculturalism is God's perfect desire for His Church. The community of believer called the church started in the context of multiculturalism (Acts 2: 1 – 13) and will finish in the same way (Rev 7: 9 – 10). Multiculturalism should be seen and thought of from the Biblical point of view by the Church and not as another good idea of being political correct. Local churches should spend time searching the Word of God, the Bible to find out what it says about this subject. The local churches should start to believe, live, preach/ teach and propagate multiculturalism as God's design for His own pleasure and glory and for the good of His people, especially the community of believers the Church.

7.2.2. Training is another key factor in building, developing and sustaining multicultural local churches. The recommendation is for leaders to be trained first and there after the members. Training is a powerful tool especially when introducing a new concept or wanting to change people's thinking. The same approach was use in Germany during the preparations for the FIFA World Cup 2006. Writing about training of the hotel staff in multiculturalism, Reuters said the following: "We are following some basic do's and don'ts. The whole staff is taking cross cultural training sessions to make them aware of the differences between Germany and Saudi Arabia... said all 123 hotel staff members have been taking eight-hours courses in sensitivity training ... (Reuters 2006: 18)."

Leaders can be trained on a number of areas that will empower them to fulfill their call to shepherd the people of God more effectively. This should include areas such how to counsel, comfort, motivate, et cetera people of different cultural background. On the other hand members should be trained on issues of relationships. Basically they should be trained on cultural sensitivity.

Training in the local churches context should take different forms in order to be more effective. Bearing in mind the apartheid history of South Africa, the multicultural local churches will have people of different education levels. It will be recommended that formal and informal approach be employed to train people in the local churches. In a formal way, local churches are encouraged to organize multicultural workshops or seminars and ask people with expertise in this particular field to come and help. Local church churches should also use Bible studies to train their people. The following are

ways that are recommended for the informal training: organizing social gatherings for people of different cultures; inviting or visiting local churches that have walked this road before. Let them share their experiences good and bad with the local church that is embarking on the new road of multiculturalism; organizing cultural events and the leaders to take a lead in encouraging members to participate. These could be leaders asking people of different cultures to prepare their special cultural food. The people could also be encouraged to taste different food and also to learn to eat them in a manner of the concerned culture.

7.2.3. Another and perhaps the most important recommendation to be made by this thesis to the local churches in South Africa that desire to be or are multicultural is to introduce the use of two languages during their Sunday worship services. It will further be suggested that the two languages should be one African and one European (for argument sake). Language is the most important aspect and perhaps the best example of one's culture (Malina 1981: 12). It is difficult to separate language from culture or culture from language. Language is a tool and vehicle of culture (Kofi 2005: 142). The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, Chapter 2, Bill of Rights, says that, everyone has the right to use the language... of their choice, and to enjoy their culture, practice their religion and use their language (1996: 15). It is important that local churches should communicate with at least two local languages. This would demonstrate their respect to local people and it is for the success of the kingdom of God (Aspina 1994: 18). The languages use does not necessarily have to be every one's mother tongue. Of course, it must be the language that people in the local church or community prefer. One of the best ways to show respect for the people with whom we associate, is to communicate with them in their own language of preference (Dadoo et al. 1997: 64).

Local churches should do research to find out at least the two most preferred languages in their communities. The two languages should then be the ones that the specific local church must adopt to use in their meetings. The two languages should at least be used during preaching. Song should also be sung in more than one language and different cultural tunes. To be specific this thesis is proposing that there must be at least one person

interpreting into another language from the language the speaker will be using. These will help more people to enjoy the service, understand better and feel welcome to participate in the life of the local church concerned.

Stat SA share some light on finding knowing which language are the most spoken in each province in South Africa. This research will only give examples in the three major cities in South Africa that also happen to be in three different provinces. In Free State local churches should seek to use Sesotho (spoken by 64.4% people) and Afrikaans (11.9%). In Gauteng isiZulu (spoken by 21.5% people) or Sesotho (13.1%) and Afrikaans (14.4%) or English (12.5%). In the Western Cape Afrikaans (55.3%) or English (19.3%) and isiXhosa (23.7%).

7.2.4. This thesis also recommends that the leadership of local churches should reflect is demographic population groups. No matter what the local church does to reach people of different cultures if the leadership is not changing the whole exercise will be useless. It is so said and believed because leadership is the key in influencing the direction of the local church. "Leadership is influence – nothing more, nothing less (Maxwell 1998: 17)." Leadership must grow from people of all cultures represented in the local church. This responsibility actually lay in the hand of the present local church leadership to see that they raise leaders from other cultural groups within their church. This point is made clear in the words of Adams and his co-authors when they say that.

"By South Africanizing South Africa we mean acknowledging its full dimensions as a country and actively recognizing the value and worth of all its people. To achieve this, we have, all of us, to break through the laws, habits and assumptions that restrict participation in the country's public, economic and cultural life. The full and varied richness of all South Africans has to be able to express itself.

To the extent that the African people have been the main victims of exclusion in the past, so they will be the main beneficiaries of inclusion in the future. Yet the objective will not be to replace one form or race rule or hegemony with another. Rather, it will be to get rid of the system of race domination altogether (Adams ed. 1993:110)."

7.2.5. The last recommendation is that local church in South Africa should start to aim at

multiculturalism and no longer on multiracialism. Multiracial local churches use the “melting pot (Fain 2000: 918)” approach. Their local church is seen as a big boiling pot. Every new member jumps into the big pot and melt into a mixture. In the big pot they loss their original culture and identity to become ‘true’ Christians. This is perpetuated when people of all cultures (races) are allowed to join the local church but their cultures are denied any space by what ever means. This mentality need to be challenge by both leaders and members of the local churches. Local churches in South Africa need to accept and promote “salad bowl (Fain 2000: 919)” approach. In this approach different cultures are ‘tossed’ together in such away that each keeps its unique identity. And all cultures represented in the local church should be given the same equal space and time.

In order to reach this state the local churches in particularly those in South Africa should have to engage themselves consciously to wrestle with the five challenges that seem to always emerge were multiculturalism is preferred or promoted. The five challenges of multiculturalism were identified during this research. They are the following: the challenge of multiculturalism and community; the challenge of multiculturalism and contextualization; the challenge of multiculturalism and equality; the challenge of multiculturalism and communication and finally the challenge of multiculturalism and leadership.

These challenges may not necessarily happen in the order listed above. But it the recommendation of this study that every local that want to or is involved in multiculturalism should be ready or prepare itself for these challenges.

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