

**CHURCH PLANTING IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN URBAN
CONTEXT – WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE ROLE OF
THE REFORMED CHURCH TSHIAWELO**

By

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EPIGRAPHY

After this, the Lord chose seventy-two others and sent them out in pairs ahead of Him into every town and place where He planned to go. He said to them,

“There are a great many people to harvest,
but there are only a few workers.

So pray to God, who owns the harvest,
that He will send more workers to help gather His harvest.
Go now, but listen! I am sending you out like sheep among wolves.

Don't carry a purse, a bag, or sandals,
and don't waste time talking with people on the road.

Before you go into a house, say, 'Peace be with this house.'
If peaceful people live there, your blessing of peace will stay with them,
but if not, then your blessing will come back to you.

Stay in the peaceful house, eating and drinking what the people there give you.

A worker should be given his pay. Don't move from house to house.

If you go into a town and the people welcome you,
eat what they give you. Heal the sick who live there, and tell them,

'The Kingdom of God is near you.'

But if you go into a town, and the people don't welcome you,
then go into the streets and say,

'Even the dirt from your town that sticks to our feet we wipe off against you.'

But remember that the Kingdom of God is near.'

I tell you, on the Judgment Day it will be better for the people of Sodom
than for the people of that town.

Luke 10:1-12 (NCV)

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis wholeheartedly and with great honour to the following people:

The leaders of Reformed Church Tshiawelo and of all the churches that constitute Synod Soutpansberg; urban church planting is an urgent work we must seriously engage ourselves in. This thesis indicates the basis of urban church planting and also the reasons why we should regard urban church planting as serious and urgent work to be done. In order to achieve this, we must support Heidelberg Theological Seminary so that it should continue to produce many Ministers who should engage themselves in the urban church planting programme.

To Professor TC Rabali, my mentor and spiritual father. I dedicate this thesis to him, in honour and appreciate his sincere work of leading Reformed Church Tshiawelo to her great success in urban church planting especially in Gauteng Province. I say so because his visionary leadership is clear to everybody who knows him and also to those who do not know him. At the time Professor TC Rabali started to work on this congregation (1995); the congregation was only located at Soweto Township, but now it has many fellowship centers in many, townships, cities and suburbs in Gauteng Province and also one in Mpumalanga Province. Through his leadership the church managed to call seven Ministers (Rev Muswubi TA [2001 - former Minister], Rev Makhuvha NP [2004], Rev Ramantswana H [2004], Rev Liphadzi AE [2004], Rev Rabali Thiofhitshithu [2005], Rev Budeli TM [2007] and Rev Nemutanzhela TS [2008]). With the cooperation and full support of the vision of the urban church planting, the Reformed Church Tshiawelo planted five (5) daughter churches simultaneously on the 16th of August 2008 during her 40th anniversary celebrated on the 15-17 of August 2008. Professor TC Rabali endured difficult circumstances and challenges, but he did not regret his vision of focusing seriously on urban mission. I became missionary minded by observing and being inspired by what Professor TC Rabali did to rebuild Reformed Church Tshiawelo, I cannot forget the church councils' conference led by him at Tshipise in 1998, where he was focusing mainly on urban mission. That conference played an important role in encouraging me to view urban areas as a fertile mission field where the Word of God should be planted instantly without delay.

Soli Deo Gloria

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SUMMARY

If urbanization is one of the most important social realities in Africa today, it goes without saying that Christian mission must take full account of it. The church has turned her attention to African towns and cities none too soon. Her own historical and theological inclinations have led the church in the past to favour the rural areas, where success has been widely achieved. Yet the Christian enterprise in Africa is threatened by urbanization, and a half-hearted approach to the towns will not save it.

The research rests upon the hypothesis that the younger churches on the African continent – especially in Southern Africa – are indeed awaking to their missionary obligation, of moving from the position of receiving churches to sending churches. Especially in the growing cities of Africa the churches need to be informed and empowered to play their part in this regard. With a proper understanding of the Biblical mandate for mission, as well as of the urban context in which the church has to function, a comprehensive strategy for mission in the cities of Africa may be developed. The congregation of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo in Soweto was used as a case study in the research.

The biblical theology of urban mission was firstly attended to. The focus was on the way both the Old and the New Testaments view urban mission. From the biblical point of view, it was clear that mission of the church always concern sending. The Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is the prime Subject of Mission (*Missio Dei*), sending His church into the world (*missio ecclesia*). The biblical theology of the city showed a negative and a positive image of the city – the city of Satan and the city of God.

Jesus Christ had a great concern for the repentance of the city dwellers. He preached in cities (Mt 9:35-36), cried for the city of Jerusalem for her repentance (Lk 13:34-35), sent His disciples to preach in cities (Mt 10:5, 7, 11, 14, 23). He instructed His disciples to witness to Him from the city of Jerusalem, all Judea, Samaria, and to the end of the earth

(Ac 1:8). He also showed His great concern to the seven churches resided at the seven cities of Asia Minor (Rv 2:1-3:22). Paul's life was mainly centered on preaching, and planting churches mainly in urban areas

Cities all over the globe are growing at an astonishing rate. People are forced to migrate from rural to urban areas because of push and pull factors. Natural growth in the cities is rocketing. A third cause of urban growth is immigration. The problems that immigrants are encountering in are xenophobia and unsettlement, as recent events in South Africa demonstrated. Other vexing problems to be faced in the cities are urban poverty, prostitution, street people, HIV/AIDS, unemployment, crime, etc.

The development of a comprehensive definition of mission in an urban setting is required. Christ called the church to be His witness (*martyria*) to the world (Ac 1:8) by proclaiming the Word of God (*kerygma*) to the people, by serving people (*diakonia*), and by entering into fellowship of love with people (*koinonia*). The main goal of witnessing Christ in urban areas should be the *glorificatio Dei*, "to glorify God", this is the *liturgical dimension*.

The ministry of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo (Soweto) was used to illustrate and test the above. With the co-operation of the Synod Soutpansberg, the congregation developed a comprehensive mission programme, sending and equipping their members to undertake mission campaigns, seminars and conferences. Leadership training, as well as proper budgeting form an important part of the programme.

The strategies can be utilized to plant churches in metropolitan cities outside Gauteng Province, e.g Bloemfontein, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Pietermaritzburg, East London, Durban, Kimberley, etc. The strategies for urban church planting were grouped into four phases which are: Visionary Phase (Step 1), Planning Phase (Step 2), Preparation Phase (Step 3), and Establishment Phase (Step 4).



KEY TERMS

Biblical theology

Dimensions of mission

Heidelberg Theological Seminary

Missio Dei and Missio Ecclesia

Partnership

Reformed Church Tshiawelo

Synod Soutpansberg

Urban Church planting

Urban mission

Urbanization

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ABBREVIATIONS

GENERAL ABBREVIATIONS

AD	: Anno Domini
AIDS	: Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BC	: Before Christ
B.C.E.	: Before Common Era
C.E.	: Common Era
Cf	: refers to
e.g.	: for example
ed	: edition
ed	: editor
eds	: editors
et al	: and others
etc	: et cetera
GKSA	: Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid Afrika
HIV	: Human immunodeficiency virus
i.e.	: that is
IMC	: International Mission Conference
CBD	: Central business district
Ltd	: Limited
NCV	: New Century Version
NRSV	: New Revised Standard Version
PWV	: Pretoria Witwatersrand Vereeniging



RCSA	: Reformed Churches in South Africa
RCT	: Reformed Church Tshiawelo
SA	: South Africa
Sv	: sub voce (under the word)
SS	: Synod Soutpansberg
RCSASSA	: Acts of the Synod Soutpansberg of the Reformed Churches in South Africa
UK	: United Kingdom
USA	: United State of America
rev ed	: Revised Edition
EC	: Eastern Cape
FS	: Free State
GT	: Gauteng
KJV	: King James Version
KZN	: Kwazulu Natal
LIM	: Limpopo
LXX	: the Septuagint
MP	: Mpumalanga
NC	: Northern Cape
NCV	: New Century Version
NIV	: New International Version
NRSV	: New Revised Standard Version
NW	: North West
WC	: Western Cape
RSA	: Republic of South Africa



ABBREVIATIONS OF THE BIBLE BOOKS

OLD TESTAMENT		NEW TESTAMENT	
Gn	Genesis	Mt	Matthews
Ex	Exodus	Mk	Mark
Lv	Leviticus	Lk	Luke
Nm	Numbers	Jn	John
Dt	Deuteronomy	Ac	Acts
Jos	Joshua	Rm	Romans
Jdg	Judges	1 Cor	1 Corinthians
Rt	Ruth	2 Cor	2 Corinthians
1 Sm	1 Samuel	Gl	Galatians
2 Sm	2 Samuel	Eph	Ephesians
1 Ki	1 Kings	Phlp	Philippians
2 Ki	2 Kings	Col	Colossians
1 Chr	1 Chronicles	1 Th	1 Thessalonians
2 Chr	2 Chronicles	2 Th	2 Thessalonians
Ezr	Ezra	1 Tm	1 Timothy
Neh	Nehemiah	2 Tm	2 Timothy
Es	Esther	Tt	Titus
Job	Job	Phlm	Philemon
Ps	Psalms	Heb	Hebrews
Pr	Proverbs	Ja	James
Ec	Ecclesiasts	1 Pt	1 Peter
Can	Song of Songs	2 Pt	2 Peter



Is	Isaiah	1 Jn	1 John
Jr	Jeremiah	2 Jn	2 John
Lm	Lamentations	3 Jn	3 John
Ezk	Ezekiel	Jude	Jude
Dn	Daniel	Rv	Revelation
Hs	Hosea		
Jl	Joel		
Am	Amos		
Ob	Obadiah		
Jnh	Jonah		
Mi	Micah		
Nah	Nahum		
Hab	Habakkuk		
Zph	Zephaniah		
Hg	Haggai		
Zch	Zechariah		
MI	Malachi		



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 RELEVANCE OF STUDY

Urban church planting is of prime importance to the church and her mission. During the 20th century cities have mushroomed on six continents, also in Africa. Urbanization and modernization, with their concomitants of materialism and secularism, have become salient features of our time. According to Shorter (1991:1-2), towns and cities are centers for generating wealth, but African socio-economic realities ensure that the wealth created by urbanization is far from evenly distributed. On the contrary, there are unmistakable signs of poverty, alienation and disorientation caused by urbanization, and particularly by the gigantic influx of urban migrants. There are also signs that the growth and multiplication of towns are hindering much needed development in rural areas.

It is clear from all indicated above that urbanization is one of the most important social realities in Africa today, and that Christian mission must take full account of it. The church has turned her attention to the African towns none too soon. Her own historical and theological inclinations have led her to favour the rural areas, where success has been widely achieved. Yet the whole Christian enterprise in Africa is threatened by urbanization, and a half-hearted approach to the towns will not save it. The church must take urbanization seriously and give it a priority that is absolute. Personnel have to be deployed in towns and proper structures created, if the Gospel is to continue to make an impact in urban areas.

Cities play an important role for the urban church growth. This is clearly confirmed by McGavran when he says: “The importance of cities for church growth increases when we see that larger and larger proportions of the earth’s population are living in them. The rush to the cities is on, and within the next few decades perhaps three-fourths of the human race will be born, lives, and dies in urban rather than rural areas” (1980:314).

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

According to Conn (1997:26), white churches “remained largely aloof from the movement and the urban context, self-insulated from public life, of evangelism from social transformation. Fearful also of programs and theologies that sounded too much like a revised social gospel, they moved deeper into ‘suburban captivity of the church,’ drawn to the growth potential of the suburbs. Urban mission for many was a synonym for evangelization in the city”.

One of the greatest challenges to world evangelization is urban ministry. Urban centers are complex mosaics, increasingly resistant to traditional evangelistic methods. The challenge can be met only by strategies that are adapted to the context, through planning based on accurate understanding of those to be reached (Engel 1997:46). There are many people who are migrating from rural areas to urban areas due to economic, political, social and other realities (cf Monsma 1989:108-110; cf McGavran 1980:315; Verster 2000:37; Greenway 1999:116). The problem needs to be faced is that many of the rural migrants, when they arrive in urban areas, leave or distance themselves from the church, and involve themselves in the life of robbery, drugs, prostitution, street life, etc. The questions that the local church should pay more attention to are as follows:



- What is urban mission?
- What is the biblical theology of urban mission?
- What are the needs of people living in cities?
- How should the local urban church minister in urban areas?
- What should be done to plant more churches in urban areas?
- Why should more churches be planted in urban areas?

1.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this study is to explore the role of a local urban church of accomplishing the threefold goal of mission articulated by Gilbertus Voetus, the founder of Utrecht which are the conversion of the nations; the planting of the churches; the glorification and manifestation of divine grace (Jongeneel 1997:83; cf Verkuyl 1978:184; Kritzinger, Meiring and Saayman 1994:1; Müller 1987:31) within the context of urban areas. Johan H. Bavinck adopted the same goals and stressed that they are three aspects of the same goal. He placed conversion, church planting, and the glory of God's grace in the coming of the Kingdom. He further indicated that it must be emphasized, however, that these three purposes are not distinct and separate but they are in fact three aspects of a single purpose of God: the coming and extension of the Kingdom of God. The coming of the Kingdom is concerned with God, with His greatness, with His honor and His grace. The coming of the Kingdom includes the extension of the church over the whole earth. And, the coming of the Kingdom realizes itself in the conversion of sinners. These are not three separate purposes, but one great and exalted final purpose that is disclosed to us in three blessings, of which the glorification of God is undoubtedly foremost, the establishment of His church second, and the conversion of the heathen third (Bavink 1964:155-156). According to Kritzinger et al (1994:36), the goal of mission can only be accomplished through a holistic approach. In this study the researcher will develop a

comprehensive mission strategy in which the following five components of mission will be explicated (Van Engen 1981:178-190; Kritzinger 1988:34-35; Van Engen 1993:89; Pretorius et al 1987:154):

- *Kerygma* – to proclaim the Lordship of Jesus
- *Koinonia* – to build the fellowship of believers
- *Diakonia* – to serve one another
- *Martyria* – to witness Christ and reconcile with God
- *Leitourgia* – to worship and serve God through our participation in His mission

The specific objectives of this study are as follows:

- To understand the Biblical theology of urban mission.
- To discern the role of a local church in urban church planting.
- To develop a comprehensive mission strategy for the church in an urban setting.
- To evaluate the work of urban mission of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo.
- To develop the strategies that the Reformed Church Tshiawelo can utilize to plant more churches in metropolitan cities outside Gauteng Province.

1.4 HYPOTHESIS

The younger churches on the African continent – especially in Southern Africa – are awaking to their missionary obligation, of moving from the position of receiving churches to sending churches. Especially in the growing cities of Africa the churches need to be informed and empowered to play their part in this regard. The hypothesis of this study is that: with a proper understanding of the Biblical mandate for mission, as well as of the

urban context in which the church has to function, a comprehensive strategy for mission in the cities of Africa may be developed. The congregation of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo in Soweto is used as a case study in the research.

1.5 CENTRAL THEORETICAL ARGUMENT

The central theoretical argument of this study is: the local urban church should be urged to re-evaluate her role of doing urban mission, and as a result plant more churches in urban areas, churches that address the real needs of the community they serve. Local urban churches should be motivated and empowered to play role in this regard. Chareonwongsak states that, "Because cities are the centers of complex social interaction, they are home to the nation's social, commercial, political, military, artistic, entertainment, educational, and mass media life. To evangelise a whole nation requires us to use these resources on the cities first" (1997:13-14).

1.6 WHY STUDY URBAN CHURCH PLANTING?

There are three vital reasons that encouraged the researcher to study urban church planting.

➡ The *first reason* is that the study of urban church planting is very crucial because of the fact that billions of people are moving from rural areas to urban areas because of different reasons (cf Meiring 1994:589; Grigg 1992:30-31; Aghamkar 1994:147), and when they arrive in urban areas, most of them distance themselves from the church. By developing urban mission, and as a result planting more churches in urban areas, people who have distanced themselves from the church and the not-yet Christians will be easily reached for the proclamation of God's Word.



➤ The *second reason* for doing this research is that a little has been done on this topic and the researcher wants to elaborate more on this subject. C. Kirk Hadaway is of the opinion that: "... research dealing with the urban church can benefit churches and denominations and help them to be more effective. It is my view that some very good research has been conducted, but much of it has not been publicized or translated in such a way that it can be used" (Hadaway 1997:35).

➤ The *third reason* is to give advocacy and encouragement to the local urban churches so that they can see urban church planting as their necessity and as a result prioritise it and put it on their agenda. Stuart Murray (2001:15) states that:

Church planting initiatives are in their infancy. Many opportunities for church planting have been identified. And for thousands of churches, the issue of church planting is not even on the agenda. Much more advocacy and encouragement is needed, if the trickle of church planting that has become a stream is to develop into the flood that many believe is vital, if our society is to be effectively evangelized.

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The basis of this research was obtained through two research methods, namely, *literature study* and *empirical research*. In developing his methodology, the researcher was informed by the following guidelines:

1.7.1 Literature study

According to Melville & Goddard (1996:18), the term literature study is often used to describe the process of finding out about previous work from a range of sources (*only some of which are literary*). Study of the literature form a fundamental and integral part of the planning and undertaking of the research project (Smit 1995:9). Any good research involves two distinct literature studies:

1.7.1.1 A preliminary literature study

It allows the researcher to get a feel for the topic and issues involved, and to understand how the proposed research would fit into it. This is done as preparation for research and should precede any written proposal to conduct research.

1.7.1.2 A full literature study

It is a far more comprehensive study; this is part of the research process itself than part of the preparation for research. The bulk of this study should be done prior to embarking on experimentation or data collection in order that the results of the study may be used. However, during the course of the research itself, the researcher should 'top up' his knowledge of recent development by reading current publications.

The basis of this research was obtained through literature study, and especially in theological research. Theological books together with the Bible were consulted in order to have relevant information concerning this research. A thorough and in-depth identification and study of relevant sources of information were the fundamental aspects of the compilation of this research project (Smit 1995:22).

1.7.2 Empirical method

An empirical research was conducted in this research project. Other sources like interviews; observations; and questionnaires were conducted in addition to the literature study.

1.7.2.1 Interviews

Melville & Goddard (1996:49) are of the opinion that:

An interview involves a one-on-one verbal interaction between the researcher and a respondent. ...An interview should have a plan. ...One area where researchers would need to use interviews rather than questionnaires would be in getting information from people who can't read. Other advantages of an interview over a questionnaire are that the researcher can ask the respondent to clarify unclear answers and can follow up on interesting answers. Some advantages for a questionnaire over an interview are that the respondents can answer the questionnaire at times that are suitable to them, and the respondents may not be as inhibited in answering sensitive questions. However, a questionnaire is the only practical approach when dealing with many respondents.

The personal interviews were conducted in a group setting where each participant had a self-administered questionnaire which makes it possible to keep anonymity. A researcher called for qualitative data which were gathered in interviews with a few

selected individuals. This was in-depth interviews with an individual where the researcher continued to probe deeper into the responses (Søgaard 1996:103)

1.7.2.2 Questionnaires

Melville & Goddard (1996:43) define a questionnaire as a printed list of questions which respondents are asked to answer. Sapsford (2007:47) defines a questionnaire as a list of questions which informants answer themselves – a ‘self completion’ instrument. According to Søgaard (1996:104) the questions can be both structured¹ and disguised². The questionnaire is regarded as the best method of gathering data. Best and Kahn (1993:17) identified a few advantages of this method:

- Questionnaires demand less time.
- They are economically cheaper.
- They can be administered to large groups as opposed to interviews.
- At times questionnaires can be administered personally, thus, providing the advantages offered by the interview.

With the help of The Institute for Missiological and Ecumenical Research (IMER) at the University of Pretoria, the researcher has developed a questionnaire to use in the Reformed Church Tshiawelo, in order to obtain the necessary information and to test some of his findings. Church members and church leaders of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo were interviewed through the questionnaire in Appendix A and B.

¹ Structured questions refer to questions where the respondent will either not have any alternatives, or will have to choose between certain alternatives provided on the questionnaire (Søgaard 1996:104).

² Disguised questions refer to the questions where the purpose of the questions is not directly obvious to the respondent (Søgaard 1996:104).

1.7.2.3 Participant observer

In their daily lives people constantly observe reality to gather information. From what they see, they make their diagnosis and interpret events. Certain types of information will have to be gathered through observation (Søgaard 1996:106). In this study the researcher became a participant observer. Being an ordained Minister, he sometimes became a part of the situation being observed because direct observation is one obvious way of seeing what is done in practice and it is an effective way of collecting data (cf Sapsford 2007:142). Leady also indicated that:

Participant observation is characterised by the observer (researcher) becoming a part of the situation being observed. Participant observation is typically conceived of as existing along a continuum with the role of 'completed observer' on one end and the role of 'complete participant' on the other. Depending on the researcher's purpose and skill, different levels of participant observation are more or less appropriate (Leady 1997:159).

1.8 EXPLANATION OF CONCEPTS

1.8.1 Local church

In order to know what a local church is, it is of great importance to know first what a church is. Elwell (1984:231) indicated a good explication of the church in the following way:



The English word “church” derives from the Late Greek word *kyriakon*, the Lord’s house, a church building. In the NT the word translates the Greek word *ekklēsia*. In secular Greek *ekklēsia* designated a public assembly and this meaning is still retained in the NT³. In Hebrew OT the word *qāhāl* designates the assembly for God’s people⁴ and the LXX, the Greek translation of the OT, translated this word with both *ekklēsia* and *synagōgē*. Even in the NT *ekklēsia* may signify the assembly of the Israelites⁵; but apart from these expectations, the word *ekklēsia* in the NT designates the Christian church, both the local⁶ and the universal church⁷.

In this study the word “church” refers to the people of God (cf Heyns 1980:46) and, by implication then, as a pilgrim church⁸. The local church refers to the community of God which is found everywhere in the world. Therefore the local church becomes the church-in-mission Bosch (1991:373).

1.8.2 Urbanization

Greenway and Monsma (1989:xiii) define urbanization as the process by which, in a particular country or region, the percentage of people living in cities increases relative to the rural population, with consequent effects on human life. Where there is rapid urbanization, there is a relative decline in rural population. This process has marked the

³ Ac 19:32, 39, 41.

⁴ Dt 10:4; 23:2-3; 31:30; Ps 22:23.

⁵ Ac 7:38; Heb 2:12.

⁶ Mt 18:17; Ac 15:41; Rm 16:16; 1 Cor 4:17; 7:17; 14:33; Col 4:15.

⁷ Mt 16:18; Ac 20:28; 1 Cor 12:28; 15:9; Eph 1:22.

⁸ Bosch (1991:378) says, “The church-in-mission is, primarily, the local church everywhere in the world”.

major phenomenon of social change in the second half of this century: “By 1950, United Nations’ estimates placed 28, 4 percent of the world population in cities. By 1980, that figure had reached 41, 3 percent. And, by the year 2000, according to UN projections, it will reach 51, 3 percent” (Conn 1993:319). By the year 2025 it will reach 65 percent. In 1961 the Economic and Social Council of UN indicated the rapid growth of urban populations as “one of the most outstanding revolutions of the modern epoch” (Greenway 1972:227).

1.8.3 Urban areas

The word “urban” refers to that which pertains to or characterizes cities in distinction from rural areas. An urban area comprises a city and the communities that are related to and affected by it. An urban region may include a number of cities, towns, and related communities (Greenway and Monsma 1989:xiii).

1.8.4 Urban ministry

The biblical concept of “ministry” is service rendered to God or to people, in this instance to people living in urban areas. Ministry in the church has as its goal the edification of individuals with a view towards corporate maturity in Christ [Eph 4:7-16] (Elwell 1984:271). The concept of ministry or service is seen in the words *diakoneō* “service” and *douleo* “serve as a slave” and their corresponding nouns. The word *hypēretēs* indicates one who gives willing service to another e.g. servants of the “Word” (Lk 1:2), of Christ (Jn 18:36; Ac 26:16; 1 Cor 4:1) and of Paul and Barnabas (Ac 13:37). The term ministry therefore refers to the work both of those commissioned to leadership and of the whole body of believers (Elwell 1984:272).

1.8.5 Urban Church planting

The term “urban church planting” denotes the process whereby new churches are started in urban areas (i.e. in cities, towns, etc). This term is used consistently in this thesis.

1.8.6 Theology of urban mission

Gerald Anderson in *The Concise Dictionary of the Christian mission*, defined theology of mission as, “concerned with the basic presuppositions and underlying principles which determine, from the standpoint of Christian faith, the motives, message, methods, strategy and goals of Christian world mission” (Stephen, Anderson and Goodwin 1971:594). Theology of mission is a multi-and interdisciplinary enterprise. According to Charles Van Engen (1994:248), theology of mission is a relatively new discipline, with its first text appearing in 1961 in a collection of essays edited by Gerald Anderson, entitled *The Theology of Christian Mission* (Anderson 1961).

Theology of mission has to do with three arenas, which will be shown in interlocking circles. The Christians apply biblical and theological presuppositions and values to the enterprise of the church’s ministry and mission, and set them in the context of specific activities carried out in particular times and places. The following figure will illustrate the point.

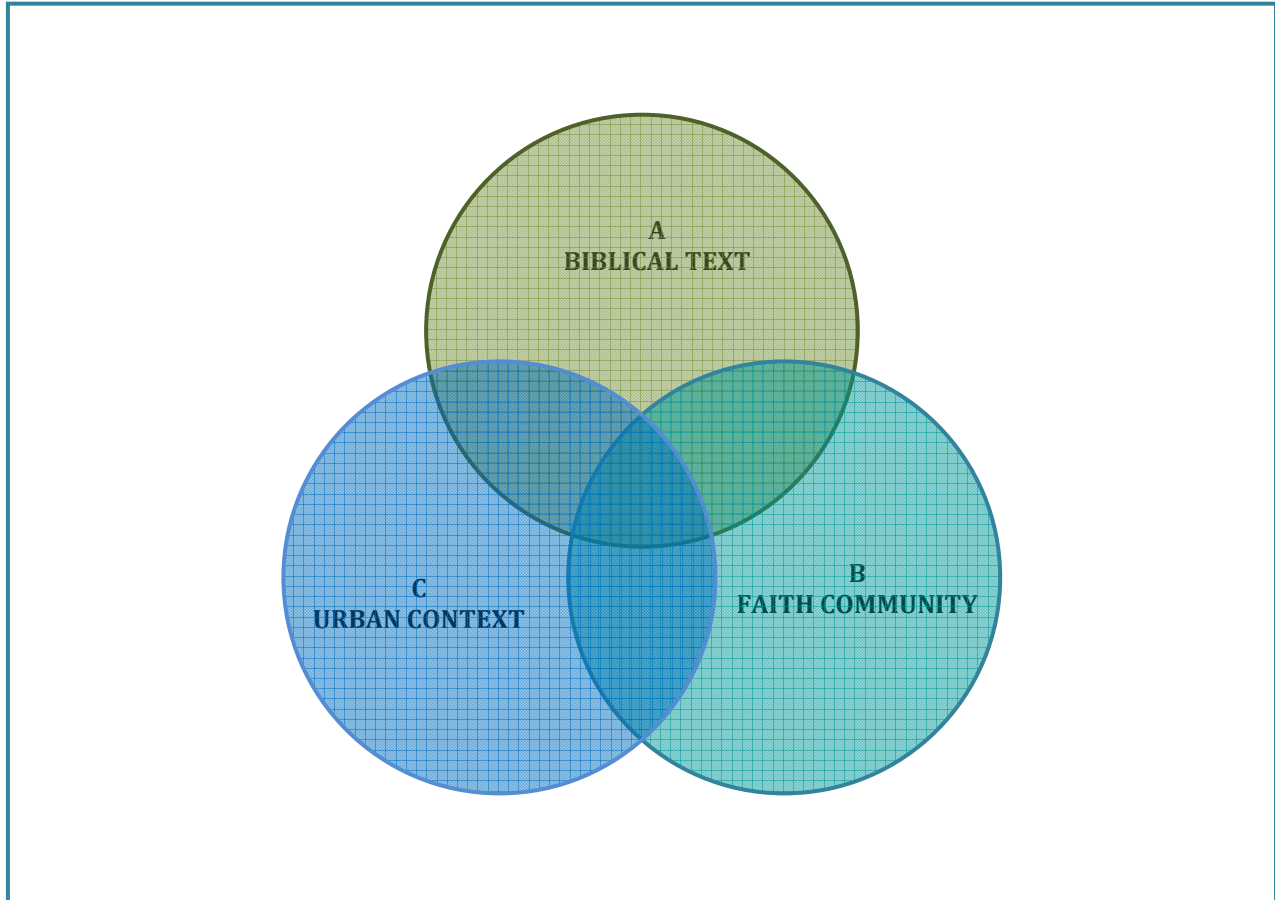


Figure 1.1 The tripartite nature of theology of mission – (Taken from Van Engen 1994:249)

According to Van Engen (1994:249-251) circle A in figure 1.1 above indicates *first*, that the theology of mission is theology, because fundamentally it involves reflection about God. It seeks to understand God's mission, God's intentions and purposes, God's use of human instruments in God's mission, and God's working through God's people in God's world. *Second*, theology of mission is theology of mission (circle C in figure 1.1). Here Christians are dealing with applied theology. This type of theological reflection focuses specifically on a set of particular issues, those concerning the church's mission. *Third*, theology of mission is specially oriented toward and for mission (circle B in figure 1.1). Theology of mission draws its incarnational nature from the ministry of Jesus, and always happens in a specific time and place. Hence circle C involves the missiological use of all

the social science disciplines that help Christians to understand the context in which God's mission takes place.

According to Charles Van Engen (1994:251), there are three things Christians have to consider in order to understand the city. Those things are as follows:

- *First*, Christians borrow from sociology, anthropology, economics, urbanology, the study of Christianity and religious pluralism in the city, psychological issues of urbanism, and a host of other cognate disciplines.
- *Second*, this makes them come to a more particular contextual understanding of the city in terms of a hermeneutic of the reality in which they minister.
- *Third*, this in turn calls them to hear the cries, see the faces, understand the stories, and respond to the living needs and hopes of people.

Charles Van Engen further indicated that the above three overlapping circles indicated in figure 1.1 need not be isolated from each other because when urban life and urban ministry happen, they do so in the midst of all three circles at once (1994:251).

1.9 PRELIMINARY OUTLINE

CHAPTER ONE gives an introduction: it focuses on the relevance of study, problem statement, aim and objectives, hypothesis, central theoretical argument, reasons for studying urban church planting, research methodology and explanation of related concepts.

In **CHAPTER TWO**, the biblical theology of urban mission is discussed. It focuses on what the Old and the New Testaments view about urban mission. In this chapter it is

clearly indicated that God is God who shows great concern to urban mission (Bakke 1997:42-44; DuBose 1983:56; McKeown 2003). Jesus Christ also shows a great concern to urban mission (DuBose 1978:43; Walker 1996:35). The apostles' concern about urban mission was also discussed in this chapter. Cities in the history of the church, is the last issue discussed in this chapter.

CHAPTER THREE focuses on urbanization. The researcher pays attention to urban growth (Monsma 1989:108; Linthicum 1991a:17-19; Shorter 1991:1-2). The causes of urban growth were discussed (Grigg 1992:29-30; Shorter 1991:17; Aghamkar 1994:147-148). The researcher ends the chapter by highlighting the problems that are encountered in urban areas because of urban growth, for example, urban poverty, prostitution, street people, crime, HIV/AIDS, etc.

CHAPTER FOUR discusses the development of a comprehensive mission strategy for the church in an urban setting. The church is called by Christ and sent to the world to work on His behalf in all spheres of life. An explication of five dimensions of mission was done. Those dimensions are *kerygma*, *koinonia*, *diakonia*, *martyria* and *leitourgia* (Van Engen 1993:89; Kritzinger et al 1994:36).

CHAPTER FIVE focuses on mission work of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo in an urban setting. The rebuilding of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo is the main issue discussed in this chapter. This chapter focuses also on equipping and mobilizing Christians for mission, the challenges of the Reformed church Tshiawelo. The last thing discussed in this chapter is the evaluation of the urban mission of the reformed Church Tshiawelo. This was done through the questionnaires that were handed to three groups of people, i.e, mission committee members, Church Council members and church members. The questionnaire included questions that evaluated the mission of the church

through the “Seven I’s” Programme (Kritzinger et al 1994:48), namely; Inspiration, Information, Interpretation, Involvement, Instruction, Investment and intercession.

CHAPTER SIX focuses on the strategies in which the Reformed Church Tshiawelo can utilise to plant churches in metropolitan cities outside Gauteng Province, e.g Bloemfontein, Cape Town, Durban, Port Elizabeth, East London, Kimberley, etc. The strategies were summarized in four phases which are: Visionary phase, planning phase, preparation phase for church planting and establishment phase of the daughter churches. Principles of urban church planting are also discussed, and the methods of church planting are the last issue discussed in this chapter.

CHAPTER SEVEN is the last chapter. In this chapter the researcher summarises the main findings of his research, discusses the implications of his thesis for both the study of Missiology and the missionary practice of the church. Recommendations in this regard, together with suggestions for further research in future, bring the chapter and the thesis to a close.



CHAPTER 2

THE BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF URBAN MISSION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is devoted to a discussion of the biblical theology of urban mission. This chapter starts by introducing the biblical theology of mission in general. It focuses on what mission entails, the motives of mission, and specifically on how both the Old and New Testaments view urban mission. It will point out the involvement of the Triune God (God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit) in the sending. The Apostle Paul's concern for urban mission will be the last issue to be discussed in this chapter. As urban mission is studied in this chapter from a biblical theology, explication of relevant texts will be done more in this chapter.

2.2 THE BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF MISSION

2.2.1 What mission entails

When Christians speak about mission, they are speaking about the work or process which always concern "sending". According to DuBose (1983:37), the word "send" whether is it used in a more general or in a special theological sense, always conveys threefold ideas. Those ideas are:

- an intelligent sending "source,"
- a sending "medium" (instrument, agent, etc.), personal or impersonal,
- a sending "purpose".

This simply means that one can not speak of mission in a real sense of the word if it does not have all the three vital ingredients of sending. A mission always has *a source, a medium, and a purpose*.

The researcher does agree with the above idea of DuBose because when he read the Bible, he discovered that there are many missiological texts in the Bible, and those texts have all the three vital ingredients of sending. Here, for example, the researcher constructs a systematic analysis of two of those texts. The *first* text is John 3:17: “God did not send His Son into the world to judge the world guilty, but to save the world through Him” (NCV). From this text, all the ingredients of sending are present. God the Father who is the Source in this text sends His Son Jesus Christ, who is the medium of sending, the work that Christ came for “to save the world’ is the purpose of the sending.

The *other* text is 2 Corinthians 5:20: “So we have been sent to speak for Christ. It is as if God is calling to you through us. We speak for Christ when we beg you to be at peace with God” (NCV). The idea of mission is expressed through the concept of the spiritual ambassadorship. All the ingredients of the sending are present without the language as such: the source, the instrument and the purpose. Christ the King sends us, His ambassadors, on His mission to reconcile the world to Christ (cf 2 Cor 5:18-20) (DuBose 1983:56).

2.2.2 The Triune God as involved in the sending

What do Christians understand when they speak of a Triune God? This is the type of question that needs a deep knowledge of theology. In answering this question, the researcher defines the term “Triune God” as the way God reveals Himself to Christians

in three persons, i.e the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Does this mean that Christians have three gods? This does not mean that, but it means that they have the one and only God who revealed Himself to them in three living persons (*Dutch Reformed Church* 1999:4). In a paper read at the Brandenburg Missionary Conference in 1932, Karl Barth became one of the first theologians to articulate mission as an activity of God Himself (Bosch 1991:389). Throughout, the Barthian influence was crucial. Indeed, Barth may be called the first clear exponent of a new theological paradigm which broke radically with an Enlightenment approach to theology (cf Küng 1987:227). His influence on missionary thinking reached a peak at the Willingen Conference of the IMC (1952). It was here that the idea *missio Dei* first surfaced clearly. Mission was understood as being derived from the very nature of God. It was thus put in the context of the doctrine of the Trinity, not of ecclesiology or soteriology. The classical doctrine on the *missio Dei* as God the Father sending the Son, and God the Father and the Son sending the Spirit was expanded to include yet another “movement”: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit sending the church into the world (Bosch 1991:390).

There are many texts that speak about the Trinity of God. Christ prescribed baptism “in the name (singular: one God, one name) of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”, the three persons who are the one God to whom Christians commit themselves (Mt 28:19). So they meet the three persons in the account of Jesus’ own baptism: the Father acknowledged the Son, and the Spirit showed His presence in the Son’s life and ministry (Mk 1:9-11). “For when our Lord was baptized in the Jordan, the voice of the Father was heard saying, ‘This is my Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased’ (Mt 3:17) (NIV); the Son was seen in the water and the Spirit appeared as in the form of a dove” (*Dutch Reformed Church* 1999:5).

According to DuBose (1983:64), the language of sending has special significant implications for the doctrine of the Trinity. It was thus part in the context of the doctrine of the Trinity of God. Bosch (1991:292) further indicated that, “mission is primarily and ultimately, the work of the Triune God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, for the sake of the world, a ministry in which the church is privileged to participate” (cf Kritzinger 1988:42).

Even in the Old Testament, there are hints of this Trinitarian expression in the language of the sending. For example, the psalmist spoke of God sending forth His Spirit to renew the earth (Ps 104:30). A more definite statement is from the voice of the servant in the significant Servant songs of the second section of the servant of the Book of Isaiah: “Draw near to me, hear this! From the beginning I have not spoken in secret, from the time it came to be I have been there. And now the Lord GOD has sent me and His Spirit” (Is 48:16) (NRSV).

2.2.2.1 God the Father as the Sender

In the Synoptic Gospels the Kingdom or Reign of God is the central theme in Jesus’ ministry. The opening words of Jesus’ ministry are: “The time has come” He said “The Kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the Good News” (Mk 1:15) (NIV). Christ’s response to the Galilean people who tried to keep Him in their religion is: “I must preach the Good News of the Kingdom of God to other towns also, because that is why I was sent” (Lk 4:43) (NIV) (Goheen 2000:137).

Jesus Christ used various forms of the expression, “He who sends me” as a divine title of the Father. Although this concept is also found in the Synoptic Gospels and the Epistles, the Fourth Gospel develops it most completely. In an almost endless variety of

expressions⁹, yet with a remarkably consistent ring, Jesus spoke of the Father who sent Him. For example:

For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him (Jn 3:17) (NIV).

I tell you the truth, whoever hears what I say and believes in the One who sent me has eternal life. That person will not be judged guilty but has already left death and entered life (Jn 5:24) (NCV).

Bosch (1991:392) is of the opinion that, “mission has its origin in the heart of God. God is a fountain of sending love to the people. This is the deepest source of mission. It is impossible to penetrate deeper still; there is mission because God loves people”.

2.2.2.2 God the Son as the Sender

The Gospels make it plain that Jesus, the Son of God, not only was sent but also Himself sends. In fact, in two significant references, Jesus linked the Father’s sending of His own whom the Father had given Him. Christians observe this in the prayer just cited in John 17:18, “I have sent them into the world, just as you sent me into the world” (NCV). This is also indicated in the commission in John 20:21 where Christ said to His disciples, “Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, I now send you” (NCV) (Goheen 2000:162,178). According to Spindler, the pattern of “being sent out” is the first biblical idea behind the concept and reality of mission. Jesus sent out the twelve apostles (Mt 10:16) and the seventy two disciples (Lk 10:1-12). Jesus said to His disciples, “The

⁹ Jn 4:34; 5:30, 36-38; 6:38-39, 44,57; 7:28-29,33; 8:16,18,26,29,42; 9:4; 12:44-45,49; 13:20; 14:24; 17:3,8,18,25

harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest” (Lk 10:2; Mt 9:38) (NRSV) (Spindler 1995:127, cf Wagner 1984a:19). He further said to them, “As the Father sent me, I now send you” (Jn 20:21) (NCV). In itself the term “apostle” like *Šaliah* in the Jewish tradition, stands for the “one who is sent” or the “envoy”, one who represents with authority, the one who has sent. What is indicated, therefore, is the distinct authority to represent Christ and His Father in the power of the Holy Spirit (Spindler 1995:127).

According to Goheen (2000:136), the commission words of Jesus “As the Father has sent me, I now send you” (Jn 20:21) (NCV) to the embryonic church demonstrate that ecclesiology is dependent on Christology. This mandate gives the church her missional identity and nature; the content of that missional identity and nature is defined by the way the mission of Jesus is understood.

The Synoptic Gospels had emphasized the fact that Jesus sent out the twelve (Mt 10:5, 6), Jesus said to them, “Go not into any way of the Gentiles, and enter not into any city of the Samaritans; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (KJV). According to Bonhoeffer (2001:148), “In His very first words Jesus lays down a limitation of the work, a circumstance which they must inevitably have found strange and difficult. The choice of field for their labours does not depend on their own impulses or inclinations, but on where they are sent. This makes it clear that it is not their own work they are doing, but God’s”. The Synoptic Gospels also emphasized the sending of the seventy (Lk 10:1). Jesus emphasized His sending role to His disciples: “I tell you the truth, whoever accepts anyone I send accepts me; and whoever accepts me accepts the one who sent me” (Jn 13:20) (NIV). This small group of disciples was the nucleus of the community He prepared to continue His mission: they were to continue His mission as the Father had sent Him (Scherer and Bevans 1992:133). L.A. Hoedemaker is of the

opinion that: “The church is related to the whole world, that its origin has to do with a vision for the whole of humankind, in short that the church is “sent” is one of the fundamental givens of the Christian faith. In the church and in the theology “mission” is a key word, and that has always been the case” (Hoedemaker 1995:157).

2.2.2.3 God the Holy Spirit as the Sender

The New Testament speaks of the Holy Spirit both as being sent and as sending. Jesus spoke of His sending the Holy Spirit: “Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you“(Jn 16:7) (KJV). More Trinitarian in its impact is the two significant passages relating both the divine Father and the divine Son in the sending of the divine Spirit. In John 14:26, Jesus said that the Father will send the Spirit in the Son’s name; and in John 15:26, Jesus said that He will send the Spirit from the Father. DuBose (1983:66) indicates that full Trinitarian impact of the divine apostolate awaits the role of the Holy Spirit as Himself the Sender. This is dramatically illustrated in Acts 13:1-4:

In the church at Antioch there were these prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon (also called Niger), Lucius (from the city of Cyrene), Manaen (who had grown up with Herod, the ruler), and Saul. They were all worshiping the Lord and giving up eating for a certain time. During this time the Holy Spirit said to them, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul to do a special work for which I have chosen them.” So after they gave up eating and prayed, they laid their hands on Barnabas and Saul and sent them out. Barnabas and Saul, sent out by the Holy Spirit, went



to the city of Seleucia. From there they sailed to the island of Cyprus (Ac 13:1-4) (NCV) (cf Marshall 1983:213-218).

The Holy Spirit led the Church in Antioch of Syria in the dedication of Paul and Barnabas for their mission (Johnson 1987:53; cf Bavinck 1960:280). After the Church released them for their special mission assignment, Luke spoke climactically of Paul and Barnabas “being sent by the Holy Spirit (Ac 13:4).

According to Goheen (2000:183), the Book of Acts gives us a full exposition of the Holy Spirit as the primary agent of mission. The Spirit is poured out at Pentecost and immediately the eschatological gathering of God’s people begins. The Spirit continues to be the primary agent of mission. He brings Philip to the Ethiopian eunuch (Ac 8), prepares Ananias to receive Saul as a brother (Ac 9), prepares Peter and Cornelius for their encounter (Ac 10), initiates the first mission to the Gentiles (Ac 13), and guides the Apostles on their journeys (Ac 16:7).

2.3 DIFFERENT VIEWS CONCERNING THE BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF THE CITY

The fundamental question that might come to people when they hear about the biblical theology of the city might be, “What is a biblical theology of the city?” A biblical theology of the city refers to a way of viewing the city from a God point of view or from a God frame of reference. Concerning this biblical theology of the city, DuBose (1978:100-101) is of the opinion that:

The urban theme of the Bible is a very rich one. It furnishes us ample understanding of the city and therefore provides us a guide for

discerning both the negative and positive meaning of urban reality. The city is more than geography and artifact, however; it is first and foremost people. It is people who are compelled to structure their lives in terms of the demands of the urban way of life. The Bible has an uncanny way of speaking to that way of life, furnishing us with profound insight into its meaning and its implication for church life in a complex urban setting. The beautiful thing about the theological principles at work in New Testament church growth is that we do not have to find a way to relate them to the urban setting. The New Testament does this for us. However, the Bible does not suddenly thrust us into the Book of Acts with its marvelous account of church growth. Moreover, it is not the Book of Acts which first introduces us to the city. The Old Testament as well as the Gospels have prepared us. The God of the Bible has been at work in the cities from their very beginning. To see how He has been at work – to view the wide panorama of the city in the Bible – will give us the best basis for an understanding of the New Testament context of church growth. We must know the whole city and the whole truth about it. The Bible provides us with this understanding.

2.3.1 The negative image of the city

2.3.1.1 The city of Satan

According to Harvie M. Conn, Babylon was one of the first urban development projects recorded in the Bible. Her architects planned her as “the gate of the gods” (Gn 11:4). She ended as the place of confusion, the epitome of non communication (Gn 11:7-9) (Conn 1987:37). John, the author of the Book of Revelation first paints a picture of Babylon as the city of Satan (Rv 17:1-19:10) (Brooks 1986:151-160). Here we examine

the eventual result of a city which has no redeeming value, a city given over to the wholehearted worship and pursuit of evil. What caused the archetypal Babylon, the great city, city of power as indicated in Revelation 18:10, to be dumped by God? There are many reasons given by John, the author of the Book of Revelation. Here the researcher will give some of them, and also give an explanation so that we can clearly understand the reason why Babylon was dumped by God, and regarded as the city of evil.

The first reason is that, Babylon has become the city of Satan because she committed idolatry. Babylon has committed herself to the worship of the emperor and of the empire which he personifies (cf Rv 17:1-2; 18:2-3, 9-10). There are two words used to explicate the sin of Babylon. The words used are “prostitutes” and “adultery”. By seeing these words, one can think that Babylon committed adultery. Adultery is used regularly by the Old Testament prophets as a pseudonym for idolatry (e.g., Jr 3:8; 29:23; Ezk 16:32; 23:37). According to Linthicum (1991a:281), for Babylon to commit herself solely to emperor worship was not only to bring about her spiritual disintegration, but also to cause the corruption of the people of her city, and the nations and kings around her. With her total and complete submission to emperor worship and idolatry, Babylon’s spiritual interior had become irredeemably evil. Babylon had become the city of Satan first of all because she had committed herself to the worship of another god.

The second reason is that, Babylon had given herself to the unconditional exploitation of the world in order to foster her own economic security and luxury (Rv 17:4-5; 18:11-19). Babylon’s demand for wealth, economic security, and luxury has brought the wealth of the world to her; it was brought through both economic power and her military strength (cf Mounce 1977:309-310). To John, the author of the Book of Revelation, the serious misuse of the economic order was equal to the sin of idolatry.

Babylon's greed and lust for wealth and economic security impacted on the rest of the world, leaving her helpless and destitute, unable to cope with either the national or the individual demands of life. This implies that the radical impoverishment of the world, both of its peoples and its natural resources, meant nothing to Babylon, as long as she could have her little niceties and obscene luxuries.

The third reason is that, Babylon radically misused her political power in order to oppress those people who represented a threat to her. John, the author of the Book of Revelation indicated this point in the following way:

Then I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of God's holy people and with the blood of those who were killed because of their faith in Jesus. When I saw the woman, I was very amazed (Rv 17:6) (NCV).

You are guilty of the death of the prophets and God's holy people and all who have been killed on earth (Rv 18:24) (NCV).

The above two texts, point out two groups of people who were persecuted unto death by Babylon. Those groups are *the prophets* and *the saints* (Christians). According to Linthicum (1991a:283), the prophets were persecuted because they were questioning the intentional idolatry, the economic exploitation of the world for the accumulation of that city's luxury, and both the political suppression of dissidents and the oppression of all who would question the ethics and intentions of the city's government. The Christians on the other hand questioned the policies which the economic, political, and religious systems of Babylon were using to deceive both themselves and their citizens. The Christians also proclaimed by their very lifestyle a way of life in total opposition to the one which the people and systems of the city had accepted as their own. The

marriage of the economics of privilege and exploitation, the politics of oppression, and a religion of idolatrous control inevitably resulted in the martyrdom of the poor, the prophetic, and the spiritually liberated of the city. There was no longer any place for such in a city given over solely to Satan.

As the Almighty God does not tolerate sins, He did not tolerate the sins of the city of Babylon. He promised to destruct Babylon for her sins (cf Rv 18:21-19:4). John, the author of the Book of Revelation indicated this in his book when he says:

After this vision and announcement I heard what sounded like a great many people in heaven saying: "Hallelujah! Salvation, glory, and power belong to our God, because His judgments are true and right. He has punished the prostitute who made the earth evil with her sexual sin. He has paid her back for the death of his servants." Again they said: "Hallelujah! She is burning, and her smoke will rise forever and ever" (Rv 19:1-3) (NCV) (Mounce 1977:336-338).

According to Linthicum (1991a:284), the city of Babylon was rejected by God and physically annihilated because she has given herself over fully to economic exploitation and privilege, political oppression of the weak and of the truth-tellers, and the selection of either her economic or her political order to serve as the center of her true and daily religion. Such seduction of Babylon's systems has led to the city's demonic domination by her principalities and powers, so that the interior spirituality of the city has become irredeemably evil. Such is the inevitable end of any city that allows herself to become the city of Satan.

2.3.1.2 The symbol of evil

According to DuBose (1978:102), the city seems to get off to a bad start in the Bible. The first urban reference in the Book of Genesis is a negative one, associating the building of the first city with the murderer Cain. Jacques Ellul further elaborated the idea of DuBose by indicating that:

The city is the direct consequence of Cain's murderous act and his refusal to accept God's protection. Cain has built a city. For God's Eden he substitutes his own, for the goal given to his life by God, he substitutes a goal chosen by himself – just as he substituted his own security for God's. Such is the act by which Cain takes his destiny on his own shoulders, refusing the hand of God in his life (Ellul 1970:5).

From Jacques Ellul's point of view, it is clear that he sees in Cain the prototype of all city builders and interprets the whole urban theme of the Bible from this premise. To him the city in the Bible represents the epitome of human rebellion against God, an attempt by man in his pride to construct his own social, political, economic, and even moral defenses in defiance of the will and purpose of God for man. It is undeniable that the developing urban drama of Genesis seems to confirm these early suspicions about the city and thus give credence to the view of Jacques Ellul.

The negative view of the city is not one which is confined to the Book of Genesis. The Old Testament prophets seemed equally sensitive to the evil capability of the city and urban life. For example, Micah exclaims: "The voice of the LORD cries to the city (it is sound wisdom to fear your name): Hear, O tribe and assembly of the city! Can I forget the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and the scant measure that is

accused? "(NRSV) (Mi 6:9-10). Prophet Ezekiel also declared that the land is full of blood and the city is full of violence (Ezk 7:23) and he further indicated that "the land is full of blood and the city is full of injustice" (Ezk 9:9).

According to Bakke (1997:184) throughout the Bible, Babylon is a symbol of the city which is anti-God. Literally the name means "gate to God". The Babylonian disease leads a city to build towers that breach heaven's gates. Babylon was also the destroyer of Jerusalem, her temple and monarchy. The biblical references to Babylon in the New Testament are in Revelation 16:17-18:24. According to Brooks (1986:151) the subject of Revelation chapters 17 and 18, which belong very intimately together, is Babylon. Babylon is portrayed as the great prostitute seated on many waters, representing the various nationalities that Babylon subjugated (Rv 17:1, 15) (Arnold 2003). She is called 'Babylon the great, mother of whores and of earth's abominations' (Rv 17:5) (NRSV) (Brooks 1986:152). DuBose (1978:103-104) indicates that "Babylon is described in the most repulsive terms conceivable: as the 'mother of harlots and of earth's abominations' who is 'drunk with the blood of the saints' (Rv 17:5-6)" (NRSV). But Babylon is a code name for Rome, for Revelation 17:18 states: "The woman you saw is the great city that rules over the kings of the earth" (NRSV). Because of her great pride and luxurious living at the expense of those she tormented, Babylon's downfall is swift and total. "For in one hour your judgment has come" (Rv 18:10; 14, 17, 19) (NRSV). Arnold (2003) indicated that first-century readers of Revelation have undoubtedly understood 'Babylon' as a cipher for Rome, which could not have been openly criticized (cf Watson 1992). Just as ancient Babylon had been the wicked and ruthless enemy of God's people in Old Testament times, so now the Roman Empire was the enemy of Christians. The passage thus symbolizes the rapacious and violent nature of the imperial power sought by many earthly kingdoms. According to Arnold (2003), nations have continued to satiate their relentless appetite for secular power, but the practices of

real politic will not succeed for ever. Just as the early Christians celebrated the downfall of Rome, so every generation of believers waits expectantly for the end of oppressive world empires.

2.3.2 The positive image of the city

2.3.2.1 The city of God

It was clearly taught in the Old Testament that Jerusalem was something special, for she was the place that God had ordained and where His name would dwell (Dt 12:11), and even in ruins (Is 44:5; 49:16) affirmations could be made on her behalf and her future could be anticipated (Zch 8:21; Ps 86:9) (Bakke 1997:63).

According to Walker (1996:33), Jesus regarded Jerusalem as the 'city of the Great King'. This principle is seen most clearly in connection with Jesus' statement that His followers should not swear 'by Jerusalem' because she was the 'city of the Great King' (Mt 5:35). By using this phrase Jesus affirms that Jerusalem is a city with which God, the Great King, has been pleased to identify Himself. "A city, namely Jerusalem itself, became a symbol of God's presence and power in the world" (Bakke 1997:63). Linthicum (1991a:285) is of the opinion that the other archetypal city presented in the Book of Revelation is the New Jerusalem. This is the city which is totally dedicated to God: City as God has always intended city to be. She is described fully in Revelation 21:1-22:5. There is perhaps no greater description of the city of God than that which follows:

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The first heaven and the first earth had disappeared, and there was no sea anymore. And I saw the



Holy City, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. She was prepared like a bride dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, “Now God’s presence is with people, and he will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them and will be their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death, sadness, crying, or pain, because all the old ways are gone” (Rv 21:1-4) (NCV).

The researcher does agree with the above idea indicated by Robert C. Linthicum. In order to understand clearly what Linthicum said above, the researcher will elucidate three points that will help to understand the context of the nature of the city of God as indicated in the Book of Revelation 21:1-8.

First, verse 1 indicates that the city of God exists only within the context of a new order. She is built around a new physical environment and upon a new social order. The reason for this affirmation becomes clear in verse 2 where John the author of Revelation says, “I saw the Holy city, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. It was prepared like a bride dressed for her husband” (NCV). Both the image of a new environment and order and the image of an entire city being let down upon the earth exists by God’s actions, and not humanity’s. The timing for when the cities of this earth becomes the city of God will depend upon God’s activities, and not ours. We can not build the city of God, but our task is to faithfully practice our vocation as God’s people in the city through the presence, prayer, practice, and proclamation of the church (cf Mounce 1977:368-371).

Second, the context of God’s city is understood by showing Christians that the one who promises this city to them and will accomplish her formation is the only true God. This

is indicated in verse 6, where God is “the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End”. This is the God who stood faithfully by His people from the call of the patriarch Abraham to leave the city of Ur to the call of the church into the city of the new Jerusalem, from the formation of Israel through Moses’ confrontation of the principality of Egypt to the church’s confrontation of a “divine Roman emperor” demanding worship, from the beginning of creation to the end of time. This God causes to be what is caused to be, and thus will bring to pass the city He has promised.

God’s city is meant to be a refuge for all of the world’s believing immigrant population. In God’s city, there are no slums, no squatter settlements, no *favellas* or *barrios* or *bustees*! There are neither governmental policies to try to keep people out nor any economic standards which exclude the marginalized from effective participation in the marketplace. God has built the city for the whole world! (Linthicum 1991a:287).

Robert C. Linthicum is of the opinion that, “The indicators of what God intends the city of God to be like are quite obvious. This will be a city fully under God, a religious environment where all will be in relationship with God and thus in *shalom* with each other (Rv 21:3, 6-8, 22; 22:3-4)” (Linthicum 1991a:289). God’s city will also be practicing an economics of plenty, equitable distribution, and security (Rv 21:13-14, 18-21, 26-27; 22:1-2). This will include a transformation of the natural order of death, illness, grief, and pain will be gone (Rv 21:4, 25).

Finally, the researcher concludes by indicating that, the city of God will have a political order which is centered in God with room for everyone, a city whose political life will be completely just and in which everyone will play a part in the city’s governance (Rv

21:24-25; 22:5). The principalities and powers remain a part of the city's life. But God transforms the powers, for here they are in the service of God, and consequently, of the people of the city (Rv 22:9, cf. Rm 8:19-21; Phlp 2:10-11; Hb 12:22).

2.3.2.2 A symbol of Good

In the Book of Joshua, God gave a direct order to Joshua to designate certain cities of refuge. The purpose of those cities was to serve as havens for persons guilty of manslaughter where they might flee the "avenger of blood" until a fair hearing could be held. Those cities therefore symbolized both mercy and justice. Moreover, they were built not by any motivation of man, let alone one man's pride and rebellion against God. Those cities were established by a direct order from God Himself and were therefore of divine motivation and origin (see Jos 20) (DuBose 1978:104).

What is interesting is that, even though the prophets were deeply aware of the potential for evil in the city, they were equally appreciative of the potential for good in the city. Prophet Ezekiel, whose negative views of urban life have already been cited (i.e in Ezk 7:23; 9:9), also has some very positive pictures of the city. In the close of his prophecy where he describes the restored city, Ezekiel reaches for a name which would best characterize this restored city. The very last line reveals that name: "And the name of the city henceforth shall be 'The Lord is there'" (Ezk 48:35) (NCV). Here the city becomes the very symbol of the presence of God Himself, the city to the Great King (Mt 5:35) (Walker 1996:33).

Francis M. DuBose is of the opinion that, the ultimate imagery of the Bible is strongly urban. He indicated this by citing an example of the city of Jerusalem as it is indicated in Psalm 46 and in the Book of Revelation 22:



The symbolism of Jerusalem is rich in imagery. Jerusalem became Mount Zion and thus incorporated the ancient idea of equating God's presence with "the holy mountain." It also incorporated the garden qualities of the Edenic paradise, though the language of Eden as such is carefully avoided. This is illustrated in such passages as Psalm 46:4: "There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High." The Book of Revelation employs a similar figure in describing the New Jerusalem: "Then he showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city" (Rv 22;1-2) (DuBose 1978:107).

2.4 URBAN MISSION FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT PERSPECTIVE

2.4.1 God's concern for the city of Nineveh

From the Old Testament we find that God showed a great concern for a sinful city of Nineveh. What were the sins of Nineveh? Nineveh was a city of cultural achievement and also of injustice, oppression, and violence (Jnh 1:2). She was the betrayer of nations and a city of harlotries. Every form of vice and witchcraft was practiced, and even its artistic achievements were fouled by obscenities and idolatry. According to Greenway (1989a:9), in scripture, the call to urban mission begin with the prophet Jonah and God's commission to go to Nineveh¹⁰ to preach a message of doom to the wicked inhabitants of Nineveh (Jnh 1:2) (McKeown 2003; Fernando 1988d:26). God's command

¹⁰ Nineveh was a *great city* Jonah 1:2. God's common grace was richly displayed there. It was not only a large metropolis, the capital of a powerful empire; it was famous for her beauty. Because of sin, the prophet Nahum (Nahum 3:1) called her "the city of blood". For violence and plunder made it what it was.

to Jonah is well known: “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city” (Jnh 1:2; 3:1) (DuBose 1983:56). Rejecting this commission, Jonah boarded a ship and went in the opposite direction (Jnh 1:3). According to Bakke (1997:98), Nineveh was east, but Jonah went west. A violent storm pummeled the ship until sailors were forced to throw Jonah overboard (Jnh 1:12-16). But God provided a great fish to swallow Jonah and Jonah was inside the fish three days and three nights (Jnh 1:17). “Jonah speaks of being in the fish as being in ‘Sheol’, the place of the dead (Jnh 2:2). It was as if God was saying that this thing of great power, this thing which signifies death and destruction, even this thing God can use to fulfill His purposes” (Fernando 1988b:37). After being brought to land by a larger fish, Jonah complied with God’s renewed command and warned the people of Nineveh about their impending doom (1:17-3:4) (McKeown 2003). On the first day, Jonah started into the city of Nineveh. He proclaimed: “Forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned” (Jnh 3:4) (NIV). According to Fernando, starting to preach must have been very difficult for Jonah. Jonah did not overcome this difficulty by secretly entering the city at night and whispering the message to a few people. We are told that he cried out, he proclaimed. But once the start was made, the first big hurdle overcome, the news seems to have spread like wild fire. These people had already been prepared by God came in crowds to hear him (Fernando 1988c:49). Ninevites responded with repentance, and consequently God graciously averted the threatened destruction of their city (3:5-10). After their repentance we are told that they declared a fast and that they all of them from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth (Fernando 1988c:51). It is interesting to see the people of Nineveh repented (see Jnh 4:5-10) from their sins and it pleased God (see Jnh 4:11). According to Müller (1987:57-58) God proved to Himself to be a merciful and forgiving God and so Jonah was angry. God had a hard time convincing him of his intolerance and the narrowness of his piety. “Then shouldn’t I show concern for the great city Nineveh, which has more than one hundred twenty thousand people who do not know right from wrong, and many animals, too?” (NCV) (Jnh 4:11) (Fernando 1988a:68).

Müller (1987:58) states that Jonah 4:11 shows more than any other text that Yahweh is the God of all men and has mercy on all who call on Him. The God of revelation does not exclude anyone from His salvation, not in the Old and still less in the New Testament.

According to Bakke (1997:97-98), Jonah and Nahum, taken together form a historical parenthesis around Nineveh and God's dealings with what was arguably the most violent city in the ancient Near East. The hero of the Jonah story is not the prophet or the fish, but the struggle of the Almighty God to get a message of grace and forgiveness to the capital of the Assyrian Empire.

2.4.2 God's concern for the city of Sodom

"Sodom is mentioned more than fifty times in the Bible. People who know almost nothing about the Bible seem to know a great deal about this city, for its reputation for sex and violence has flourished in the worldwide film industry" (Bakke 1997:39).

According to Bakke (1997:42), the immediate context contrasts Sodom with even greater debaucheries of Jerusalem, which faced her own punishing judgment at the hand of Babylon. What specifically was the terrible sin of Sodom that displeased Almighty God? The rich were getting richer and were proud of their extravagant surpluses while the poor were getting poorer. And because in the midst of their awful haughtiness they did not aid the poor and needy, God said, "I did away with them."

Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and the needy (Ezk. 16:49) (KJV).



Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire (Jude 7) (KJV).

Bakke (1997:44-45) is of the opinion that “back in our Genesis account, Abraham faced Sodom and prayed earnestly for it”. Abraham took a long conversation with God pleading for the salvation of Sodom (Gn 18:26-36) (NIV):

The LORD said, “If I find fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake.”

Then Abraham spoke up again: “Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, though I am nothing but dust and ashes, what if the number of the righteous is five less than fifty? Will you destroy the whole city because of five people?”

“If I find forty-five there,” he said, “I will not destroy it.”

Once again he spoke to him, “What if only forty are found there?”

He said, “For the sake of forty, I will not do it.”

Then he said, “May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak. What if only thirty can be found there?”

He answered, “I will not do it if I find thirty there.”

Abraham said, “Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, what if only twenty can be found there?”

He said, “For the sake of twenty, I will not destroy it.”

Then he said, “May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak just once more. What if only ten can be found there?”

He answered, “For the sake of ten, I will not destroy it.”

In this context, Abraham's prayer for Sodom is very significant precisely because it's a prayer of negotiation with God to save a wicked city. And, in fact, God's response is that the city will indeed be saved if ten righteous residents can be found within her. But what happened is that God destroyed Sodom, and saved Lot from Sodom (DuBose 1987:41).

2.4.3 God's concern for the city of Jerusalem

Go up and down the streets of Jerusalem,
look around and consider,
search through her squares.
If you can find but one person
who deals honestly and seeks the truth,
I will forgive this city (Jr 5:1) (NIV).

Ray Bakke (1997:44) says, "Now, remembering that ten people could have saved Sodom – and should have saved it, as both Abraham and God desired. Consider God's words to Jerusalem before her exile: 'Go up and down the streets of Jerusalem, look around and consider, search through her squares. If you can find but one person who deals honestly and seeks the truth, I will forgive this city' (Jr 5:1) (NIV)". Ray Bakke further indicated that, "Just imagine the agony of God at the multiplied sins of Jerusalem. Now He is not asking for ten righteous as He did to Sodom; He is looking for just one righteous urbanite. That is all! The presence and righteous power of one person could have spared Jerusalem" (Bakke 1997:44).

God is looking for a few righteous people who will live in every city. But in Jerusalem it was the opposite, all people were living unrighteous lives, this is clearly indicated in Isaiah 59:14-21. The prophets discerned divine judgment upon the city, and they denounced her for her disregard of Yahweh (Is 22:11), her idolatry (Jr 7:17-18; Ezk 8:3), the corruption of her leaders (Jr 13:13; Mi 3:10), oppression of the poor (Mi 6:9-16), and her failure to observe the Sabbath (Jr 17:19-23) (Walker 2003). Why was God angry? More than angry – provoked furious (Is 59:18). He saw the sins of Jerusalem, and no one would do anything about it. So God acted righteously, delivered the city, restored the communities for families and sent the Spirit to live in the city with them (Bakke 1997:44).

2.5 URBAN MISSION FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT PERSPECTIVE

2.5.1 Jesus' concern for urban mission from the perspective of the Gospels

Jesus' life was centred mainly in an urban setting. He was born and bred in Galilee, "industrial complex" of Palestine, was crucified and resurrected in the city of Jerusalem. During Jesus time, Jerusalem was an awesome urban centre compared to the general social context of the day.

2.5.1.1 He preached in cities

The major thrust of Jesus' ministry was in the population centers of His day: "And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the

people. But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them” (Mt 9:35-36) (KJV) (DuBose 1978:43).

Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes that:

The Saviour looked with compassion on His people, the people of God. He could not rest satisfied with the few who heard His call and followed. He shrank from the idea of forming an exclusive little coterie with His disciples. Unlike the founders of the great religions, He had no desire to withdraw them from the vulgar crowd and initiate them into an esoteric system of religion and ethics. He had worked and suffered for the sake of all His people (Bonhoeffer 2001:143).

The urban milieu of Jesus goes far beyond Galilee. Jerash in North Jordan, high in the Gilead hills, is one of the ten cities called Decapolis¹¹ where Jesus ministered and to which apostles (the former disciples) carried the Gospel after Pentecost. British scholar N.G.L. Hammond, in his study of Alexander the Great, suggests that these cities represented nearly total Macedonian control of the region, the area in Transjordan from Moab to Damascus. According to Matthew 4:25 and Mark 5:20, 31, Jesus’ message spread through these areas (Bakke 1997:131).

¹¹ **DESPOILS:** ten cities=deka, ten, and polis, a city, a district on the east and south-east of the Sea of Galilee containing “ten cities,” which were chiefly inhabited by Greeks. It included a portion of Bashan and Gilead, and is mentioned three times in the New Testament (Matt. 4:25; Mark 5:20; 7:31). These cities were Scythopolis, i.e., “city of the Scythians”, (ancient Bethshean, the only one of the ten cities on the west of Jordan), Hippos, Gadara, Pella (to which the Christians fled just before the destruction of Jerusalem), Philadelphia (ancient Rabbath-ammon), Gerasa, Dion, Canatha, Raphana, and Damascus. When the Romans conquered Syria (B.C. 65) they rebuilt, and endowed with certain privileges, these “ten cities,” and the province connected with them they called “Decapolis” (Bakke 1997:131).

What was the content of Jesus' ministry in urban areas? The ministry of Jesus Christ in urban areas includes the following:

- (a) Preaching the Good News of the Kingdom of God (Mt 9:35)
- (b) He had compassion for the people (Mt 9:36)
- (c) He healed the sick (Mt 9:35; Mk 6:35)
- (d) He noticed population growth in the cities, and also the necessity for many leaders (Mt 9:37-38)
- (e) He gave warning to the unrepentant cities (Mt 11:20-24)

2.5.1.2 His concern for the city of Jerusalem

Jesus' concern for the city of Jerusalem is clearly recorded in Luke 13:34-35 and in Matthew 23:37-39. Jesus' cry, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem!" is a profound statement by Jesus concerning God's mission in the city (Walker 1996:25). It makes clear God's loving commitment to be involved with, and related to, the city. Dubose is of the opinion that Jesus loved the city of Jerusalem and wept over it: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not?" (Mt 23:37) (DuBose 1978:43; cf Walker 1996:35, 57).

Van Engen (1994:242) indicated that, "Although Jerusalem killed the prophets; God did not flee from or gave up on, Jerusalem. Instead God sent His son, who came as King David's descendant, who came 'in the name of the Lord', who came riding on a donkey on His way to the cross and the empty tomb – events that occurred in the midst of, and

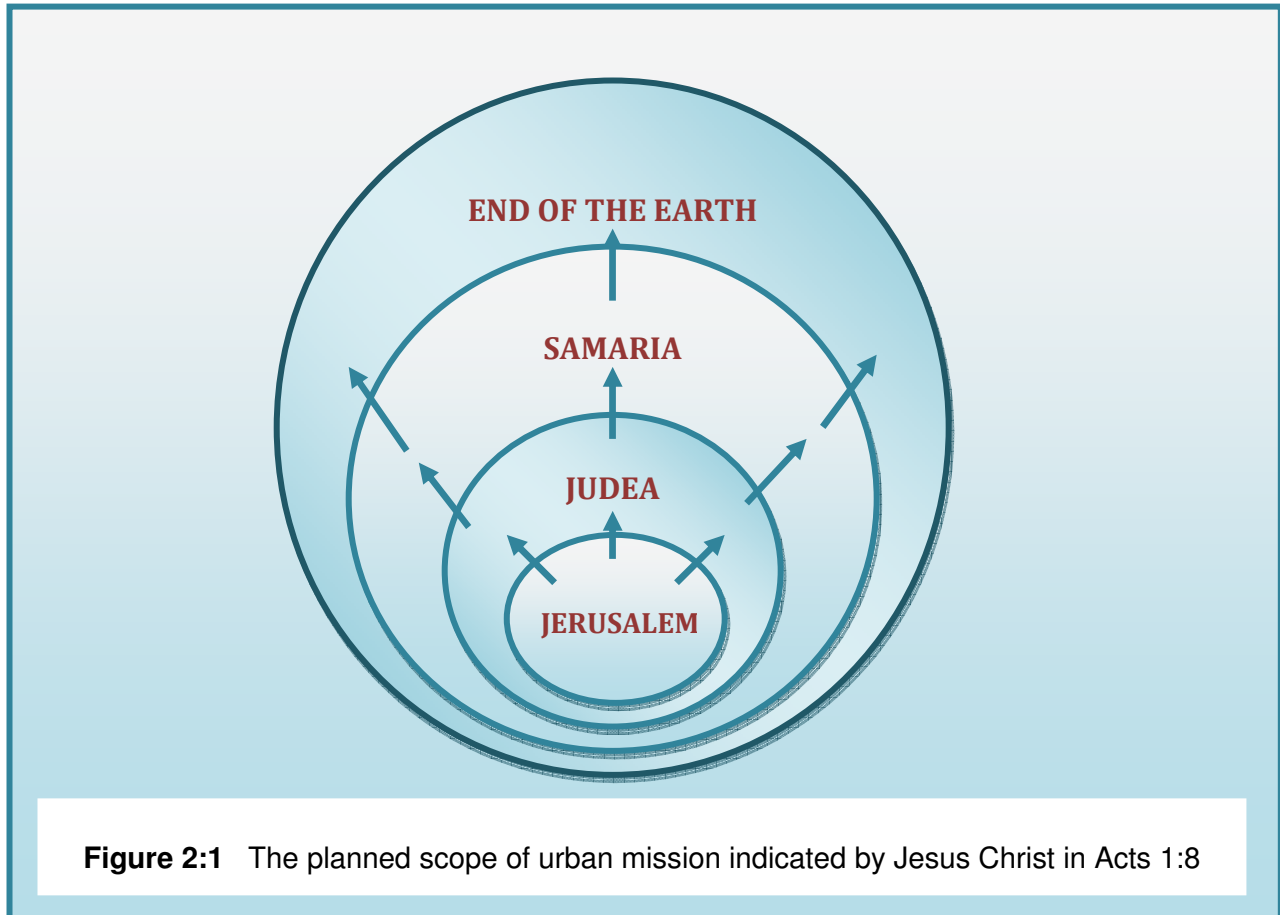
for the sake of, Jerusalem”. From the words of Jesus about a city of Jerusalem, we hear the deep pain of an urban missionary.

As a fitting climax to His earthly ministry, Jesus commanded His disciples to tarry in the city of Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high (Lk.24:49) (cf Walker 1996:76). They were admonished to tarry, not in some rural haven, not in some desert cave, but in the city of Jerusalem – where He had been crucified, where a hostile urban establishment prevailed, where the problems were, where the action was, where the influence was (DuBose 1978:43-44).

2.5.1.3 He sent His disciples to preach in cities

Jesus commissioned the twelve and the seventy. “These twelve Jesus sent out, charging them, ‘Go and preach’” (Mt 10:5, 7) (NIV). They were commissioned to proclaim His Word to the towns and villages: “Whatever town or village you enter, search for some worthy person there and stay at his house until you leave. As you enter the home, give it your greeting” (Mt 10:11) (NIV). The Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them out in pairs ahead of Him into every town and place where He planned to go. He said to them, “There are a great many people to harvest, but there are only a few workers. So pray to God, who owns the harvest, that He will send more workers to help gather His harvest. Go now, but listen! I am sending you out like sheep among wolves” (NCV) (Lk 10:1-3) (DuBose 1983:56).

2.5.2 Jesus' concern for urban mission from the perspective of the Book of Acts



Jesus Christ in Acts 1:8 told His disciples that they will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes, and as a result, they will be His witnesses from the city of Jerusalem, all of Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Boer 1982:93; cf Walker 1996:81). The scope of the disciples' task was worldwide (Marshall 1983:60). Roger S. Greenway is of the opinion that the mission movement of the New Testament was primarily an urban movement. After Pentecost, the Gospel spread from city to city and from city to the surrounding countryside (Greenway 1989d:13). This is quite clear that God, through

Christ, showed His great concern of spreading *missio Dei* to urban areas. Here the researcher will highlight on some of the cities in the New Testament that were targeted as mission field.

2.5.2.1 Jerusalem

According to DuBose (1978:44), it is significant that the church had her beginning in Jerusalem. As an urban movement, she was indigenous to her context. From the beginning she assumed the complexion of an urban institution. The evangelism of an early church took on a massive character in keeping with the institution of the mass public meeting typical of the first great urban wave.

According to Walker (1996:87), Jerusalem had been the source of the Gospel and also some of the Gospel's blessings had been experienced by Jewish people within their own 'mother-city'. Not only had the Gospel been openly proclaimed there, it had also produced a significant response; Luke wished this to be put on record for posterity. The Spirit had been powerfully at work in the city (Ac 2-7). Even if subsequently the Jerusalem church found herself in a difficult situation, Luke's portrait of the earliest days was bright (Ac 2:41, 47; 4:4; 5:13-16; 6:7) (cf Marshall 1983:82-127).

2.5.2.2 Judea

According to Boer (1982:94), the Gospel to all Judea was brought by some of the Hellenist Jews who became Christians in Jerusalem. They scattered and preached the Gospel outside Jerusalem during persecution that was led by Stephen's death. The whole of Palestine was reached with the Gospel (Marshall 1983:177). The church in

Judea had peace and was built up; and she walked in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit she was multiplied (Ac 9:31) (cf Peterson 2003).

2.5.2.3 Samaria

The establishment of the Church in Samaria is recorded in Acts 8. The believers, who had fled Jerusalem during persecution, went everywhere preaching the Good News about Jesus. Philip, for example, as indicated in Acts 8, went to the city of Samaria and told the people there about the Messiah (Boer 1982:94). Crowds listened intently to what he had to say because of the miracles he did. Many evil spirits were cast out, screaming as they left their victims. And many who had been paralyzed or lame were healed. So there was great joy in that city (Richardson 1978:91).

A man named Simon had been a sorcerer there for many years, claiming to be someone great. The Samaritan people, from the least to the greatest, often spoke of him as “the Great One—the Power of God.” He was very influential because of the magic he performed. But now the people believed Philip’s message of Good News concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. As a result, many men and women were baptized. Then Simon himself believed and was baptized (Marshall 1983:159-160). He began following Philip wherever he went, and he was amazed by the great miracles and signs Philip performed (Richardson 1978:91-92). According to DuBose (1978:45), so great was the response that the apostles at Jerusalem, hearing the good report, sent Peter and John to Samaria to develop new Christian community there (Ac 8:14).

2.5.2.4 Antioch

The city of Antioch was known for both positive and negative things. The researcher will focus first on the positive things that the city of Antioch was known for, then her negative things, and then lastly, he will focus on how the Gospel reached this city.

(a). The positive things of the city of Antioch

According to Marshall (1983:201), Antioch the capital city of the Roman province of Syria had grown rapidly to become the third largest city in the Empire with a population estimated at around 500,000 (cf Greenway 1989a:31, Johnson 1987:46). According to Bakke (1991:146), the population of Antioch was between 500,000 – 800,000. The city of Antioch had everything to offer. Known as “Antioch the Beautiful,” the city undertook a tremendous building program, which was financed jointly by Augustus and Herod. According to Bakke (1997:145), Antioch on the Orontes was the most famous of the sixteen Antioch cities founded in honor of Antiochus I, the father of Selucius. Her athletic stadiums drew thousands to see the annual games. Antioch was the center for diplomatic relations with Rome’s vassal states in the East and a meeting point for many nationalities and cultures. She was a place where East and West came together, a truly cosmopolitan center (Greenway 1989b:32). According to DuBose (1978:45), Antioch was the second Christian center after Jerusalem.

(b). The negative things of the city of Antioch

According to Greenway (1989b:32), archeological excavations indicate that every religious movement in the ancient world was represented in Antioch. Magnus Zetterholm (2003:26) is of the opinion that, “in Antioch as in every other major city, the

gods of the Greek pantheon were well represented through temples and statues”. Different cults were found in Syria, such as the cults of Zeus, Athene and Apollo and the rest of the Greek pantheon. “Zeus and Apollo enjoyed a special status in Antioch since they were considered the protectors and founders of the Seleucid dynasty, and when the city was founded Seleucus I erected a temple for Zeus and a statue of Apollo” (Zetterholm 2003:25). “There were also the Syrian worship of Baal and the Mother Goddess, and the mystery religions with their teachings on death and resurrection, initiation, and salvation. Occultism was common along with magic, witchcraft, and astrology” (Greenway 1989b:32). At the root of the pagan conception of deity in Syria lies the idea of *ba’al*, carrying the primary meaning of ownership or possession (Wallace-Hadrill 1982:15). ‘The network of interconnected pagan cults in Syria had grown from the early Semitic conception of *ba’al* into the more clearly-defined pantheos of local deities, who in turn had to a considerable extent been overlaid first by the Hellenistic pantheon introduced by Alexander the Great, and then again by the Roman pantheon” (Wallace-Hadrill 1982:14). According to Greenway (1989b:32), Antioch was also known for her immorality. The dancing girls of Antioch were the talk of the Mediterranean world. As a large and rich commercial center, Antioch embodied the voluptuousness and corruption of a pagan society untouched by Christian influence. The city rivaled Corinth as a center for vice, and the Roman poet Juvenal, writing near the end of the first century A.D., charged that the wickedness of Antioch was one of the sources of Rome’s corruption.

(c). Witnessing Christ to the city of Antioch

The church in Antioch was founded by laypersons who were scattered by the persecution that arose in connection with the death of Stephen (see Ac 8) (Hemphill 1994:13), their names were not recorded but their labors began an important new chapter in the story of

Christianity. According to Bakke (1997:145), the Antioch church, the first city-center church was founded by Selucius I in 300 B.C. Boer (1982:96) states that the founders, who were Hellenists, natives of Cyprus and Cyrene, when they arrived in Antioch after being persecuted in Jerusalem, took the significant step of preaching the glad tidings to the Gentiles (Ac 11:19-26) and established the church in Antioch (cf Williams 1986:10-11). “At Antioch, Gentiles as well as Jews were recruited” (McKechnie 2001:44).

Apparently, in Antioch, people of different ethnic backgrounds began to cross the interior walls of the city to hear the Gospel and join the church (Richardson 1978:93). The Jerusalem church heard about this and sent Barnabas, the trusted Cypriot who had sold his land to purchase food back in Jerusalem (Ac 4) (Marshall 1983:109-110, 201-202), to strengthen the church (Hemphill 1994:13). He was sent implicitly to deal with issues raised by there being both Jewish and Gentile Christians in the first wave of Antioch converts - and then Barnabas brought Saul (Paul) from Tarsus to join the Antioch venture (McKechnie 2001:44-45; cf Richardson 1978:95). When he came to this city-center church, Barnabas built a pastoral team that consisted of Simeon the Black (an African), Lucius of Cyrene (A North African), Manean (possibly a slave of Herod’s father), Saul of Tarsus (native of Asia Minor, the land bridge to Europe) and Barnabas himself from Cyprus (Bakke 1997:146).

Antioch became the main gateway for the Gospel to the Gentile world. Antioch became a bridge for Christianity between the Jewish and Greek worlds. There, believers were first called Christians (Ac 11:26) (Johnson 1987:44). This attested to their witness before the pagan community (Hemphill 1994:13). In the Aramaic speaking world they continued to be called ‘Nazarenes’ (cf Ac 24:5) (McKechnie 2001:50). It is interesting to note that the New Testament never talks about Antioch’s wickedness and idolatry, her culture and beauty, or her importance as one of the great commercial centers of

antiquity (cf Johnson 1987:46). In describing Antioch, Luke refers only to the great spiritual events that took place there. Events in Antioch affected the course of the Gospel, threw open the empire to evangelization, and molded the character of the missionary enterprise. As for her impact upon the world, Antioch soon came to supersede Jerusalem, developing in to the missionary headquarters of the first century (Greenway 1989b:32) and was certainly an important centre of Christian theological learning (Johnson 1987:50). Through the establishment of the church in Antioch, it is quiet clear that God is the initiator of mission in that city. God used the persecution as the way of bringing His Good News to a city of Antioch.

2.5.3 Jesus' concern for the Seven Churches sited in Seven cities of Asia Minor

According to Armstrong (1972:8), the first real message of the Book of Revelation is contained in the second and third chapters – the messages to the seven churches (cf Linthicum 1991a:295). These messages according to the author come directly from Christ – they contain the direct testimony of Jesus Christ. Here Jesus takes the actual spiritual condition and functioning of these seven churches, then existing in Asia Minor, as a prophecy of the spiritual condition and the works and accomplishments, in carrying out Christ's Great Commission, of the true Church of God during the seven successive periods of time up until the end of this age and the Second Coming of Christ. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck write:

As stated in Revelation 1:11 Christ sent a message to each of seven local churches in Asia Minor. The order of scriptural presentation was geographic. A messenger would naturally travel the route from the seaport Ephesus 35 miles north to another seaport Smyrna, proceed still

farther north and to the east, to Pergamos, and then would swing further to the east and south to visit the other four cities (1:11) (Walvoord and Zuck 1985).

These are the messages from Christ, the living Head of His Church, to His own true Church in her seven successive eras of time from about A.D. 100, until a period even yet future (Armstrong 1972:8-9). Each message deals with the same issues; only the content of the message different, reflecting the condition of each church (Linthicum 1991a:295). Robert C. Linthicum further indicated that the external Gospel is contextualized for each situation, so that it is relevant to each city. He indicated the following three important points:

- *First*, each message reveals an understanding of the history, the commerce, and the religious and political roles of that city in the empire.
- *Second*, each message deals with the question, “How have you reacted to your city, as you have sought to minister in and to her?” Each message describes the effect the city has had on the church and (or) the church has had on the city.
- *Thirdly*, each message affirms, exhorts, and makes promises to the church around the question, “What is that I, the Lord God, want you to do? Each message calls the church to faithfulness in ministry to that city (Linthicum 1991a:295).

The symmetry of the seven letters has long interested commentators. Each letter is prefaced by a charge to write to the angel of the specific church. This is followed by an identification of the author in descriptive phrases taken from the vision in chapter 1 of the Book of Revelation. The body of each letter is composed of an acknowledgement of the church’s positive achievements (except in Laodicea and, perhaps, in Sardis), followed by words of encouragement, censure, counsel, or warning. Only Smyrna and

Philadelphia escape some note of censure. The letters close with the exhortation to hear and a promise to those who conquer (Morris 1969:58; cf Caird 1966:27). The orderliness and symmetry of the seven letters betray a purpose that goes beyond ethical instruction to seven particular churches in the Roman province of Asia. The entire sequence is a literary composition designed to impress upon the church universal the necessity of patient endurance in the period of impending persecution (Mounce 1977:84). It is this motif which binds the oracles to that which follows. In the final conflict between Christ and Caesar, believers will need to hold fast to their confession of faith and stand ready for whatever sacrifice may be required. Bruce writes that the letters give a vivid impression of Christian life in Asia at a time when “pressure is being brought to bear on Christians to be less unyielding in their negative attitude to such socially approved activities as emperor worship and the like” (Bruce 1969:637).

There are some remarkable similarities in comparing these letters to the seven churches to the movement of church history since the beginning of the apostolic church. For instance, Ephesus seems to characterize the apostolic church as a whole, and Smyrna seems to depict the church in her early persecutions. However, the Scriptures do not expressly authorize this interpretation, and it should be applied only where it fits naturally. After all, these churches all existed simultaneously in the first century. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck write that:

Though each message is different, the letters have some similarities. In each one Christ declared that He knows their works; each one includes a promise to those who overcome; each one gives an exhortation to those hearing; and each letter has a particular description of Christ that related to the message which follows. Each letter includes a commendation (except the letter to Laodicea), a rebuke (except the



letters to Smyrna and Philadelphia), an exhortation, and an encouraging promise to those heeding its message. In general these letters to the seven churches address the problems inherent in churches throughout church history and are an incisive and comprehensive revelation of how Christ evaluates local churches (Walvoord and Zuck 1985).

Here follows the explication of each letter to the seven local Churches in Asia Minor as recorded in the Book of Revelation chapters 2 and 3. We will focus on their destination, commendation, rebuke, exhortation and promise of each letter where applicable.



Figure 2.2: Map indicating the location of the Seven Churches cited in Seven cities of Asia Minor (from Walvoord and Zuck 1985).

2.5.3.1 Ephesus

2.5.3.1.1 Destination

According to Mounce (1977:85), the *first* letter is directed to the angel of the church in Ephesus. At the time this letter was written, Ephesus was a major city of Asia Minor, a

seaport, and the location of the great temple of Artemis (cf. Ac 19:24, 27-28, 34-35), one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. “It was also a center for many other religious cults (including the Nicolaitans) (Linthicum 1991a:296). John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck write that Paul had visited Ephesus about A.D. 53, about 43 years before this letter in Revelation was sent to them. Paul remained in Ephesus for several years and preached the Gospel so effectively “that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the Word of the Lord” (Ac 19:10). This large city was thoroughly stirred by Paul’s message (Ac 19:11-41), with the result that the silversmiths created a riot because their business of making shrines of Artemis was threatened (Walvoord and Zuck 1985).

The church accordingly had a long history and was the most prominent one in the area. The Pastor or messenger of the church was addressed as the angel (*angelos*). The word’s principal use in the Bible is in reference to heavenly angels (Louw & Nida 1989:144). But it is also used to refer to human messengers (cf Mt 11:10; Mk 1:2; Lk 7:24, 27; 9:52). The letter comes from Christ who was holding seven stars in His right hand and walking among the seven golden lampstands. The “stars” were the angels or messengers of the churches and the “lampstands” were the seven churches (Rv 1:20) (Mounce 1977:86).

2.5.3.1.2 Commendation

In Revelation 2:2-3, Christ commended those in the Ephesian Church for their hard work . . . perseverance, their condemnation of wicked men, and their identification of false apostles. (False teachers were present in each of the first four churches; cf Rv 2:2, 6, 9, 14-15, 20). “The Ephesians had toiled to the point of exhaustion and borne patiently the hostility of a society at odds with their goals and efforts (if the problems of

Paul in Ephesus with disbelieving Jews, the seven sons of Sceva, and the mob aroused by Demetrius the silversmith) (Ac 19:8-40)” (Mounce 1977:87). In addition they were commended for enduring hardships and not growing weary in serving God (Linthicum 1991a:296). In general this church had continued in her faithful service to God for more than 40 years (Walvoord and Zuck 1985).

2.5.3.1.3 Rebuke

In spite of the many areas of commendation, the church in Ephesus was soundly rebuked by our Lord Jesus Christ: “Yet I hold this against you: you have forsaken your first love”¹² (Rv 2:4) (NIV). The order of words in the Greek is emphatic; the clause could be translated, “Your first love you have left.” Christ used the word *agapēn*, speaking of the deep kind of love that God has for people (Louw and Nida 1989:293-294). This rebuke contrasts with what Paul wrote the Ephesians 35 years earlier, that he never stopped giving thanks for them because of their faith in Christ and their love (*agapēn*) for the saints (Eph 1:15-16). John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck further indicated that most of the Ephesian Christians were now second-generation believers, and though they had retained purity of doctrine and life and had maintained a high level of service, they were lacking in deep devotion to Christ. How the church today needs to heed this same warning, that orthodoxy and service are not enough. Christ wants believers’ hearts as well as their hands and heads (Walvoord and Zuck 1985).

¹² The Ephesian Church had left her first love. The expression includes both love of God and love of mankind at large, but seems to refer to mainly their love for one another (as in 2 Jn 5). Jeremiah 2:2 is instructive. God speaks through the prophet to apostolate Israel, “I remember the devotion of your youth, your love as a bride, and how you followed me in the wilderness” (cf Jdg 2:7, 10-11; Hos 2:14-16) (NRSV). A cooling of personal love for God inevitably results in the loss of harmonious relationships within the body of believers. Jesus had made it clear that “by this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (Jn 13:35) (Mounce 1977:88).

2.5.3.1.4 Exhortation

The Ephesians were first reminded to remember the height from which they have fallen. They were told to repent and to return to the love they had left (Rv 2:5) (Mounce 1977:88). Similar exhortations concerning the need for a deep love for God are frequently found in the New Testament (Mt 22:37; Mk 12:30; Lk 10:27; Jn 14:15, 21, 23; 21:15-16; James 2:5; 1 Pt 1:8). Christ stated that one's love for God should be greater than his love for his closest relatives, including his father, mother, son, and daughter (Mt 10:37). Paul added that love for God should even be above one's love for his or her mate (1 Cor 7:32-35). In calling the Ephesian believers to repentance Christ was asking them to change their attitude as well as their affections (Linthicum 1991a:298). They were to continue their service not simply because it was right but because they loved Christ. He warned them that if they did not respond, the light of their witness in Ephesus would be extinguished: "I will . . . remove your lampstand from its place" (Rv 2:5) (NRSV).

John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck state that the Ephesian Church continued and was later the scene of a major Church Council, but after the 5th century both the church and the city declined. The immediate area has been uninhabited since the 14th century (Walvoord and Zuck 1985). The reprimand for having left first love is followed by commendation for hating, as Christ does, the works of the Nicolaitans¹³. This heretical

¹³ The Nicolaitans were the followers of a Christian leader named Nicolaus, who sought to minimize the differences between Roman society and the Christian faith. The Nicolaitans stressed that the Jewish Law was no longer formative for faith or ethics, that Christians were free to eat meat offered to idols, and that Christians need not practice the chastity and sexual regulations of the Law. Rather, the Christian was free to engage in both the feasts and the sexual promiscuity of the Romans, they taught, as well as to engage in Roman politics and their economic system. They believed that Christianity ought to be

group is mentioned in both the letter to Ephesus (Rv 2:6) and the letter to Pergamum (Rv 2:15). The mention of eating food sacrificed to idols and practicing immorality in the letter of Thyatira (Rv 2:20-21) as well as in the letter to Pergamum (Rv 2:14) where this is connected with the teaching of Balaam and closely related to the teaching of the Nicolaitans, indicates that all three churches were in some way affected by the sect¹⁴ (Mounce 1977:89).

2.5.3.1.5 Promise

As in the other letters, Christ gave the Ephesian Church a promise addressed to individuals who will hear. He stated, “To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God” (Rv 2:7) (NIV). According to Robert H. Mounce, “The overcomer in Revelation is not one who has conquered an earthly foe by force, but one who has remained faithful to Christ to the very end. The victory he achieves is analogous to the victory of Christ on the cross” (Mounce 1977:90). The tree of life, first mentioned in Genesis 3:22, was in the Garden of Eden. Later it reappears in the New Jerusalem where it bears abundant fruit (Rv 22:2). Those who eat of it will never die (Gn 3:22). This promise should not be construed as reward for only a special group of Christians but a normal expectation for all Christians. “The paradise of God” is probably a name for heaven (cf Lk 23:43; 2 Cor 12:4 — the only other NT references to paradise). Apparently it will be identified with the New Jerusalem

integrated into a culture, so that to be a good Christian and to be a good Roman were the same thing, for Christianity should endorse and bless the Roman system (Linthicum 1991a:297).

¹⁴ W.M. Mackay finds three separate sects in Revelation 2 which represent the three great obstacles to the witness of the Church in all ages; each is connected with a personal name – Balaam, worldliness; Jezel, false doctrine and Nicolas, ritualism (“Another look at the Nicolaitans” *Evangelical Quarterly*, 45 (1973) pp 111-115).

in the eternal state. Walvoord and Zuck (1985) indicate that this encouragement of true love reminded the Ephesians again of God's gracious provision for salvation in time and eternity. Love for God is not wrought by legalistically observing commands, but by responding to one's knowledge and appreciation of God's love.

2.5.3.2 Smyrna

2.5.3.2.1 Destination

The *second* letter was addressed to Smyrna, a large and wealthy city 35 miles north of Ephesus. Like Ephesus, she was a seaport. In contrast to Ephesus, which today is a deserted ruin, Smyrna was still a large seaport with a present population of about 200,000 (Mounce 1977:91; cf Walvoord and Zuck 1985). She was a great trading city and "the fairest of the cities of Iona" (Lucian). Smyrna was one of the very few planned cities in the world and had great, broad streets, magnificent temples and planned architecture (Linthicum 1991a:299). The name of the city, Smyrna, means "*myrrh*," an ordinary perfume. The perfume was also used in the anointing oil of the tabernacle, and in embalming dead bodies (cf. Ex 30:23; Ps 45:8; Can 3:6; Mt 2:11; Mk 15:23; Jn 19:39). While the Christians of the church at Smyrna were experiencing the bitterness of suffering, their faithful testimony was like myrrh or sweet perfume to God (Walvoord and Zuck 1985).

Christ described Himself as the *First* and the *Last*, who died and came to life again (Rv 2:8). Christ is portrayed as the eternal One (cf. Rv 1:8, 17; 21:6; 22:13) who suffered death at the hands of His persecutors and then was resurrected from the grave (cf Rv 1:5). These aspects of Christ were especially relevant to the Christians at Smyrna who, like Christ in His death, were experiencing severe persecution. According to Robert H.

Mounce, the strong allegiance to Rome plus a large Jewish population which was actively hostile to the Christians made it exceptionally difficult to live as a Christian in Smyrna. The most famous martyrdom of the early fathers was that of the elderly Polycarp, the “twelfth in Smyrna”, who, upon his refusal to acknowledge Caesar as Lord, was placed upon a pyre to be burned (Mounce 1977:91-92) on Saturday, 23 February C.E. 155 after he replied the police captain who begged him to deny Christ and make a sacrifice to Caesar, “Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who saved me?” (Linthicum 1991a:299).

2.5.3.2.2 Commendation

What a comfort it was to the Christians in Smyrna to know that Christ knew all about their sufferings: “I know your afflictions and your poverty—yet you are rich!” (Rv 2:9) (NIV). The church was being persecuted: her people were persecuted; some of them have been imprisoned; all of the people have been slandered. John identifies the source of the trouble: “those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan”¹⁵ (Rv 2:9) (NRSV). Smyrna had a large and economically strong Jewish colony, and it was that colony which was organized against the church (Linthicum 1991a:299-300). They were being persecuted not only by pagan Gentiles but also by hostile Jews and by Satan himself. Apparently the local Jewish synagogue was called the synagogue of Satan (cf Rv 3:9). (Satan is mentioned in four of the seven letters: Rv 2:9,

¹⁵ Referring to people as “those who say they are Jews and are not” does not mean that they were not Jews, but they were acting in ways that denied their Jewishness. It was this synagogue of Satan or assembly of the Jewish colonists which was behind the persecution, which was making slanderous statements about the Christians, raising fear and anger at them and thus motivating both the people and the state to persecute them. The church had a most formidable opponent in the Jewish colony in Smyrna (Linthicum 1991a:300).

13, 24; 3:9). Walvoord and Zuck (1985) indicate that in the history of the church the most severe persecution has come from religionists. Besides suffering persecution, they were also enduring extreme poverty (Linthicum 1991a:299) (*ptōcheian* in contrast with *penia*, the ordinary word for “poverty”) (Louw and Nida 1989:564). Though extremely poor, they were rich in the wonderful promises Christ had given them (cf 2 Cor 6:10; Ja 2:5).

2.5.3.2.3 Rebuke

Notable is the fact that there was no rebuke whatever for these faithful, suffering Christians. This is in striking contrast with Christ’s evaluations of five of the other six churches, which He rebuked. Smyrna’s sufferings, though extremely difficult, had helped keep them pure in faith and life (cf Walvoord and Zuck 1985).

2.5.3.2.4 Exhortation

What does Christ want the church of Smyrna to do in the face of such ominous persecution? *Firstly*, they were to keep their focus on Jesus. By keeping their eyes on Jesus, the Christians in Smyrna would be able to maintain their resolve and commitment, because they would remember constantly that “the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world” (1 Jn 4:4) (NIV). *Secondly*, they were to stand firm and not allow themselves to fear about what they will continue to suffer. (Linthicum 1991a:300). The word of Christ to these suffering Christians was an exhortation to the Christians at Smyrna to have courage: “Do not be afraid (lit., stop being afraid) of what you are about to suffer” (Rv 2:10) (NIV). Their severe trials were to continue. They would receive further persecution by imprisonment and additional suffering for 10 days. The problem of human suffering, even for a limited time, has always perplexed faithful

Christians. Suffering can be expected for the ungodly, but why should the godly suffer? The Scriptures give a number of reasons. Suffering may be (1) disciplinary (1 Cor 11:30-32; Heb 12:3-13), (2) preventive (as Paul's thorn in the flesh, 2 Cor 12:7), (3) the learning of obedience (as Christ's suffering, Heb 5:8; cf. Rm 5:3-5), or (4) the providing of a better testimony for Christ (as in Ac 9:16) (Walvoord and Zuck 1985).

2.5.3.2.5 Promise

In their suffering the believers at Smyrna were exhorted, "Be faithful, even to the point of death" (Rv 2:10) (NIV). While their persecutors could take their physical lives, it would only result in their receiving the crown of life. Apparently up to that time none had died, but this could be expected. Later Polycarp, having become the bishop of the church in Smyrna, was martyred, and undoubtedly others were also killed (cf Linthicum 1991a:299). "The crown of life" is one of several crowns promised to Christians (cf 1 Cor 9:25; 1 Ths 2:19; 2 Tm 4:6-8; 1 Pt 5:4; Rv 4:4). The crown of life is also mentioned in James 1:12. Believers are encouraged to be faithful by contemplating what awaits them after death, namely, eternal life. As in all the letters, an exhortation is given to the individuals who will listen. The promise is given to overcomers, referring in general to all believers, assuring them that they will not be hurt at all by the *second death*¹⁶ (Rv 2:11; cf Rv 20:15) (Linthicum 1991a:300). The reassuring word of Christ to Smyrna is the word to all suffering and persecuted Christians. As stated in Hebrews 12:11, "No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it" (NIV).

¹⁶ The *second death* is a rabbinic term for the death of the wicked in the next world (Dt 33:6; cf Jer 51:39, 57 and Is 52:14; 65:6, 15). In Rv 20:14 it is identified as the lake of fire, and in Rv 21:8 as the final lot of "the cowardly, the faithless, the polluted," etc. Over the faithful, who share in the first resurrection, it has no power (Rv 20:6) (Mounce 1977:94).

2.5.3.3 Pergamum

2.5.3.3.1 Destination

The *third* church was in Pergamum or Pergamos, about 20 miles inland from Smyrna. “Whereas Ephesus and Smyrna were the economic and cultural ‘capitals’ of Asia Minor, Pergamum was its political capital. It had been Asia Minor’s capital city for nearly four hundred years” (Linthicum 1991a:301). Like Ephesus and Smyrna, Pergamum was a wealthy city, but she was wicked. Religion flourished in Pergamum. She was a center of worship for four of the most important pagan cults of the day – *Zeus*, *Athene* (the patron goddess), *Dionysos*, and *Asklepios* (who was designated *Sōtēr*, Saviour)¹⁷. The shrine of *Asklepios*, the god of healing (also known as “the Pergamene god”, attracted people from all over the world (Mounce 1977:95).

The city of Pergamum had the most outstanding library in Asia (two hundred thousand parchment rolls), second only to the library in Alexandria; in fact, parchment was invented in Pergamum. She was the administrative center and political capital of the Roman Empire in Asia. According to Walvoord and Zuck (1985), anticipating Christ’s rebuke for their being tolerant of evil and immorality, John described Him as the One who has the sharp, double-edged sword (also mentioned in Rv 1:16; 2:16; 19:15, 21). The sword is a symbolic representation of the Word of God’s twofold ability to separate believers from the world and to condemn the world for its sin. It was the sword of salvation as well as the sword of death.

¹⁷ The emblem of *Asklepios* was a serpent (Mounce 1977:95).

2.5.3.3.2 Commendation

The letter to Pergamum begins with an acknowledgement of the difficulty of living in an environment so distinctly pagan and a commendation for the church's faithful witness in the face of severe opposition (Mounce 1977:96). Christ identified this city as *where Satan has his throne*. Because Pergamum was the administrative center and political capital of Roman Asia, she was the center of emperor worship in Asia. This was why John identified her as "where Satan lives" – because nothing was more Satanic to the mind of the early church than substituting Caesar for Christ as one's lord (Linthicum 1991a:301).

Like the church in Smyrna, the church in Pergamum was a church under attack. Because she existed in the city where Satan has his throne, and because the church very decisively opposed emperor worship, Rome have quickly perceived this church as an enemy. It is likely; therefore, that the attack the Pergamum church was under from the Roman authorities was severe (Linthicum 1991a:301). In these adverse conditions the church at Pergamum had held fast to the Name of Christ. They had not denied their faith by yielding to the pressure of burning incense to the emperor and declaring "Caesar is Lord". Not even in the days of Antipas, who was put to death in their midst, did they deny their faith. Little is known about this early martyr apart from the reference in Revelation (Bruce 1969:638). The legend appears in later hagiographers (*Simon Metaphrastes, the Bollandists*) that he was slowly roasted to death in a brazen bull during the reign of Domitian. Antipas' name means "against all" (Mounce 1977:97). Mounce further indicated that Antipas's name (abridged from Antipater) has mistakenly been taken to mean "against all", and the idea that he gained the name by his heroic stand against the forces of evil is unfounded noteworthy. What is noteworthy is that he is given the Lord's own title from Revelation 1:5 – "faithful witness" (NIV) (1977:97).

2.5.3.3.3 Rebuke

Although the church at Pergamum had remained faithful in the midst of severe opposition (even when Antipas was martyred), they were guilty of severe compromise by holding the teaching of Balaam and the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Balaam had been guilty of counseling King Balak to cause Israel to sin through intermarriage with heathen women and through idol-worship (cf Nm 22-25; 31:15-16) (Mounce 1977:97).

Earlier the Ephesian Church had been commended for rejecting what appears to be a moral departure (cf. Rv 2:6) (Linthicum 1991a:302). Some Greek manuscripts add here that God hates the teaching of the Nicolaitans, as also stated in Revelation 2:6. Compromise with worldly morality and pagan doctrine was prevalent in the church, especially in the third century when Christianity became popular. So compromise with pagan morality and departure from biblical faith soon corrupted the church (Walvoord and Zuck 1985).

2.5.3.3.4 Exhortation

What was it that Christ's message called the church in Pergamum to do? The indifference of the church at Pergamum to the presence of Nicolaitans was a matter of considerable concern. Unless they repent Christ promised to come and war against them with the sword of His mouth (Linthicum 1991a:301). He promised that the judgment would come "soon" (*tachys*) which also means "suddenly" (cf Rv 1:1; 22:7, 12, 20). Only a portion of the church has fallen prey to the pernicious doctrine of the Balaamites, but all were guilty of not taking action against their presence. The church in Pergamum needed to continue to stand strong against emperor worship and not be tempted (like the Balaamites) to compromise with it in order to protect herself (Mounce

1977:98), if she does not repent, Christ would contend with them, using the sword of His mouth (cf Rv 1:16; 2:12; 19:15, 21). This again is the Word of God sharply judging all compromise and sin.

2.5.3.3.5 Promise

If she was to be a faithful church, then the church of Pergamum was instructed that she must follow her calling to stand strong in her faith and to make vital her relationship with Christ (Linthicum 1991a:302). To the faithful at Pergamum the risen Christ promised them “*the hidden manna*”¹⁸ and “*a white stone inscribed with a new name known only to the recipient*”¹⁹ (Mounce 1977:99). The hidden manna may refer to Christ as the Bread from heaven, the unseen source of the believer’s nourishment and strength. Whereas Israel received physical food, manna, the church receives spiritual food (Jn 6:48-51). The stone’s inscription which gives the believer “*a new name*” indicates the acceptance by God and His title to glory. This may be an allusion to the Old Testament practice of the high priest wearing 12 stones on his breastplate with the names of the 12 tribes of Israel inscribed on it. Though believers at Pergamum may not have had precious stones or gems of this world, they had what was far more important, acceptance by

¹⁸ The idea of hidden manna reflects a Jewish tradition that the pot of manna which was placed in the ark as a memorial to future generations (Ex 16:32-34; cf Heb 9:4) was taken by Jeremiah at the time of the destruction of Solomon’s temple (sixth century BC) and hidden underground in Mount Nebo. There it was to remain until the coming of the Messiah when Jeremiah would reappear and return the ark and its contents to the new messianic temple in Jerusalem. In the context of the letter to Pergamum it alludes to the proper and heavenly food of spiritual Israel in contrast to the unclean food supplied by the Balaamites (Mounce 1977:99).

¹⁹ Likely, this is a reference to the pagan custom, especially popular among children, of carrying a white stone with a god’s name upon it as a good luck amulet. For the church to be given a white stone would be a reminder to the Christians that they are safe in life and in death because they “carry” the name of the only true God around inside them (Linthicum 1991a:302).

Christ Himself and assurance of infinite blessings to come. Taken as a whole, the message to the church in Pergamum was a warning against compromise in morals and against deviating from the purity of doctrine required of Christians (Walvoord and Zuck 1985).

2.5.3.4 Thyatira

2.5.3.4.1 Destination

Thyatira, 40 miles southeast of Pergamum, was a much smaller city. Thyatira was a commercial center with a large number of guilds established for people who worked with wool, leather, linen, bronze, outer garments, material dyeing, pottery, and baked goods, as well as those who traded slaves (Linthicum 1991a:303). In Acts 16:14-40 we meet a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods who also had a house at Philippi (Mounce 1977:102). The church was small, but she was singled out for this penetrating letter of rebuke. In keeping with what follows, Christ is introduced as the Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze. This description of Christ is similar to that in Revelation 1:13-15, but here He is called the Son of God rather than the Son of Man (Walvoord and Zuck 1985). The situation required reaffirmation of His deity and His righteous indignation at their sins. The words “burnished bronze,” which describe His feet, translate a rare Greek word “χαλκολιβάνω” (Louw and Nida 1989:27) also used it in Revelation 1:15. It seems to have been an alloy of a number of metals characterized by brilliance when polished. The reference to His eyes being, “like blazing fire” and the brilliant reflections of His feet emphasize the indignation and righteous judgment of Christ.



2.5.3.4.2 Commendation

The church in Thyatira apparently was thriving and prosperous. She was known through the city for doing good deeds and serving the needy. Her members were generous, and exhibited deep love and loyalty to each other (Rv 2:19) (Walvoord and Zuck 1985). The glorified Christ was not unmindful of the works which characterized the Thyatiran church. They were listed as *love, faith, ministry* and *patience* (Mounce 1977:102). Anyone looked at this church was attracted by the quality of her life and her commitment to the needy. She was a church whose Sunday services probably were packed and of which any person was proud to be a member (Linthicum 1991a:304).

2.5.3.4.3 Rebuke

Jesus' major condemnation concerned the woman Jezebel, who claimed to be a prophetess and taught believers to take part in the sexual immorality that accompanied pagan religion and to eat food sacrificed to idols (Mounce 1977:102). What was acceptable to that local society was abhorred by Christ. Their departure from morality had gone on for some time (Rv 1: 21). The church in Thyatira may have first heard the Gospel from Lydia, converted through Paul's ministry (Ac 16:14-15). Interestingly now a woman, a self-claimed "prophetess," was influencing the church. Her name "Jezebel"²⁰ suggests that she was corrupting the Thyatira Church much like Ahab's wife Jezebel corrupted Israel (1 Ki 16:31-33) (Walvoord and Zuck 1985). Christ promised sudden

²⁰ The Thyatiran Jezebel is probably some prominent woman within the church who, like her OT counterpart, was influencing the people of God to forsake the loyalty to God by promoting a tolerance toward and involvement in pagan practices. This extended to fornication and participation in the religious feasts connected with membership in trade guilds (Mounce 1977:103).

and immediate judgment, called her sin adultery and promised that all who followed her would suffer intensely. He also promised, “I will strike her children dead” (Rv 2:23) (NIV), meaning that suffering would extend also to her followers (Linthicum 1991a:304). The judgment would be so dramatic that all the churches would know that Christ is the One who searches hearts and minds.

2.5.3.4.4 Exhortation

After His condemnation, Christ extended a word of exhortation to the godly remnant that existed in the church in Thyatira, implying that the rest of the church was apostate. According to Linthicum (1991a:304), the Thyatiran Church was called to reject her own popularity and the grounds upon which that popularity has been won, and to follow Christ. The remnant He called “the rest of you in Thyatira . . . you who do not hold to her teaching and have not learned Satan’s so-called deep secrets” (Rv 2:24) (NIV). On this godly remnant He imposed one simple instruction: “Only hold on to what you have until I come” (Rv 2:25) (NIV) (Mounce 1977:105). Perhaps because the church was small, Christ did not command them to leave her (the church) but to remain as a godly testimony. Judgment on Jezebel and her followers would come soon and would purge the church (Linthicum 1991a:204). In modern times Christians who find themselves in apostate local churches can usually leave and join another fellowship, but this was impractical under the circumstances in Thyatira (Walvoord and Zuck 1985).

2.5.3.4.5 Promise

Christ promised believers who were faithful that they will join Him in His millennial rule (Ps 2:8-9; 2 Tm. 2:12; Rv 20:4-6). The word in verse 27 translated “rule” (*poimanei*) means “to shepherd,” indicating that they will not simply be administering justice but will

also, like a shepherd using his rod, be dealing with his sheep and protecting them as well (Mounce 1977:106). Though Psalm 2:9 refers to Christ's rule, John's quotation of it here relates the ruling (shepherding) to the believer who overcomes. Believers will have authority just as Christ does (1 Cor 6:2-3; 2 Tm 2:12; Rv 3:21; 20:4, 6). Christ received this authority from His Father (cf Jn 5:22). In addition, the faithful will receive the morning star, which appears just before the dawn (Linthicum 1991a:304). The Scriptures do not explain this expression, but it may refer to participation in the rapture of the church before the dark hours preceding the dawn of the millennial Kingdom (Rv 2:28). The letter to Thyatira closes with the familiar exhortation to hear what the Spirit says to the churches. Unlike the earlier letters, this exhortation follows rather than precedes the promise to overcomers, and this order is followed in the letters to the last three churches (Rv 2:29) (Mounce 1977:106; cf Walvoord and Zuck 1985).

2.5.3.5 Sardis

2.5.3.5.1 Destination

In the sixth century BC Sardis was one of the most powerful cities of the ancient world. Sardis was the capital city of the ancient kingdom of Lydia, the most obstinate of the foreign powers encountered by the Greeks during their early colonization in Asia Minor (Mounce 1977:108-109). The important commercial city of Sardis was located about 30 miles southeast of Thyatira, on an important trade route that ran east and west through the kingdom of Lydia (Walvoord and Zuck 1985). Situated at the western end of a famous highway from Susa through Asia Minor, Sardis was a city of wealth fame. Under Croesus gold was taken from the river Pactolus (Linthicum 1991a:305). Jewelry found in the local cemeteries indicates great prosperity. It was at Sardis that gold and

silver coins were first struck. Important industries included jewelry, dye, and textiles, which had made the city wealthy.

From a religious standpoint she was a center of pagan worship and site of a temple of Artemis, which ruins still remain (Mounce 1977:109). Only a small village called *Sart* remains on the site of this once-important city (Walvoord and Zuck 1985). Archeologists have located the ruins of a Christian church building next to the temple. In addressing the message to the church, Christ described Himself as the One who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars, similar to the description in 1:4. Here Christ said He holds them, speaking of the Holy Spirit in relation to Himself (Is 11:2-5; cf Rv 5:6). As in 1:20 the seven stars, representing the Pastors of the churches, were also in His hands (cf Rv 2:1).

2.5.3.5.2 Commendation

The only word of approval is in actuality a word of rebuke as Christ declared that they had a reputation for being alive and apparently were regarded by their contemporaries as an effective church (Linthicum 1991a:305).

2.5.3.5.3 Rebuke

Christ quickly stripped away their reputation of being alive by declaring, "I know what you do. People say that you are alive, but really you are dead" (Rv 3:1) (NCV). Like the Pharisees, their outer appearance was a facade hiding their lack of life (cf Mt 23:27-28). Christ added, "Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of My God" (Rv 3:2) (NIV). They were falling far

short of fulfilling their obligations as believers. Linthicum (1991a:305-306) illustrated the unresponsiveness of the Sardian Church in the following way:

Sardis was a city where watchmen would sleep and posted soldiers would be absent from their battlements, where the people were soft, lazy, and comfortable, and the church had caught this infectious disease. This church was spiritually dead, unresponsive, and lethargic. Intriguingly, the church of Sardis faced none of the overwhelming problems of the other churches in Asia. She faced no heresy from within her ranks. She was not persecuted by the Jews. She was untroubled by the Roman authorities. She did not even face the seduction that comes with popularity. Any of the other churches gladly would have traded places with Sardis just to get some relief! But she was the Sardian church which was dead. She did not even have enough controversy to birth a heresy; the people did not hold strongly enough to their convictions to become a target of persecution. She was simply a dull church!

2.5.3.5.4 Exhortation

Christ asked the church to shake herself awake and take action before she dies from lethargy. Christ indicated three things that the church must do to awaken herself:

Firstly, she must remember the Gospel she had received and experience once again her vitality. *Secondly*, she must repent of her lethargic ways and recommit herself to a living Christianity. *Thirdly*, she must obey the commands of the Gospel and begin living and acting with such conviction that persecution and theological debate could conceivably result (Rv 3:3) (Linthicum 1991a:306). He warned them that if they did not

heed this exhortation, He would come on them like a thief, that is, suddenly and unexpectedly (Walvoord and Zuck 1985).

2.5.3.5.5 Promise

While this church as a whole was dead or dying, Christ recognized a godly remnant in the Sardis Church that had not soiled their clothes with sin. There was hope for some in the church in Sardis. There were some with a glimmer of life in them (Rv 3:4-5) (Linthicum 1991a:306). According to Mounce (1977:113-114), Christ gave a threefold promise to the overcomer:

The first promise was that the overcomer will be arrayed in white garments. The white garments promised in Revelation 3:5 represent the attire appropriate to the heavenly state. Since they are made white by washing in the blood of the lamb (Rv 7:13), the figure is highly appropriate to portray justification.

The second promise was that the overcomer's name will not be blotted out of the book of life. The idea of a divine ledger is first mentioned in the OT in Exodus 32:32-33 where Moses prayed that if God will not forgive the sin of His people, He wished to be blotted out "of the book you have written" (NIV) (cf Ps 69:28; Dn 12:1). Thus, in the OT, the book of life was a register of all those who held citizenship in the theocentric community of Israel.

Finally, to the overcomer Christ promised that He will confess His name before His Father and angels. This is a clear reminiscence of Matthew 10:32, "Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven" (NIV) (cf Lk 12:8; Mk 8:38 or Lk 9:26).

According to Walvoord and Zuck (1985), the letter also concludes with the exhortation to hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The letter to Sardis is a searching message to churches today that are full of activity and housed in beautiful buildings but are so often lacking in evidences of eternal life. Christ's word today is to "remember," "repent," and "obey," just as it was to the church in Sardis.

2.5.3.6 Philadelphia

2.5.3.6.1 Destination

The city of Philadelphia was 28 miles southeast of Sardis. She was located in an area noted for its agricultural products but afflicted with earthquakes which destroyed the city several times, most recently about A.D. 37. The city was named for a king of Pergamum, Attalus Philadelphus, who had built this city. "Philadelphus" is similar to the Greek word *philadelphia*, meaning "love for one's fellow believer" or "brotherly love" (Louw and Nida 1989:293) which occurs seven times in the Bible (Rm 12:10; 1 Th 4:9; Heb 13:1; 1 Pt 1:22; 2 Pt 1:7 [twice]; Rv 3:7) (Linthicum 1991a:307). Only here is it used of the city herself. Christian testimony continues in the city in this present century.

Christ described Himself as "the One who is Holy and true, who holds the key of David, and who is able to open or shut a door which no one else could open or shut" (Rv 3:7) (NCV). The holiness of Christ is a frequent truth in Scripture (1 Pt 1:15), and being Holy He is worthy to judge the spiritual life of the Philadelphian Church. "The key of David" is a metaphorical expression indicating complete control over the royal household (Mounce 1977:116). According to Walvoord and Zuck (1985), "The key of David" seems to refer to Isaiah 22:22; cf Job 12:14b, where the key of the house of David was given to Eliakim who then had access to all the wealth of the king. According to Robert

H. Mounce, the language of Isaiah is used to present Christ as the Davidic Messiah with absolute power to control entrance to the Heavenly Kingdom (Mounce 1977:116).

Christ earlier had been described as the One who holds “the keys of death and hades” (Rv 1:18) (NIV). The reference here, however, seems to be to spiritual treasures (Walvoord and Zuck 1985; cf Mounce 1977:116).

2.5.3.6.2 Commendation

As in the messages to the other churches, Christ stated, “I know your deeds”. In keeping with the description of His authority to open and close doors. He declared, that He has placed before them an open door that no one can shut (Rv 3:7). There is no word of rebuke, though Christ said, “I know that you have little strength”²¹ (Rv 3:8) (NIV). These words, however, become a basis for His commendation that they have kept His Word and have not denied His name. According to Robert C. Linthicum, the church in Philadelphia may be small and weak, but she has been faithful to Christ against overpowering odds. Because she has been faithful, Christ is now going to open to this church the door of missionary opportunity (Rv 3:8) (Linthicum 1991a:307).

Mounce (1977:118) states that Revelation 3:9 takes us into the heart of serious conflict between Church and synagogue in Philadelphia. The Jewish population was convinced that by national identity and religious heritage she was the people of God. Not so, claimed the Christians. The Apostle Paul in Romans 2:28-29 taught that “A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. No,

²¹ Christ recognizes that although they have little power (it was probably a fairly small congregation and they had not made a major impact upon the city), they have, faithfully kept His word and not denied His name (Mounce 1977:117).

a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man's praise is not from men, but from God" (NIV). It was the Philadelphian Church that could now be called "the Israel of God" (Gl 6:16) (NRSV), for the Jewish nation had forfeited that privilege by disbelief. Members of the local synagogue in Philadelphia claimed to be Jews, but the very claim constituted them liars. By their slander and persecution of Christians they have shown themselves to be the "synagogue of Satan" as indicated by Christ in Revelation 3:9. According to Linthicum (1991a:307), Christ declared that He will make the Christians' opponents to come and fall down at their feet and acknowledge that He has loved Christians in the city of Philadelphia.

2.5.3.6.3 Promise

The church in Philadelphia received no rebuke from Christ. Instead Christians were commended and given a promise because they had been willing to endure patiently for His sake (Bruce 1969:640). Christ promised that He will also keep them from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth (Rv 3:10). Mounce (1977:119) says that the hour of trial is that period of testing and tribulation that precedes the establishment of the eternal Kingdom. It is mentioned in such passages as Daniel 12:2; Mark 13:19; and 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12. It is the three and a half years of rule by Antichrist in Revelation 13:5-10. In fact, all the judgments from Revelation 6:1 onward relate to this final hour of trial. It is during this period that Christ will reward the faithfulness of the Philadelphian Church by standing by to ward off all the demonic assaults of Satan.

George Ladd writes, "Although the church will be on earth in these final terrible days and will suffer fierce persecution and martyrdom at the hands of the beast, she will be

kept from the hour of trial which is coming upon the pagan world. God's wrath, "poured out on the kingdom of the Antichrist, will not afflict His people" (Ladd 1972:62). The promise is consistent with the high-priestly prayer of Jesus, "My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one" (Jn 17:15) (NIV).

Additional promises were given. Christ promised, "I am coming soon" (Rv 3:11) (NIV), a concept repeated often in the Book of Revelation. The thought is not simply that of coming soon but coming suddenly or quickly (cf Rv 1:1; 2:16). Linthicum (1991a:307) is of the opinion that this news was to be encouragement to them in their ministry, comfort to the oppressed, and warning to those who ignored Christianity. And if the church in Philadelphia remains faithful to the open door of missionary opportunity given to them, Christ will richly reward them. They will be seen as pillars in the heavenly temple of God. Jesus will write upon them the name of His God, the temple of God (Rv 3:12).

2.5.3.6.4 Exhortation

The Philadelphian Christians were exhorted in the light of His coming to continue to hold on to what they have. The letter closed with the familiar appeal; "...hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (Rv 3:13) (NIV) (Linthicum 1991a:308). The promise given to the Philadelphia Church and the challenge to continue to be faithful is certainly God's Word to His whole church today.

2.5.3.7 Laodicea

2.5.3.7.1 Destination

According to Robert C. Linthicum, the city of Laodicea was founded in 250 B.C.E. by Antiochus of Syria. She was strategically located where three major roads converged. She was, consequently, one of the wealthiest cities in the Roman Empire. He further indicated that the city's wealth came from three main sources. *First*, she was the center of the garment industry of Asia, specializing in raising black sheep which became the base for naturally black clothing (Linthicum 1991a:308). According to Mounce (1977:123), by careful breeding a soft, glossy black wool had been produced which was much in demand and brought fame to the region. Among the various garments woven in Laodicea was a tunic called the *trimita*. So widely known was this tunic that at the Council of Chalcedon in AD 451 Laodicea was called *Trimitaria*. *Second*, she was Asia's primary banking center, specializing in buying and selling gold. *Third*, she was a medical center specializing in ophthalmology, and many in the city made a great deal of money from the sale of eye ointments and salves (Linthicum 1991a:209). Walvoord and Zuck (1985) indicate that the wealthy city of Laodicea was located on the road to Colosse about 40 miles southeast of Philadelphia. About 35 years before this letter was written, Laodicea was destroyed by an earthquake, but she had the wealth and ability to rebuild. According to Robert C. Linthicum, the city's citizens rebuilt the entire city out of her public and their private coffers; they refused any financial assistance from Rome. In fact, one citizen donated a stadium and others donated other public buildings out of their own treasuries (Linthicum 1991a:308). There is no record that Paul ever visited this city, but he was concerned about her (Col 2:1-2; 4:16).

In addressing the church Christ introduced Himself as the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Ruler of God's creation. The word "Amen," meaning "so be it," refers to the sovereignty of God which is behind human events (cf 2 Cor 1:20; Rv 1:6). (Mounce 1977:124). In speaking of Himself as "the faithful and true Witness" Christ was repeating what He had said earlier (Rv 1:5; 3:7). As "the Ruler of God's creation" Christ existed before God's Creation and is sovereign over it (cf Col 1:15, 18; Rv 21:6). This description was in preparation for the stern word of rebuke which Christ would give the church in Laodicea.

2.5.3.7.2 Rebuke

No word of commendation was extended to the Laodicean Church. They were pictured as utterly abhorrent to Christ because they were lukewarm (Linthicum 1991a:309). In referring to the church as "lukewarm" Christ had in mind that this was her permanent situation. In their feasts as well as in their religious sacrifices people in the ancient world customarily drank what was hot or cold—never lukewarm. This rebuke would have been especially meaningful to this church, for water was piped to the city from Hierapolis (Walvoord and Zuck 1985). Four kilometers north across the Lycus was the city of Hierapolis, famous for her hot springs which, rising within the city, flowed across a wide plateau and spilled over a broad escarpment directly opposite Laodicea. By the time the water reached Laodicea, it was lukewarm (Mounce 1977:125). Their being lukewarm spiritually was evidenced by their being content with their material wealth and their being unaware of their spiritual poverty. Christ used strong words to describe them: wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked (Rv 3:17) (Linthicum 1991a:309, cf Mounce 1977:126).

2.5.3.7.3 Exhortation

Christ urged the Laodicean Christians to buy not ordinary gold, but refined gold, referring to that which would glorify God and make them truly rich. Through her banking industry the city had material wealth. But the church lacked spiritual richness. Though they had beautiful clothes, they were urged to wear white clothes (cf Rv 3:4), symbolic of righteousness which would cover their spiritual nakedness. As wool was a major product of the area, Laodicea was especially famous for a black garment made out of black wool. What they needed instead was pure white clothing (Linthicum 1991a:309). Then Christ exhorted them to put salve . . . on their eyes. A medical school was located in Laodicea at the temple of Asclepius, which offered a special salve to heal common eye troubles of the Middle East. What they needed was not this medicine but spiritual sight. The church at Laodicea is typical of a modern church quite unconscious of her spiritual needs and content with beautiful buildings and all the material things money can buy. This is a searching and penetrating message. To all such the exhortation is to be earnest, and repent (Walvoord and Zuck 1985). Robert C. Linthicum is of the following opinion about the Laodicean Church:

The church must repent! She must get converted! She needs to recognize that she is Christian in name only, and receive Christ both as Lord and as Saviour. And when those lukewarm, so called Christians respond with an earnest commitment to Christ, they will discover that He is there, awaiting them. For He stands by the door of their church, ready to respond to their response. All they need to do is to undo the latch and swing wide the door, and He will enter into the life of their church, will break Communion bread with them, and will be at one with them (Linthicum 1991a:310).

In their blind self-sufficiency they had, as it were, excommunicated the risen Lord from their congregation. In an act of unbelievable condescension He requests permission to enter and re-establish fellowship (Mounce 1978:129). To be a faithful church, the Laodicean Christians were called to repent of a conventional, indifferent Christianity, recognize their spiritual bankruptcy, and allow Christ to “remold them from within” (Rm 12:2). Christ rebuked them because He loved them, which love would also bring chastisement on this church (Linthicum 1991a:310).

2.5.3.7.4 Promise

Dramatically Christ pictured Himself as standing outside and knocking on a door. In a familiar painting the latch is not shown but is assumed to be on the inside. The appeal is for those who hear to open the door. To them Christ promised, “If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will go in and eat with him, and he with me” (Rv 3:20) (NIV) (Walvoord and Zuck 1985; cf Linthicum 1991a:310). With Christ on the outside, there can be no fellowship or genuine wealth. With Christ on the inside, there is wonderful fellowship and sharing of the marvelous grace of God. This was an appeal to Christians rather than to non-Christians. This raises the important question concerning the extent of one’s intimate fellowship with Christ. To those who respond, Christ promises to give the right to sit with Him on His throne and share His victory (Mounce 1977:130). Once again the invitation to listen and respond is given: “He, who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches” (Rv 3:22) (NIV).

2.5.3.8 A message to the churches today

In conclusion, the letters to the seven churches are a remarkably complete testimony of problems that face the church today. The recurring dangers of losing their first love (Ephesus 2:4), of being afraid of suffering (Smyrna 2:10), doctrinal defection (Pergamum 2:14-15), moral departure (Thyatira 2:20), spiritual deadness (Sardis 3:1-2), not holding fast (Philadelphia 3:11), and lukewarmness (Laodicea 3:15-16) are just as prevalent today as they were in first-century churches. Because these letters come from Christ personally, they take on significance as God's final word of exhortation to the church down through the centuries. The final appeal is to all individuals who will hear. People in churches today would do well to listen to what our Lord Jesus Christ says to them, and fulfill their obligation of being salt and light to the cities they are located at. This will be done by uncovering the darkness overwhelming our cities with the Word of Christ, and as a results plant many urban churches.

2.5.4 Paul's strategies for urban mission

One of the most important figures in early Christianity, St Paul made extensive journeys as a Christian missionary throughout the Eastern Mediterranean. Paul's goal, to reach peoples still untouched by the work of evangelists, proved to be a strenuous and often difficult task. He survived three separate journeys during the AD 40s and 50s, bringing Christianity to Macedonia and Greece. During a *fourth* trip, however, the Romans arrested Paul in Jerusalem and probably executed him in Rome in AD 62 (Encarta Encyclopedia 2005 CD). On the above map these journeys are indicated by differently coloured or differently stippled lines (Boer 1982:98).



Figure 2.3: Map indicating the journeys of an Apostle Paul (Encarta Encyclopedia 2005 CD).

2.5.4.1 He was more focused on big cities

According to Murray (2001:98), Paul's strategy, as described in the New Testament, seems to have to concentrate on the main urban centers and then move on, leaving these urban churches to plant further churches in the rural areas.

2.5.4.2 Paul's missionary method

Bosch (1991:130) is of the opinion that there is undoubtedly a certain method in Paul's selection of the centres. He concentrates on the district or provincial capitals, each of which stands for a whole region: Philippi for Macedonia (Phlp 4:15), Thessalonica for Macedonia and Achaia (1 Th 1:7-9), Corinth for Achaia (1 Cor 16:15; 2 Cor 1:1) and

Ephesus for Asia (Rm 16:5; 1 Cor 16:19; 2 Cor 1:8) and Paphos the centre of Roman rule in Cyprus (Ac 13:6,7,12) (cf Marshall 1983:218-220). These “metropolises” were the main centres as far as communication, culture, commerce, politics and religion were concerned (cf Haas 1971:85). To say that Paul “did not think in terms of individual ‘gentiles’ so much as ‘nations’” (Hultgren 1985:133; cf Haas 1971:35) is, however, misleading and, actually an anachronism, Paul was thinking regionally and not ethnically; he chose cities that have a representative character. In each of those cities, he laid the foundations for a Christian community, clearly in the hope that, from those strategic centers, the Gospel would be carried into the surrounding countryside and towns. This apparently happened, for in his very first letter, written to the believers in Thessalonica less than a year after the first arrived there (Malherbe 1987:108), he said, “And the Lord’s teaching spread from you not only into Macedonia and Southern Greece, but now your faith in God has become known everywhere. So we do not need to say anything about it” (1 Th 1:8). We also read in passages like Acts 19:10 that all the Jews and Greeks living in the province of Asia heard the Word of the Lord during the period of two years, while Paul was working in Ephesus.

Green (1970:262) agrees that Paul’s strategy was an urban strategy. Paul’s approach is not exclusively urban, but also personal (reaching prominent leaders in society), provincial and global (Green 1970:316-321). Through reaching cities it became possible to reach regions (provinces) and eventually the globe. Greenway states that the movement in the New Testament was primary an urban movement. After Pentecost the Gospel spread from city to city and from the cities to the surrounding countryside (Greenway 1989d:13). Wayne Meeks points out that Paul was a city person through and through. The city lives in his language. Paul’s language and metaphors are drawn primarily from the urban world. When Paul rhetorically catalogues the places where he

suffered danger, he divides the world into city, wilderness and sea (2 Cor 11:26) (Meeks 1983:9-10).

2.6 CITIES IN THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

Throughout the history of the church, the 3 lines were continued:

2.6.1 City as the place of rebellion against God

For many centuries cities were regarded as centers of sin or desperation. Havie M. Conn is of the opinion that:

During the industrial revolution there was a coalescence of industrialization and urban growth. And out of it came a renewal of the polarized mythology on the rural side. There was a renewed fear of urban life as dehumanizing. The symbol became a symbol of social disorder and artificiality, anomie and chaos. And that picture was mythic in proportion. It permeates the popular as well as the academic view of the city life (Conn 1987:19).

People were pessimists rather than being optimists about the city. When they think about the city, they think about negative words such as “ghetto, crime, stress, anomie, loneliness, loss of individuality, rapid change, loss of personhood”, and those words stood out boldly (Conn 1987:65). John Palen is of the opinion that, “Pessimism breeds fear, and fear seems widespread. A mid 1970s survey indicated that 56 percent of people (75 percent women) living in cities of more than one million were afraid to walk the streets at night in their own neighborhoods” (Palen 1981:267). By so doing, they



were afraid of both the city and to suffer in the city for the sake of the Gospel of Christ. According to Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Christians should not be afraid to suffer for the sake of proclaiming the Word of God, even though their lives could be in danger for the sake of witnessing Christ. As a true disciple of Christ, they should be ready to suffer for the sake of Christ's Gospel.

Suffering is the badge of true discipleship. The disciple is not above his master. Following Christ means *passio passiva*, suffering because we have to suffer. That is why Luther reckoned suffering among the marks of the true church, and one of the memoranda drawn up in preparation for the Augsburg Confession similarly defines the Church as the community of those 'who are persecuted and martyred for the Gospel's sake'. If we refuse to take up our cross and submit to suffering and rejection at the hands of men, we forfeit our fellowship with Christ and have ceased to follow Him. But if we lose our lives in His service and carry our cross, we shall find our lives again in the fellowship of the cross with Christ. The opposite of discipleship is to be ashamed of Christ and His cross and all the offence which the cross brings in its train (Bonhoeffer 2001:450).

2.6.2 City as the place where God is worshipped

People were optimistic about the cities. They viewed cities as centres of faith, where God is worshipped. According to their views, urban people were regarded as (*τούς Χριστιανούς*) Christians, while the rural people were regarded as *παγανοί* (*pagan people*). This implies that it was impossible to find a Christian in a rural area because rural areas were regarded as the places where gods were worshipped.



The city not only edged dramatically into Jesus' life and ministry but subsequently became central to the future expansion of Christianity. It was from such metropolises as Antioch, Alexandria, Ephesus, Athens, Corinth and Rome that the Gospel was carried into the countryside, where the rural sorts – the *ganai* (hence the term *pagan*) – were the last to convert. This Christianity which began in hamlets like Bethlehem and Nazareth in the person of Jesus finally came full circle through the mediation of urban culture (Maier 1991:9).

2.6.3 Strategic value of cities, where many people are reached

According to Conn (1987:47-48), people were encouraged to plant more churches in newer working-class neighborhoods because they were “receptive areas”. Others pleaded for urban church planting because the rural-urban links will not last forever. For the time being, they were told that large numbers of the city dwellers were at heart villagers. However, the argument continued, the come-and-go business was a transitional phenomenon. Larger and larger numbers of people are becoming permanent residents of the city – as in the West, they never return to their rural solitudes (cf McGavran 1980:315). Timothy Monsma in his opinion indicated that:

People who move to the city seek out members of their own tribe, for this gives them as sense of security and identity in the midst of change. Many new urbanites plan to retire to their tribal area someday, and they do not want to lose their tribal identity. The church can capitalize on this thirst for tribal identity by offering church services in tribal languages and fellowship among those who think alike (Monsma 1976:69).



According to Roger S. Greenway there was a period during which urbanologists maintained that family ties tend to disintegrate in the city and that home plays a lesser role in shaping the lives and attitudes of city people. Based on this premise, the “industrial mission” strategy was developed. Industrial missionaries theorized that in the urban setting vocational, educational, recreational, and political relationships take on larger significance than do primary-group relationships, particularly family relationships. They reasoned that urban people are best reached in the places where they work and spend their leisure time, and not primarily in the setting of the home and family (Greenway 1989d:19). Harvie M. Conn is of the opinion that:

That theory about the urban family, and the mission strategy stemming from it, have now largely been set aside. There is an ample body of research that suggests that the family was to play very important roles in meeting the needs of companionship, affection, and basic security. The urban person’s most fundamental identity is still connected with the family (Conn 1987:40-42).

2.7 CONCLUSION

The biblical theology of urban mission was discussed in this chapter. It was clearly indicated that mission always entails “the sending”. The Triune God is involved in the sending. God the Father sent Christ to the world; God the Son also sent His disciples to do mission work in villages, towns and cities. God the Father and God the Son sent the Holy Spirit. God the Holy Spirit sent Paul and Barnabas to do mission. From the biblical theology of the city, the city was viewed negatively as the city of Satan and as the city of evil. From the positive image, the city was viewed as the city of God and as a symbol of good. It was quite clear in this chapter that God from the OT perspective,



showed great concern for many cities, for example, the city of Nineveh, the city of Sodom, the city of Jerusalem, etc. From the NT perspective, Jesus Christ also showed great concern for cities. He preached in cities, He sent His disciples to preach in towns and cities; He showed concern for the city of Jerusalem. Lord Jesus Christ in Acts 1:8 gave the city of Jerusalem first priority to receive the Gospel, followed by Judea, Samaria and then other parts of the world. The Apostle Paul in his strategies for urban mission focused on big cities. He concentrated on the district or provincial capitals, each of which stands for a whole region. Throughout the history of the church, the three lines were continued: the city was regarded as the place of rebellion against God; she was viewed as the place where God is worshipped; and lastly the city was regarded as the place where many people are reached. As the biblical theology of urban mission was discussed in this chapter, in the following chapter urbanization is discussed.



CHAPTER 3

URBANIZATION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on urbanization which is a serious process whereby the church should seriously be aware of and engage herself vigorously in urban mission. Firstly, the researcher pays attention to urban growth and also discusses its causes. The causes of urban growth vary from one to the other. The reality concerning urban growth is that the more rapid urban growth occurs, the more the problems in urban areas increases as well. The researcher ends the chapter by highlighting the problems that are encountered in urban areas due to urban growth, for example, prostitution, urban poverty, street people, crime, HIV/AIDS, etc.

3.2 URBAN GROWTH

One of the salient features of our times is the rapid growth of cities in all six continents. “Developing countries are facing an urbanization explosion which has yet not been experienced” (Crowther 1991:24). This rapid urban growth was confirmed by Monsma (1989:108) who says: “The cities are growing rapidly and will continue to grow for the foreseeable future”. Linthicum added to the idea of Monsma when he says that “cities all over the world are facing an unprecedented growth explosion. Sometime close to the turn of the century there will be more people living in cities than will be living in towns or villages, on farms, in tribes, or in any other human habitation” (Linthicum 1991a:17). This implies that the world is becoming more and more urban (Conn 1987:15). Donald A. McGavran also indicated that “the importance of cities for church

growth increases when we see that larger proportions of the earth's population are living in them. The rush to the cities is on, and within the next few decades perhaps three-fourths of the human race will be born, live, and die in urban rather than rural areas" (McGavran 1970:314). Aylward Shorter for example indicated that:

Every day over 500 people are added to the population of Nairobi City, the capital of Kenya in East Africa, and most of these are new arrivals from the rural areas. This statistic is an indication of the scale and rapidity of urban growth in Africa today. Africa is the one continent undergoing the most rapid urbanization. By the end of the first quarter of the next century more than half of Africa's population will be town dwelling. During the next thirty or so years we shall continue to witness the extraordinary sight of Africa's town populations doubling and redoubling in each decade, and the townships multiplying in almost every part of the continent (Shorter 1991:1).

As was the case in many countries during the past century, urbanization arrived in South Africa with full force. The percentage of people living in urban areas in South Africa rose from 25% in 1921, to a full 50% in 1980. An interesting feature of urbanization in the country is the degree to which the different population groups have made a home for themselves in the cities. Whereas the Asian and White sections of the population may already be said to have reached an urbanization ceiling of 91% and 89% respectively in 1980, only 37% of the Black population was at that stage urbanized. The Coloured population occupied an intermediate position, with 78% urbanized in 1980. Already, more than a decade ago, more than half the total population of South Africa (53%) were confirmed city dwellers (Meiring 1994:589-590).

According to *Statistics South Africa (2006:8)*, in figure 3.1 below the provincial estimates show that Kwazulu-Natal has the largest share of the population, followed by Gauteng and Eastern Cape in 2006. Ten percent of the population lives in the Western Cape. The Northern Cape has the smallest population. Free State has the second smallest share of the South African population, with about 6% of the total population residing in this province.

Figure 3.1: Percentage distribution of the projected provincial share of the total population, 2001–2006 (taken from *Statistics South Africa, 2007:7*)

Province	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2006 (New boundaries)
Eastern Cape	15,5	15,4	15,2	15,1	15,0	14,9	14,6
Free State	6,5	6,4	6,4	6,3	6,3	6,2	6,2
Gauteng	18,5	18,7	18,9	19,0	19,2	19,4	20,1
Kwazulu-Natal	20,7	20,7	20,7	20,6	20,6	20,5	20,9
Limpopo	12,3	12,2	12,1	12,1	12,0	12,0	11,3
Mpumalanga	6,9	6,9	6,9	6,9	6,9	6,9	7,4
Northern Cape	1,9	1,9	1,9	1,9	1,9	1,9	2,3
North West	8,2	8,2	8,2	8,2	8,2	8,1	7,1
Western Cape	9,4	9,5	9,7	9,8	9,9	10,0	10,0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

In South Africa the metropolitan cities are growing tremendously. In fig 3.2 below which shows the population growth rate of some of the South African metropolitan cities, it is clearly indicated that Durban in 1990 had 3, 1%; in 1995 it was 3, 7%; in 2000 it was 4, 4% and in 2005 it was 4, 9%. In Cape Town it was 2, 5% in 1990; 2, 9% in 1995; 3, 3% in 2000 and 4, 9% in 2005. In Port Elizabeth it was 0, 98% in 1990; 1, 2% in 1995; 1, 4% in 2000 and 1, 6% in 2005. In Bloemfontein it was 0, 6% in 1990; 0, 6% in 1995; 0, 79% in 2000 and in 2005 the percentage was lower than the percentage of 2000, it was

0, 9%. In Pietermaritzburg it was 0, 49% in 1990; 0, 56% in 1995; 0, 65% in 2000 and 0, 74% in 2005. In East London it was 0, 45% in 1990; 0, 53% in 1995; 0, 62% in 2000 and 0, 70% in 2005. From all the above mentioned metropolitan cities, it is quite clear that the population is increasing every year, except in Bloemfontein where there was a rate decreased in 2005 instead of increasing.

Fig 3.2: Urbanization in metropolitan cities in South Africa (Horn and Booyesen 1992:140) (Numbers in millions).

URBANIZATION IN SOUTH AFRICAN METROPOLITAN AREAS: 1990 – 2005				
Metropole	1990	1995	2000	2005
PWV	8,7	10,4	12,3	13,9
Durban	3,1	3,7	4,4	4,9
Cape Town	2,5	2,9	3,3	3,6
Port Elizabeth	0,98	1,2	1,4	1,6
Bloemfontein	0,6	0,69	0,79	0,9
Pietermaritzburg	0,49	0,56	0,65	0,74
OFS Goldfields	0,47	0,56	0,66	0,75
East London	0,45	0,53	0,62	0,70
Total Metropolitan Areas	17,4	20,5	24,1	27,1
Total Population	37,5	42,3	47,6	53,3

Here the researcher will give a short overview of some of the South African metropolitan cities that are tremendously growing, where he will indicate some of the most important things that make these cities to be well-known, and as a result, draw or pull different people from all over the world. This will help the churches that will think of planting



churches in these metropolitan cities to have knowledge about these cities. The six cities are Bloemfontein, Kimberley, Cape Town, East London, Port Elizabeth, and Durban.

BLOEMFONTEIN

(FREE STATE PROVINCE)

She is the capital city of the Free State Province. The Free State Province has a population of 2 958 800. According to Johnstone et al (2001:576), Bloemfontein has a population of 325,000. The principal languages of this province are: Sesotho 64, 4%; Afrikaans 11, 9% and IsiXhosa 9, 1%. She falls under Mangaung local municipality (Graffney 2007/08:512). She has a well-established institutional, educational and administrative infrastructure, and houses the Supreme Court of Appeal. She is referred to as the "City of Roses", is home to some of the province's many tertiary educational institutions, including the University of Free State and the Central University of Technology (Burger 2006/07:15). There is a continuous influx of unskilled people into Bloemfontein from rural areas. The unemployment rate is 40% (Graffney 2007/08:512).

KIMBERLEY

(NORTHERN CAPE PROVINCE)

She is the capital city of the Northern Cape Province. The province has a population of 1 094 500. The principal languages of this province are: Afrikaans (68, 0 %) and Setswana (20, 8%). Other spoken languages are isiXhosa and English (Burger 2006/07:14). The Northern Cape is rich in minerals. Kimberley falls under Sol Plaatje Municipality. She has a rich and colorful history. She is famous for her diamonds which were discovered in 1870 in the walls of a farmhouse and on adjacent farmland. The

discovery of diamonds sparked a diamond rush that saw tens of thousands of diggers from all over the world rush to the area to stake their claims on Colesburg Kopje (Graffney 2007/08: 873). The country's chief diamond pipes are found in the Kimberley district. In 1888, the diamond industry was formally established with the creation of De Beers Consolidated Mines. Alluvial diamonds are also extended from the beaches and the sea between Alexander Bay and Port Nolloth (Burger 2006/07:15)

CAPE TOWN

(WESTERN CAPE PROVINCE)

She is the capital city of the Western Cape Province. The province has a population of 4 745 500. According to Johnstone et al (2001:576), Cape Town has a population of 2,6 million. The principal languages of this province are: Afrikaans (55, 3 %), IsiXhosa (23, 7%) and English (19, 3%) (Burger 2006/07:08). Cape Town falls under City of Cape Town Municipality. She is the "Mother City" of South Africa. She remains the economic hub of the Western Cape Province encompassing industrial areas such as Epping, Montagu Gardens, Parow and Retreat. Along the west coast, the Saldanha Steel Project has led to increased economic activity. The majority of the country's petroleum companies and the largest segment of the printing and publishing industries are located in Cape Town. Visitors to the Western Cape can disembark at Cape Town International Airport, George Airport or all the parts of Cape Town, Mossel Bay or Saldanha (Burger 2006/07:8). The surrounding towns are growing towards Cape Town (Graffney 2007/08:987). The city's unique environmental areas, including her beaches, the Cape Town Peninsula National Park and Roben Island (a World Heritage site) are important visitor attractions that generate economic activity and promote job creation (Graffney 2007/08:988).



EAST LONDON

(EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE)

The population of the province is 6 894 300. The principal languages of Eastern Cape are isiXhosa 83, 4 %; Afrikaans 9, 3% and English 3, 6%. Africans, Coloureds, Indians, Asians and Whites are also sited at this province (Graffney 2007/08:395). East London falls under Buffalo City Municipality. The sectors within East London with the highest growth potential are manufacturing, trade and accommodations, transport and communication and financial and business services (Graffney 2007/08:396). The metropolitan economics of Port Elizabeth and East London are based primary on manufacturing. The province is the hub of South Africa's automotive industry. Several of the world's biggest motor manufactures, such as Volkswagen, Ford (Samcor), General Motors (Delta) and DaimlerChrysler, have plants in the Eastern Cape (Burger 2006/07:10).

PORT ELIZABETH

(EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE)

The population and languages of the Eastern Cape Province are those indicated above (see East London). According to Johnstone et al (2001:576), Port Elizabeth has a population of 1,2 million. She falls under Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality. In 1993 Port Elizabeth became the first city in South Africa with a fully democratic, non-racial city council (Graffney 2007/08:452). She is the largest city in the metro, and the fifth largest in South Africa. She has a well developed infrastructure: Public transport is adequate and it is possible to move around by city bus shuttle, taxi or on foot. The city is an important centre for the automobile industry and is a major transport hub. Her well-equipped modern airport and harbour link Southern Africa with other national and

international destinations (Graffney 2007/08:452). The graceful curve of Algoa Bay provides an ideal setting for the port of Port Elizabeth. East London offers equally favorable harbor facilities. The province is serviced by three airports situated in Port Elizabeth, East London and Mthatha (Burger 2006/07:10).

DURBAN

(KWAZULU NATAL PROVINCE)

Kwazulu Natal Province has more than 9,9 million people (9 924 000). According to Johnstone et al (2001:576), Durban has a population of 2,8 million. The principal languages are: isiZulu 80, 9%; English 13, 6%; and Afrikaans 1, 5%. The remnants of British colonialism, together with Zulu, Indians, and Afrikaans traditions make for an interesting cultural mix in the province (Burger 2006/07:13). Durban falls under Ethekewini Municipality. She is one of the fastest-growing urban areas in the world. Her port is the 10-largest in the world (Burger 2006/07:12). Visitors to Kwazulu-Natal can either disembark at Durban International Airport, which handles more than 2,5 million passengers a year, or at Durban harbor. Alternatively, they can use of the extensive national road network (Burger 2006/07:12). She is South Africa's major port city and the second largest industrial hub after Gauteng. She is the major entry and exit port for both imports and exports, with access to important trading areas to the East, and proximity to the Gauteng mineral-industrial complex (Graffney 2007/08:623). According to E. Luther Copeland, because the world's society is rapidly becoming urbanized, it means that people have on their hands an urban world (Copeland 1979:60). What does this rapid urban growth mean for Christian missions? This question is a fundamental question which should be clearly understood and answered. There are many authors who have noticed the importance of rapid urban growth for Christian missions. In order

to answer the above question, the researcher pays attention to different authors' perspectives concerning what the rapid urban growth means for Christian missions:

➤ According to Maluga (1999:172), the South African cities are places where God is actively at work changing lives. This is happening through urban churches that have embraced God's call to the city. The more people move into South African cities, the potential for Kingdom impact grows greater and greater.

➤ Roger S. Greenway is of the opinion that when Christians encounter the rapidity of urban growth, it clearly means that "the harvest field is larger than ever before. More people need to be reached with the Gospel. More workers need to respond to the Lord's call, prepare themselves, and begin gathering the harvest (Greenway 1999:3-4). Dietrich Bonhoeffer is of the opinion that Jesus in Matthew 9:35-38 is portrayed as the Lord who reached out to the multitudes. His divine pity went out to that erring flock, the thousands who surged around Him. From a human point of view everything looked hopeless, but Jesus saw things with different eyes. Instead seeing the people maltreated, wretched and poor, He saw the ripe harvest field of God. "The harvest is great". It is ripe enough to be gathered, the wretched folk to be fetched home to the Kingdom of God. Jesus beholds the promise of God descending on the multitudes where the scribes and zealots saw only a field trampled down, burnt and ravaged. Jesus saw the field waving with corn and ripe for the Kingdom of God. The harvest was great, but only Jesus saw it (Bonhoeffer 2001:144).

➤ Aylward Shorter on the other hand says, "It is quite clear that urbanization is the most important social reality in Africa today, and that Christian evangelization must take full account of it" (Shorter 1991:1) and he further indicated that "Urbanization must be taken seriously by the church and given a priority that is absolute. Personnel have to

be deployed in the towns and urban church structures created, if the Gospel is to continue to make an impact in Africa” (Shorter 1991:1-2).

➤ Greenway and Monsma indicated that the urbanization of Christian missions is an urgent and serious need. Cities determine the destiny of nations, and their influence on the everyday affairs of individuals is incalculable. As cities grow in number, size, and influence, it is incumbent on those responsible for world evangelization, which includes the tasks of teaching, planning, and recruitment of missionaries, to focus on these cities (1999:xi).

➤ According to Donald A. McGavran, the Church faces huge city populations continually growing. Her task is to disciple, baptize, and teach these urban multitudes. It was urban multitudes that the Lord would have gathered as a hen gathers her brood under her wings; and His church, indwelt by Him, longs to do the same (1970:316).

It is incumbent upon Christians today to recognize and enthusiastically enter into the challenge of the new, emerging world. God is calling the church into the city. The world is becoming an urban world – and this is an inevitable and irreversible trend. Only Jesus’ return or humanity’s destruction of itself in a mushroom cloud will prevent the urbanization of the world. But people are not only faced with the mind boggling growth of the world’s existing cities – even the most rural and isolated areas of the world will be exposed to urbanization (Linthicum 1991d:19).

3.3 CAUSES OF URBAN GROWTH

Everything that happens within the planet has a cause. The question is “what is behind the mushrooming of the cities since 1940s?” According to Grigg (1992:29), “the growth

of cities is made up of both migration (called explosion growth) and natural increase within cities (sometimes called implosion growth)". The researcher's *first* focus is on migration and its causes are also illustrated; *secondly*, natural birth is illustrated; thirdly, immigration and its causes are treated; and *lastly*, problems in South African cities are also illustrated.

3.3.1 Migration

The migration of more than a billion people to the cities world wide in the last two decades is the largest population movement in history (Greenway 1999:113). An analysis of the internal migration streams revealed that Gauteng, Western Cape and Kwazulu-Natal experience positive net migration. There seems to be a high migration movement from Limpopo and the North West provinces into Gauteng. The provinces with the highest outflow of people were Eastern Cape and Limpopo (*Statistics South Africa* 2006:5).

According to Verster (2000:20), migration is a very important aspect of urbanization in Africa and other Third World countries. Migration usually occurs initially in response to events over which those affected have little control. Some of those events are: natural, economic, social and political. Every movement in life has a cause. People are migrating everyday from rural areas to urban areas because of push-pull factors. This was confirmed by Aylward Shorter who says, "Causes of migration are described as push and pull factors" (1991:29). Here the researcher will elucidate on what those push and pull factors are, and this will be done by focusing on the way different authors illustrate or view these factors.

3.3.1.1 Push factors

Aylward Shorter (1991:17) states that “the push factor in the thinly populated regions is the lack of prospects caused by deficiencies of one kind or another”. In supplementing the definition of push factors given by Aylward Shorter, the researcher defines push factors as the centrifugal forces that push (dispel) people from rural areas and as a result cause people to see urban areas as the better place to stay than rural areas. This definition was confirmed by Verster (2000:23) who says that “push factors are very important and often lead to situations in which life in the rural situation becomes unacceptable”. There are many push factors that one can spell out, but some of them are as follows:

3.3.1.1.1 Rural population growth

The worldwide increase in population is an underlying cause of migration to the cities. People today generally live longer, infant mortality has decreased, and medicines keep people alive who, years ago, would have died. The need for more jobs comes with the increase in population. This forces millions to leave their traditional rural homes and move to cities in search of employment (Greenway 1999:116). According to Viv Grigg, the increased birthrate in rural areas is one of the major causes of migration (1992:31).

3.3.1.1.2 Rural disasters

According to Aghamkar (1994:147), disasters such as famine, flooding, and community unrest force people to migrate to urban areas. In many countries the primary flow is internal, from rural areas to cities. In those cases farmers have been pushed off their land through drought or competition with large agribusinesses. They may have tried to

work as labourers on one of the large holdings for a while, but that work is usually seasonal and doesn't pay enough to hold them over through the workless periods. Many may leave the wives and children behind to seek work in the city with the hope of returning, but more often than not, if the family reunites it will be in the city (Conn & Ortiz 2001:318; cf Grigg 1992:31).

3.3.1.1.3 Escalating unemployment

Escalating unemployment in rural areas due to changes in the traditional caste system and government policies related to land, labor, and minimum wages also push rural people to the city (Aghamkar 1994:147-148) to look for employment in urban areas (Shorter 1991:17). According to J. Andrew Kirk, the lack of access to sufficient land of employment to sustain life drives people to the cities (Kirk 1999:99). Rural poverty, because of unemployment in rural areas is one of the major causes of migration (Johnstones 2001:579).

3.3.1.1.4 Rural overcrowding

Aylward Shorter (1991:16) indicated that one of the factors that push the migrant away from the village is rural overcrowding. Monsma (1979:12) is of the opinion that people are pushed off the farm by overcrowding, mechanization, or lack of opportunity. Most of the families in South African rural areas are extended families. In this type of families, for example, one family is composed of a man, his father and mother, his brothers and sisters, his wife, his sons and daughters, his daughters in law, his grand children etc.

3.3.1.1.5 People need freedom

For many young men and women, the desire for freedom from social constraints in close-knit rural communities is the primary motive for migration. Furthermore, people hope to enjoy political freedom in the cities (Verster 2000:38).

3.3.1.1.6 People need permanence and security

Viv Grigg (1992:30) indicated that throughout the centuries, men and women have needed permanence, security, community and achievement. The city, good in her reflections of the creativity, and creation of order; and evil in her infiltration, and arrogant rejection of God, has always been the mecca for such aspirations.

3.3.1.1.7 Other push factors

According to Viv Grigg (1992:31), the other push factors behind migration are poor health care, limited land, feudal relationships, multinational ownership, destruction of forests, typhoon, war, etc. These are also the most important factors that have more power of pushing people to urban areas.

3.3.1.2 Pull factors

In defining pull factors, the researcher defines these factors as the centripetal forces that pull (attract) people from rural areas and as a result see urban areas as the better place to stay than rural areas. According to Shorter (1991:17), the pull factors are usually stronger than the push factors. Some of the pull factors that one can spell out are as follows:

3.3.1.2.1 Economic reasons

Economic problems in certain areas lead to situations in which people are forced to leave those areas and go to the cities to start anew (Verster 2000:2). According to Aghamkar (1994:147), people primarily migrate to the cities for economic reasons – to earn a living. There are jobs in the city and the salaries they offer are generally better than the income one could receive in rural areas either by farming or by working for others (Hanna and Hanna 1971:39-41). City dwellers earn more money and buy more things (McGavran 1982:315). The town offers better prospects, more opportunities for improving the family income (Shorter 1991:17). According to Professor Piet Meiring, economic realities caused first the Whites and the Asians, and eventually the Coloureds and the Blacks to turn their faces to Cape Town and Durban, to Port Elizabeth and Bloemfontein, but especially to the vast urban sprawl of the so-called “PWV complex” (The Pretoria – Witwatersrand – Vereeniging Complex, with Johannesburg at the epicenter of the urban explosion) (1994:589).

3.3.1.2.2 Industrialization

Industrialization is considered a “pull” factor that attracts thousands of people to the city. Among all other factors which bring people from rural areas to the cities, however, industrialization is probably the most important. At least it is the most crucial reason for the growth of urban population in the Two-Thirds World. Some developing countries like Korea have used the term industrialization in parallel with urbanization (Greenway and Monsma 1989:xiii). The Hannas say, “Although many towns were founded in Africa and elsewhere before the local introduction of industry, sustained and rapid urban growth is usually linked with industrialization, including mining (1971:16-17). Mining is a



specialized form of industry which has also encouraged urbanization. For example, Johannesburg is associated with gold and diamond mines. Cities offer numerous options for employment, primarily in industry. Many educated and skilled people tend to move to the city. This is a major reason why people move to the city, where some kind of employment is normally available (Aghamkar 1994:147).

3.3.1.2.3 Better education

People hope that if they move to the cities they will get better education (Verster 2000:37). The availability for better educational facilities, the allure of the mass media, and increasing freedom attract thousands to the city (Aghamkar 1994:147-148). Cities offer educational opportunities that are not available in small towns and villages (Greenway 1999:116). Most schools of higher education are in cities, which offer libraries, part-time work for students, and easy access from the surrounding area (Monsma 1989:109).

Rural schools often prepare people not for rural lives, but for the modernizing influence of the city (Grigg 1992:30). In many cases, children are sent to school in town by rural parents, because it is believed – probably rightly – that urban educational standards are higher and job prospects are better at the town school (Shorter 1991:17). For example, the universities, technikons, technicals, colleges, in Gauteng, Bloemfontein, Cape Town, Durban, Cape Town, etc are occupied by students who mostly come from different rural areas. It is quite clear that those institutions in urban areas offer the best degrees, diplomas, or certificates that prepare those students for professions.

3.3.1.2.4 Better health care

Cities offer hospitals and health centers for people with special medical needs (Greenway 1999:116). While some medical care may be available in rural areas, more - specialized care, especially surgical procedures, can be obtained only in large-city hospitals (Monsma 1989:109). Most of the patients who suffer from chronic and dangerous diseases in rural hospitals are transferred to city hospitals because “medical services are more readily at hand” (McGavran 1982:315). Every city has special hospitals, surgeries, etc. To quote one example: the researcher visited a hospital in Pretoria on the 22nd of November 2005. The Louis Pasteur Private hospital is situated in the heart of Pretoria’s CBD, on the corner of Prinsloo and Schoeman Streets. What he discovered is that: the hospital caters for all of the city’s medical and surgical needs, it is also home to patients from as far as Mpumalanga, North West, Limpopo and the whole of Gauteng-and from beyond the borders of South Africa, namely, Uganda, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi and Swaziland. This hospital offers a comprehensive field of medical services, ranging from minor one-day dental procedures to highly specialize cardio-thoracic and neurosurgery. Other disciplines include general surgery, internal medicine, gynecology, ear, nose and throat surgery, cardiology, nephrology, rheumatology, plastic and reconstructive surgery and maxillofacial surgery, orthopedics, pediatrics, urology, psychology, psychiatry, audiology, physiotherapy and occupational therapy is also offered.

3.3.1.2.5 Cities are centers of service and dominance

According to Monsma (1989:108-110), cities are centers of service and dominance. This implies that cities arise and grow because they serve the towns, villages, and farms that surrounded them. As the city grows larger, she tends to serve and influence

her hinterland in at least eight major areas i.e. government, education, health care, information, entertainment, trade, industry and warfare. The Hannas (1971:42-44) are of the opinion that the urbanite enjoys many amenities that his rural relatives don't have, such as running water, electricity, speedy public transportation, cinemas, bars, sporting events, and television. Urbanites also appreciate the freedom that city life involves when compared with life in their tribal areas. This is an attractive factor which lures people from rural areas to cities. In other words, people flock to cities simply for better living conditions. Greenway (1999:113) is of the opinion that cities are the recognized centers of political power, economic activity, communication, science research, academic instruction, and moral and religious influence. Whatever happens in cities affects entire nations. The world goes in the direction that cities go.

3.3.1.2.6 Other pull factors

Young people, especially, are attracted to the cities for excitement, entertainment, and new opportunities. They often come to cities dreaming of riches and a better life, only to have their dreams destroyed by the hard realities of urban life (Greenway 1999:116).

3.3.2 Natural birth

Natural growth rate and an increasing life expectancy remain important, even expanding factors. In the earlier post independence period of Africa, rural – urban migration was the largest reason for the expansion of large cities (Conn & Oritz 2001:211). Greenway is of the opinion that “Biological growth, which is the number of births over deaths, adds greatly to this urban growth pattern (1999:113). The researcher does agree 100% with Greenway's opinion, for example, the birth rate in urban areas is growing tremendously because of the following reasons:

The first reason is that those young men and young women who migrated to urban areas for different reasons settled in the urban area. And as a result they gave birth to children. Because the urban areas become their permanent place, their children belong to the urban areas. Even when their children have to start school, they start school in the place where their parents are staying.

The second reason is that the immigrants who moved from their country of birth and come to stay permanently in South Africa, when they give birth they stay with their children here in South Africa. And by so doing, the birth rate increases tremendously.

The third reason is that there is a great competition between the teenagers to become pregnant because each one of them wants to prove whether she can give birth or not. The other motivating factor is the child grants which the government is offering to those who have children. According to a Phalaphala FM news cast a school which is under Gauteng Province recently broke a record by accommodating 71% of teenage pregnancies in 2006. This is a cause for great concern, is the rise of teenage pregnancy.

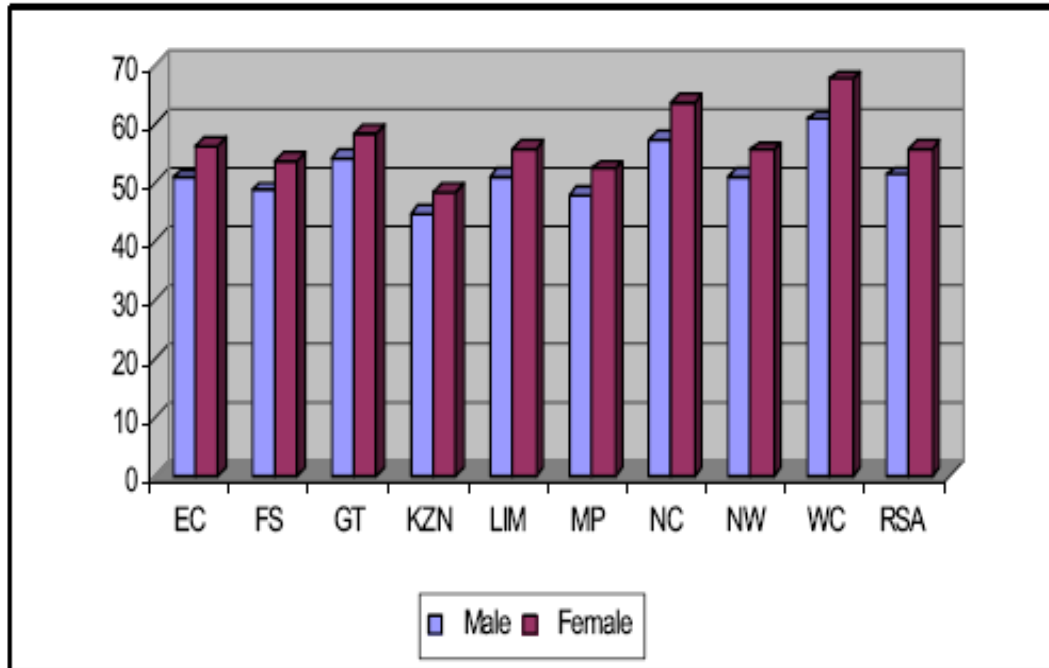


Figure 3.3: Provincial expectation of life at birth, 2001-2006 (*Statistics South Africa 2007:5*).

The above figure shows the average provincial life expectancies at birth for males and females for the period 2001-2006. Life expectancy at birth for females is the highest in Western Cape (67 years) and lowest in Kwazulu Natal (less than 50 years). For Gauteng, life expectancy at birth is estimated at 54 years for males and 57 years for females. For both sexes, life expectancy is estimated at 50, 7 years (49, 0 years for males and 52, 5 years for females) (*Statistics South Africa 2006:5*).

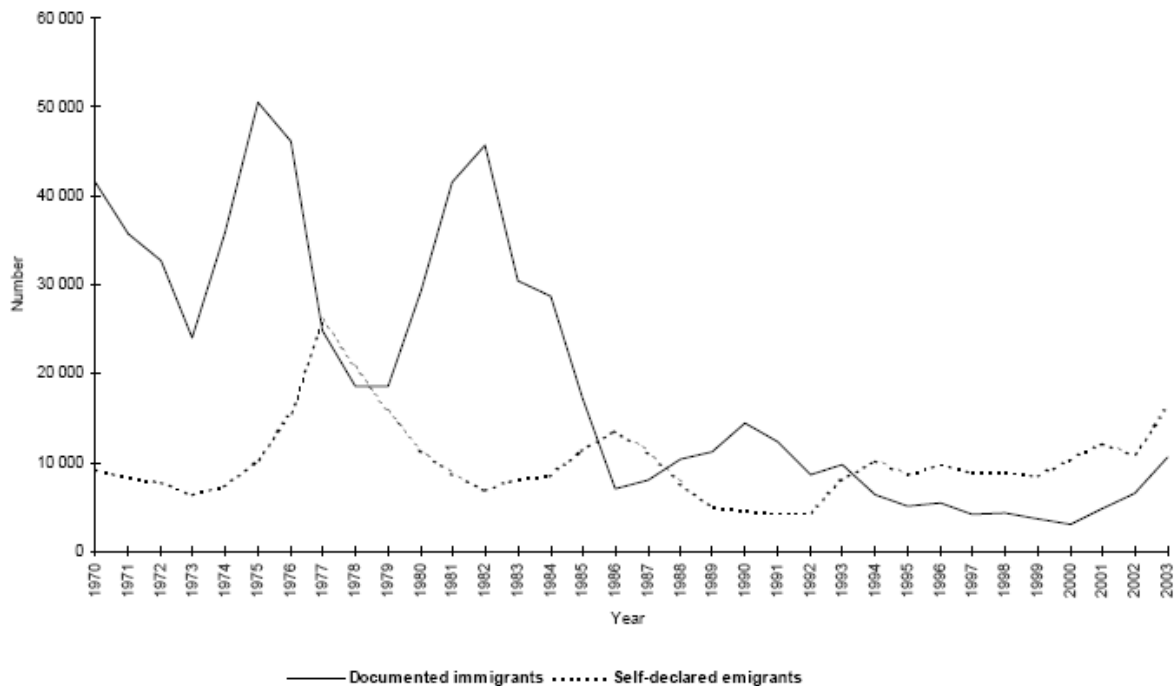
3.3.3 Immigration

3.3.3.1 Definition

What is immigration? Many people can define it in different ways, but the researcher defines it as the process whereby people leave their country of birth and go to settle in another country, either for political stability, or financial or career advancement, etc.

According to Roger S. Greenway, there are more people migrating from one country to another than we have ever seen before. People from the Southern hemisphere are moving North, and people from the East are moving West. People from the Middle East are everywhere. In most cases immigrants settle in urban areas. This turns cities into international communities with people of many different races, cultures, religions, and languages (Greenway 1999:4). According to Meiring (1994:590), Johannesburg attracted people from all over the world like Indian, Chinese, Portuguese, Greek, Jew, Pole and Czechoslovakian; all have made Johannesburg their home. Sunnyside in Pretoria and also in the city centre of Pretoria, there are many people from African countries like Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo (Zaire), Zimbabwe, Mozambique, etc.

Figure 3.4: Documented immigrants and self declared emigrants 1970-2003 (*Statistics South Africa 2005:xiv*)





The Statistics South Africa (2005:iv) indicated the following historical trend in documented immigration to South Africa:

There have been wide fluctuations in the trends of *documented immigration*²² to SA. Figure 3.4 shows that there were two prominent peaks. One peak occurred in 1975 and the other in 1982. The 1975 peak was largely due to the doubling in the number of immigrants from the UK between 1973 and 1975 and to some extent, immigration into SA from Mozambique after the country gained independence in that year. The 1982 peak was largely due to immigration to SA from the UK, China and Portugal. From 1990 onwards there was a downward trend in the number of documented immigrants to SA until 2001 when the trend started picking up. In 2003 the number of documented immigrants to SA was 10 578, an increase of 61, 6% as compared to the 2002 figure of 6 545.

²² **Documented immigrants** refer to residents of other countries who have been accepted as permanent residents in South Africa. The permanent residence status could be given either before or after arrival in South Africa (*Statistics South Africa* 2005: xiv).

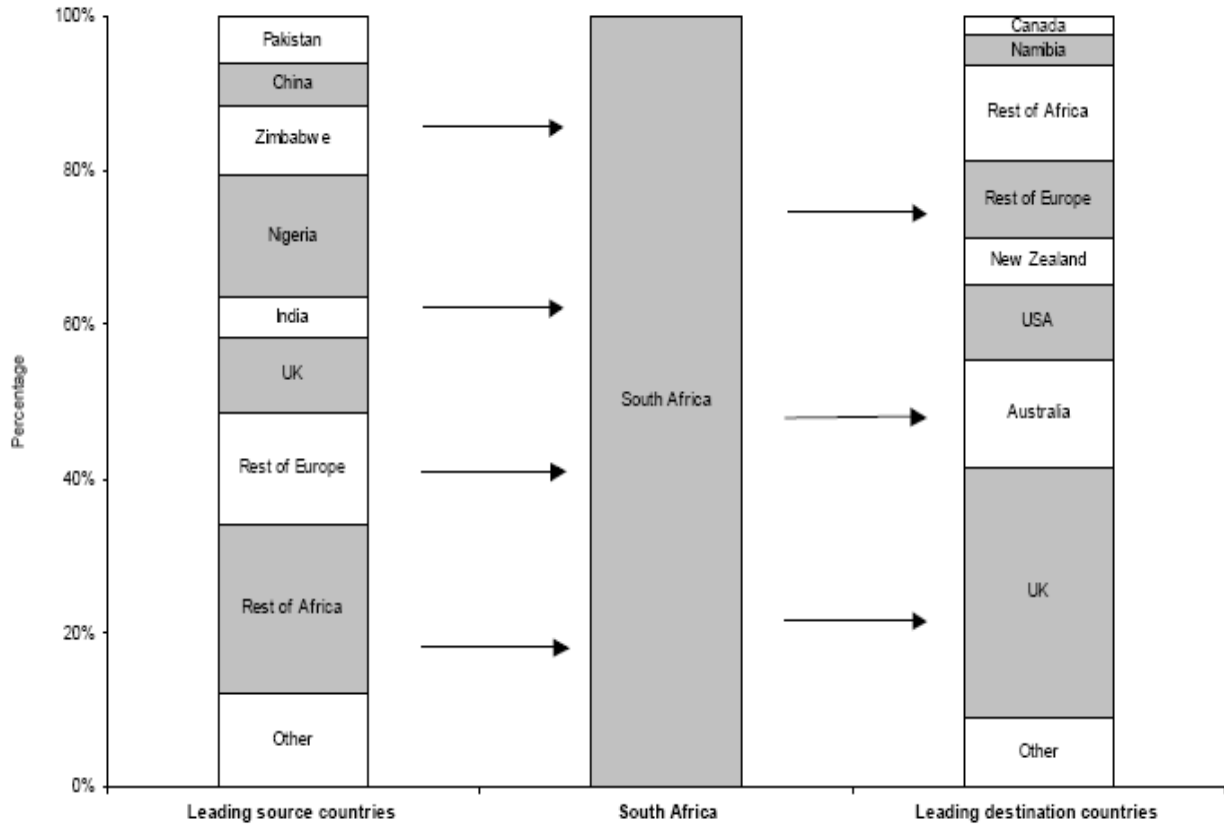


Figure 3.5: Leading countries of documented immigration to South Africa and leading countries of self-declared emigration from South Africa, 2003 (Taken from *Statistics South Africa 2005:vii*).

Figure 3.5 shows the distribution of the leading source countries (of previous permanent residence) of documented immigrants and leading destination countries of self-declared emigrants. During 2003 Nigeria was the leading source country of documented immigrants and the UK the leading destination country of self-declared emigrants. A total of 1 698 documented immigrants (16, 1%) from Nigeria came to settle in SA and a total of 5 204 self-declared emigrants (32, 2%) went to settle in the UK. Other leading source countries of documented immigrants were: the UK, 1 032 (9, 8%); Zimbabwe, 959 (9, 1%); Pakistan, 645 (6, 1%); China, 561 (5, 3%); India, 551 (5, 2%) and Germany, 365 (3, 5%). Other leading destination countries of self-declared emigrants were: Australia, 2 276 (14, 1%); the USA, 1 598 (9, 9%); New Zealand, 966 (6, 0%); Namibia, 617 (3, 8%) and Canada, 400 (2, 5%). According to Johnstone et al (2001:576), nearly one million of

the population in South Africa is not born in South Africa. Estimates for illegal immigrants from other African countries range from 4 million to 12 million.

3.3.3.2 Causes of immigration

There are different causes that led and still lead immigrants to leave their country of birth and settle in South Africa. Hiebert and Meneses (1995:284-285) indicate that immigrants from other parts of the world face other adjustments. Many of them are refugees, driven off their lands by war and violence (for example, the war and violence in Zimbabwe forced many Zimbabweans to immigrate in great numbers to South Africa and also to other countries). Others are attracted by the opportunities in the more affluent cities of the world. According to *Statistics South Africa* (April 2006:2), there were 5 280 (3, 2%) overseas immigrants and 9 095 (1, 6%) mainland Africa immigrants who arrived in South Africa were on business, 4 674 (2, 8%) overseas immigrants and 3 098 (0, 6%) mainland African immigrants for the purpose of work (including contract work), 1 276 (0, 8%) overseas immigrants and 11 491 (2, 1%) mainland African immigrants were for the purpose of study, 1 036 (0, 6%) overseas immigrants and 5 707 (1, 0%) mainland African immigrants were on transit, and 256 (0, 2%) overseas immigrants and 10 943 (2, 0%) mainland African immigrants were those with border traffic concession.

3.3.3.3 The problems that are encountered by the immigrants in South Africa

3.3.3.3.1 Xenophobia

The biggest problem immigrants are encountering is xenophobia. What is xenophobia? Xenophobia can be defined as a dislike (fear) of foreigners. Many South African citizens show a strong fear of foreigners because of the following reasons:



➤ They complain that the immigrants have good jobs while the owners of the country remain jobless. And South African citizens further believe that the immigrants will accumulate the wealth from South Africa and enrich their own countries of birth. The immigrants are treated badly, and some names are attached to them, for example, they are called *makwerekwere* which means “outsiders” or “strangers”. For example, there have been many incidents towards foreigners that have occurred in many places in South Africa this year (2008). But here the researcher will mention only attacks that have occurred in three places. The first incidents occurred in Mamelodi and Attredgeville early this year (2008) (*Pretoria News*, 13 May 2008:2). During those attacks, many foreigners lost their homes and belongings (see Appendix C1). The other horrible xenophobic attack occurred at Alexandra during May and June this year (2008). The violent attacks started after a meeting of about 200 Alexandra residents who decided to give foreigners an ultimatum: “get out or be driven out”. Armed with iron bars, stones, sjamboks, knobkerries and guns, the Alexandra residents then hunted down foreigners. After the attacks, more than 60 foreigners were killed and others were injured (see Appendix C 2 and 3). This takes away both their freedom and the happiness they are supposed to have in their lives. They always live with great fear of being killed or imprisoned.

➤ The other reason is that the immigrants are often seen as the people who are committing crimes in South Africa. The deputy Minister of Home Affairs, Mr Malusi Gigaba indicated that:

The recent spate of crimes, allegedly committed by foreign nationals in South Africa, has prompted some people to blame crime in general on immigrants. Some have even called on home affairs minister to tighten the borders and be tough on illegal immigrants. Without substance,



almost all crime in South Africa is attributed to immigrants, regardless of the fact that a visit to our correctional centres proves this to be false. In any event, whenever crime is committed by foreign nationals, they are in cahoots with South Africans. It seems that foreign criminals have exposed dangerous levels of xenophobia among many South Africans. Actually, most foreigners in our country are themselves irked by the criminals among them because they expose them to violence, discrimination, intolerance and xenophobia.

The fact that there are many South Africans imprisoned in other African countries, South East Asia and America for drug-related and other crimes does not mean that South Africans living in those countries are perforce criminals. It would be unfair if the rest of us were judged abroad by the actions of a coterie of criminals who happen to share our nationality. The fact is we should treat criminals the same, be they South African or not. Crime is not worse when committed by somebody you regard as a foreigner and better when committed by a local. These are human rights issues. We must be tolerant and accommodating of immigrants, and they must respect our laws. We must be intolerant of crime, whether committed by locals or foreigners. Like racism, xenophobia is a pernicious crime against humanity (*Sowetan*, 26 July 2006:11).

3.3.3.3.2 Unsettlement

When people make a major move, such as rural to urban migration or immigration to another country, they tend to be unsettled. They face new values, new ways of doing things, possibly a new language. At the same time they have left behind a large portion

of their former support system. Families and friends are separated, possibly for the first time in their lives. As Donald A. McGavran says, “Immigrants and migrants have been so pounded by circumstances that they are receptive to all sorts of innovations, among which is the Gospel. They are in a phase of insecurity, capable of reaching out for what will stabilize them and raise their spirits (McGavran 1970:219).

According to Greenway (1999:4), there are more refugees throughout the world than ever before. Refugees are the victims of war, political struggle, natural disasters, or drought. They are forced to leave their traditional places of living and to search new homes. When they are living as refugees, they often show interest in the Christian faith for the first time.

3.4 PROBLEMS IN URBAN AREAS

3.4.1 Poverty²³

The impact of growth in the city is immense. Where they exists, national and city development programs, already stretched by limited budgets, are swamped by the new arrivals – jobs, housing, health, basic human services. Poverty has become the dominant social problem for the host city. One day’s solution becomes the next day’s problem (Conn & Oritz 2001:212). Some of the worst suffering is found among people that have recently arrived in cities (Greenway 1999:116). Some of the people who

²³ Poverty has many faces, some less obvious than others. Poverty can have the face of an unwanted baby, an abuses child, a runaway youth, a rejected spouse, a lonely old man, or an Aids patient. Poverty can be physical, emotional, or spiritual. To be impoverished means to lack love and the essentials of life: food, clothing, shelter, health, support, identity, and purpose. The economically poor and the spiritually impoverished have the same basic need – to know that their welfare is God’s concern (Christensen 1988:36-37).

arrive in the cities, who failed to get accommodations in the cities, decide to live in squatter camps, under the bridges, etc. Poverty is universal in squatter camps. It is hard to convey the depths of this poverty. “Rising expectations have produced rising frustrations. Statusless, marginalized, hungry and rootless, the poor are formed into what Oscar Lewis calls a new culture. And all this is in cities; where so few of us venture in mission” (Conn 1984:3). In some instances it is devastating. “Shacks of corrugated iron, wooden planks, hardboard and even plastics have mushroomed wherever people have been able to find vacant land” (*Southern Africa Report* June 7 1991:3). They live in overcrowded tin shanties, cardboard boxes, old rusty motor cars, structures of branches and plastic, in back yards, in cramped servants’ quarters, on garbage dumps, wherever there is vacant land. It does not matter to them whether it is legal or illegal – they need land (Woodgate 1992:13). Adding to their misery, the poverty was often made worse by government policy: “Conditions in the squatter settlements have often been exacerbated by official lethargy or neglect as well as by certain political policies followed in the name of implementing a segregationist system (later named apartheid)” (Minnaar 1992:3).

The sad fact is that the number of poor people is increasing daily. The challenge to missions is to show Christian compassion in ways that will help the poor escape from poverty, while at the same time telling them about Jesus Christ (Greenway 1999:8). For example, if one goes around streets and roads within cities you can find people with cardboard written requests of money, food or clothes. Poverty reaches beyond racial lines. White beggars join their Black counterparts on the corners of the streets. In Pretoria in 2007, the researcher approached a well known park called Magnolia, on the corner of Walker Street and University Road, where he saw a white man at the robot aged between 45-52 years with a hardboard in his hand. There was a written message on his hardboard. The message was as follows: “*Please help with food, money, or*

anything. I am starving. Thanks.” The researcher was very touched by the message written on that cardboard, and then he went straight to him, and asks him the following questions: What is your name? Why are you doing this? The man answered, “*I am Willem*”. “*It is my everyday job to stay here and ask for money, food, clothes or anything that can help me to support my wife and our four children*”. Really this was very painful. The researcher tried to imagine the situation Willem always faces in his house, and he felt that it is devastating. This type of situation is one of the situations which can be encountered all over the streets in big cities. The researcher does agree with Roger S. Greenway who says:

Life for the poor is hard in cities. They are the victims of crime and injustice. Nevertheless, large numbers of new people continue to arrive from the villages. They are drawn to the cities as though by invisible magnets. They have great hopes and dreams for the future despite the poverty and suffering they experience now. They firmly believe that if not the parents, certainly the children will enjoy better lives in the city (Greenway 1999:116-117).

3.4.2 Prostitution

According to Hiebert and Meneses (1995:300), around the world, travel and tourism have created subcultures of entertainment that often cater to human vices. Those who are desperately poor for instance may be forced into prostitution to survive. Conn (1987:69) states that “Prostitution is said to grow in those places where the population is dense, the poor are numerous, and money flows freely”. The following statistics were compiled by a fact-finding group, currently working in Hillbrow. Among the 500 000 people living in the area there are 3 000 registered prostitutes together with 37 so called



escort agencies and 9 gay clubs (Meiring 1994:591). Willem Saayman and Jacques Kriel indicate that:

However, it must be clear from our analysis that sexual behavioural patterns in any community are determined by many factors – socio-economic, political, cultural and religious. In many if not most situations in the developing world these patterns are responses to situations of economic devastation, political maneuvering, and other forces which the individual hardly understands, let alone controls. In South Africa, for example, the social devastation caused by migrant labour and the apartheid laws, which prevented families from settling as families near their places of work, has been the major cause of the sexual behavioural patterns which form the basis of the epidemic among Black South Africans. In such situations the church simply has to address the underlying social and economic concerns and injustices and cannot confine its attention to behavioural (educational and moral) issues or even to pastoral care of Aids sufferers (1992:24).

Prostitution is promoted in many ways and it is regarded as a business where people are earning money for their survival through this wrong practice. People are not ashamed to voice out to promote it. It is advertised in news papers, internet, and television in fact almost everywhere. Three examples, taken from South African newspapers illustrate the issues (see Appendix D):

➤ ***First story: Sex gizmos displayed***

Sex toys, dancers and half-naked women filled the Durban International Convention Centre this week for an exhibition of a different kind, the



Sexpo. The Sexpo, which closes tonight, features all forms of sexual toys, big and small, manual or fully automated, lingerie and even workshops on how to use sex toys and guidance on things like anal sex. It would not be a Sexpo without dancers, and the main attraction is none other than Miss Nude Australia, Arianna Starr, and Pricasso, the talented painter who uses his penis to paint portraits. Starr says she is happy with her career. "I enjoy interacting with different clients and I love performing" she says (*Sunday Sun*, 10 February 2008:16).

➤ ***Second story: North West "Paid to train prostitutes"***

The North West department of health was embroiled in a row following allegations that its money was used to run a workshop at which three young women were taught how to be prostitutes. A nurse has been accused by the women of luring them to a workshop under the pretext that they were going to be trained as peer educators. Instead they were taught how to be prostitutes by a sex worker who ran the workshop conducted at Protea Lodge on 23 November 2007 and have been paid by the provincial Department of Health. One of the three young women who lives with her grandparents since her mother died a few years ago indicated that they believed the nurse because they knew her well. She further indicated that she thought her troubles were over when the nurse came to her and said she will be earning R500 a month as a peer educator. The three young women said that they were convinced the job offer was genuine when they were booked into the posh lodge at Mafikeng. But their happiness was short-lived when fellow recruits told them that the workshop was about how to please potential clients. One of those three lured young women indicated that they were taught how to deal with the clients who did not want to pay for services and also how to approach truck drivers. They indicated that the same night, other girls asked the three to accompany them to

'*mochofong*' (to go out and look for potential clients). The three young women were afraid and ran to the nearest police station in Mafikeng to ask for assistance. And they were assisted by the police (*Sowetan*, 4 February 2008:4) (see Appendix D 1).

☞ ***Third story: Half naked prostitutes work from toilets!***

A group of prostitutes were removed from public toilets on Monday 18th February 2008 at Hoedspruit. This happened after a security guard complained when he found five aggressive prostitutes prancing around in bikinis and G-string underwear. Michael Mabotsa, who works for a private security company in Hoedspruit, Limpopo, was waiting for a bus just after 17H00 (5 PM) when he got the call from nature. When he entered the public toilets, he found blankets, sponges and towels on the floor and then he saw the half-naked woman! When he tried to use the urinal, the women tried to seduce him, making all sorts of sexual offers. One of the women, who were also smoking, asked him if he wanted it wrapped or not. "Wrapped" is street slang for using condoms. He said the women offered him two minutes of sex for R50. Eventually, a hawker came to his rescue. It turns out that it is common knowledge that prostitutes operate from the public toilets, serving truck drivers, soldiers and the occasional tourist (*Sun*, 19 February 2008:3) (see Appendix D 2).

3.4.3 Crime

The crime rate in cities is alarmingly high (Verster 2000:6, 10). For example, crime in Hillbrow is growing tremendously. An average of 190 suicide attempts is reported monthly; an average of 37 people actually succeeds in taking their own lives. 1 200 incidents of rape occur monthly, one murder is reported everyday (Meiring 1994:591). According to Johnstone et al (2001:578), the escalating crime wave in South Africa has

shocked the nation (2000,000 murders in the 1990s), limited foreign investment and restrained the flow of tourists. The major growth industry is security violent robberies, car-hijacking and rape are commonplace. The country has a murder rate over seven times that of the USA and few crimes end up with convictions.

Roberts (1981:141) discusses the reasons for urban crime. There are different theories. According to him *one early theory* was that criminal behaviour results from social and individual disorganization and disintegration in the city following the weakening of social controls and restraints due to social breakdown. The remedy in this case would be to strengthen social order. *The second theory* is that criminal behaviour is a rational response to people's circumstances of need and want. According to J. Andrew Kirk, among other effects, urban poverty increases certain forms of crime, the break-up of the family support network, the abandonment of children to the streets and an alternative economy (including a vigorous trade in drugs) (Kirk 1999:99). The problem is, however, that not all crime can be seen as resulting from poverty and want. Monsma (1979:25) says, "Unemployment encourages crime, but it is well known that crime also occurs where employment is high, for there are always those who wish to get money quickly without working for it". According to Roberts (1981:142), *the third theory* is the opposite of the first. Crime is seen as the product of social cohesion and not of breakdown. The community with its markets and systems supports crime. The social cohesion in this negative and destructive sense leads to the destruction of society. Roberts is of the opinion that the cure is spiritual: "The remedy lies in strengthening the religious values. Only a change of heart can bring down urban crime. The saving power of the Gospel that changed the life of the malefactor on the cross is the ultimate answer for modern criminals" (1981:43). The government sometimes encourages crime in its decisions or laws. For example, it legalized abortion. The parliament on Thursday the 07th of February 2008 approved legal changes to make abortions easier to obtain, despite

criticism from opponents who said the law was already too lax. The changes will provide for 24 hour abortion facilities, do away with pre-approval procedures and permit all nurses, instead of just midwives to terminate pregnancies. Women as young as 12 can get an abortion during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy and in some cases up to 20 weeks without their parents' knowledge (*Sunday Sun*, 10 February 2008:37) (see Appendix E 1). This is a terrible law which promotes termination of pregnancies which is biblically wrong because it is murder. According to the national crime statistics released in Pretoria on the 30th June 2008, 50 people are murdered everyday in SA. An average 30 children are murdered in South Africa every week. The figure of children murdered this year (2008) increased to 1 410 as compared to 1 152 figure of 2006/07 financial year. Another area of great concern is the significant rise in house and business robberies, and truck and car hijacking. House robberies increased by 13, 5 percent, business robberies increased by 47, 4 percent, car hijacking increased by 4, 4 percent while truck hijacking increased by 39, 6 percent from the 2007/08 financial year. Safety and Security Minister, Charles Nqakula said the statistics were a serious cause for concern (*Sowetan*, 1 July 2008:4; cf *Daily Sun*, 1 July 2008:5) (See Appendix E 2).

3.4.4 Street people

Who are street people? The researcher defines "Street people" as a broad term that covers a heterogeneous population with one thing in common: its members are homeless. "Many of the poorest of the poor have no home at all" (Hiebert and Meneses 1995:299). A wide range of individuals is included: runaway boys and girls, displaced families, legal and illegal refugees, prostitutes, alcoholics and drug addicts, the aged and senile, and the mentally retarded. Changes in the nation's economy have forced a great number of people out of jobs and onto the streets.

Substance abuse is one of the major causes of homelessness. It is estimated that alcoholics and drug abusers represent up to 45 percent of the homeless population in this country (South Africa). Because of their addiction, these people cannot get or hold a job, they cannot pay for decent housing, and they are not mentally alert enough to make adequate use of available community services (Greenway 1989c:184-185). Street children often form gangs for mutual support and side-walk dwellers aid one another when they can, but there is little formal organization among them that would enable them to mobilize political pressure on the government or society or to form cooperatives to keep their costs down (Hiebert and Meneses 1995:299).

3.4.5 Unemployment

According to Pieter Verster, increasing urbanization leads to unemployment. Many flocked to the city only to find themselves without a job. Opportunities for jobs in the cities exist but are inadequate (1994:6). “Unemployment of the residents aggravates the financial plight of local authorities because people establishing themselves in cities expect essential services, but do not have the means to pay for them” (Hillard (1992:173). Timothy Monsma indicates that unemployment is another serious urban problem. Many of those people who come to the city seeking work don’t find it or don’t find it for a long time. The unemployed people often live with their relatives in the cities. Thus the income of one worker may be used to sustain several other potential workers. This tends to depress the urban standard of living. Some of those who don’t find work give up and go home, while others turn to crime or prostitution (Monsma 1979:24). According to Monsma (1979:30), the unemployed falls under the lower class together with the day labourers, petty traders, prostitutes and those who gain their livelihood by illegal activities (such as stealing, smuggling, or swindling).

3.4.6 HIV/Aids

According to Johnstone et al (2001:578), Aids has become the primary cause of death in South Africa. Daily 1,200 victims are buried. There were 420,000 Aids orphans in 2000. Over 20% of the adult population and a third of all teachers are infected. According to the Minister of Correctional Services, Ngconde Balfour, at least 13 000 inmates in South Africa's overcrowded jails are known to be HIV positive. In a written reply to a parliamentary question, tabled on the 26 March 2007, he said 628 of them were receiving antiretroviral treatment. "As at December 31, 2006, the total number of known HIV positive offenders was 13,729, of whom 13 275 were sentenced males, and 444 sentenced females". He said five prisons had been accredited as "comprehensive treatment, care and support centres", and provided antiretroviral treatment. Inmates of other prisons who needed antiretroviral treatment were taken to the nearest accredited public health facility. "As at 31 December 2006, a total number of 628 prisoners were placed on the antiretroviral treatment program" Balfour said. Prison overcrowding is in the region of 137, 6% (*Daily Sun*, 27 March 2007:4). According to Johnstones et al, Aids is silently destroying swathes of society. Only Christians have meaningful message of eternal hope and the moral foundation to prevent its spread (2001:579).

3.5 CONCLUSION

It was clearly indicated in this chapter that urbanization is the process which is occurring worldwide and also in South African cities rapidly. South African cities are recipients of immigrants from European countries and also from African countries. Not only European immigrants and immigrants from other African countries occupy SA cities, but also a great number of South African citizens from villages migrated to SA cities. All were forced to move to SA cities by push and pull factors. Some are pushed

to urban areas because of rural population growth, rural disasters, escalating unemployment, etc. Those who are pulled to SA cities are pulled by economic reasons, industrialization, better education, better health care; cities are centers of service and dominance, etc. The other cause of urban growth is natural birth. According to *Statistics South Africa* (2006:5), there are many children who are born in SA cities. The urban church must see this as the great opportunity for them to plant many churches in SA cities.

It was quiet clear in this chapter that the more people move to SA cities in great numbers, the more problems occur in urban areas. Olley (1990:21) emphasizes that the church must not be discouraged by life in the earthly city: “We live in the cities of the world, but our scattered communities are to bear witness to a different set of values, a life of hope”. This chapter indicated many problems in SA cities, but the most common problems occurring time and again in SA cities are poverty, prostitution, crime, street people, unemployment, and HIV/Aids. What does this mean to the church? This means that the urban church must develop a comprehensive definition of mission in an urban setting. The development of comprehensive definition of mission in an urban setting is clearly discussed in the following chapter, chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COMPREHENSIVE DEFINITION OF MISSION IN AN URBAN SETTING

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter dealt with urbanization. It was quite clear that the urban areas are growing tremendously. The more urbanization occurs, the more problems occur in urban areas. This leaves the church with no option than to accept the great responsibility of witnessing Christ in word and deed for urban dwellers. This chapter focuses on the development of a comprehensive mission strategy for the church in an urban setting. Two questions are asked: Who is the subject of mission? And what does mission entail?

- **The subject of mission**

Mission is not primarily the activity of men and women, but is God's work. Mission is first and foremost to be regarded as *missio Dei*, God's mission on earth (Bavinck 1960:280). In the recent past, it was first used at the Willingen Conference of the International Missionary Council (1952). Its primary reference is to the purposes and activities of God in and for the whole universe (Kirk 1999:25). It has the Trinitarian base: just as God the Father sent God the Son in to the world, and as God the Father and God the Son together sent God the Holy Spirit, so Father, Son and Holy Spirit send the Church into the world (Kritzinger et al 1984:2). Murray (2001:39) added to the opinion of Kritzinger et al by indicating that, mission has a Trinitarian basis and is theocentric rather than

anthropocentric. Mission is defined, directed, energized, and accomplished by God.

David J. Bosch indicated that:

During the past half a century or so there has been a subtle but nevertheless decisive shift toward understanding mission as God's mission. During preceding centuries mission was understood in a variety of ways. Sometimes it was interpreted primarily in soteriological terms: as saving individuals from eternal damnation. Or it was understood in cultural terms: as introducing people from the East and the South to the blessings and privileges of the Christian West. Often it was perceived in ecclesiastical categories: as the expansion of the church (or of a specific denomination). Sometimes it was defined salvation-historically: as the process by which the world – evolutionary or by means of a cataclysmic event-would be transformed into the Kingdom of God" (Bosch 1991:389).

After the above explanation of the subject of mission, two questions arise: If mission is understood as God's activity – what then of us? Does the *missio Dei* exclude *missio ecclesia*? On the contrary, Jesus Christ told His disciples on the day of His resurrection that: "As the Father sent me, I now send you" (Jn 20:21) (NCV). Greenway (1999:12) is of the opinion that Jesus brought together His own mission from the Father with the mission that He gave the disciples, when He said the above words in John 20:21. The *missio Dei* avails itself of the *missio ecclesia*, the mission of the Church. It is important to observe the order of the "sendings" in this passage. First, the Son of God was sent by the Father, and that makes Jesus the primary, divine Missionary. Jesus in turn, sent His disciples, which made them missionaries of the Gospel. We learn in other parts of the Gospel of John that the Holy Spirit was sent by God to bear witness to Christ and convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment (Jn 14:25-26; 15:26-27; 16:7-8).

DuBose (1983:122-123) is of the opinion that: the sending does not always express itself in success. Christian witness is primarily sent to be faithful. Sometimes there is the positive response of the masses. Sometimes there is rejection. The mission of Christ, the mission of the Jerusalem Church, and the mission of Paul were often attended by hostility, rejection, and danger.

The Book of Acts relates another version of this commission: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Ac 1:8) (NRSV). The Triune God, Father-Son-Spirit, invites the Church, to be His co-workers on earth. The Senior Partner invites a host of junior partners to join Him in venture. Mission, one must argue, is the reason for the existence of the church (Kritzinger et al 1994:41-42). The church is by nature missionary to the extent that, if it ceases to be missionary, it has not just failed in one of her tasks, she has ceased being Church. Thus, the Church’s self-understanding and sense of identity (her ecclesiology) is inherently bound up with her call to share and live out the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth and the end of time. Without a strong sense of vocation to her missionary work, the Church cannot consider herself either catholic or apostolic (Kirk 1999:30-31). The church is not called to exist for her own life and traditions; she must be a community in response to the *missio Dei*, bearing witness to God’s activity in the world by her communication of the Good News of Jesus Christ in word and deed. Roger S. Greenway is of the opinion that Christians are followers of Christ and co-missioners with Him. As He was sent and commissioned to bear witness to the truth, so Christians are sent and commissioned (1999:12). According to Archbishop William Temple (cf Neil 1968:76) the church is the only society in the world which exists for the sake of those who are not members of her. The classical expression of this perception is “the church for others”. Its architect was Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who wrote the following sentences from *Nazi prison* in 1944, “The church is the church only

when she exists for others ... The church must share in the secular problems or ordinary human life, not dominating, but helping and serving” (Bonhoeffer 1971:382-386). Mission is not an activity that should be done by only the clergy, but should be done by both the clergy and the laity. Why? Because of the following reasons: The church is a body, an organism, in which all parts cohere and all limbs function in unison (Heyns 1980:50). Hence the church must become oriented to “body life”. Each member of the body has a unique contribution to make to the Church’s functioning, a factor which the church must recognise and allow for in her structures.

The entire church should involve herself in mission as commissioned by Christ (Kritzinger et al 1984:4) and this mission requires the radical commitment of the whole church (DuBose 1983:123). In the power of the Holy Spirit Christians become co-participants in the plan and purpose of God to reconcile the world to Himself. Mission is not only work for God, but work with God. The work is to be done in a way that resembles the sacrificial obedience of Jesus Christ (Greenway 1999:12).

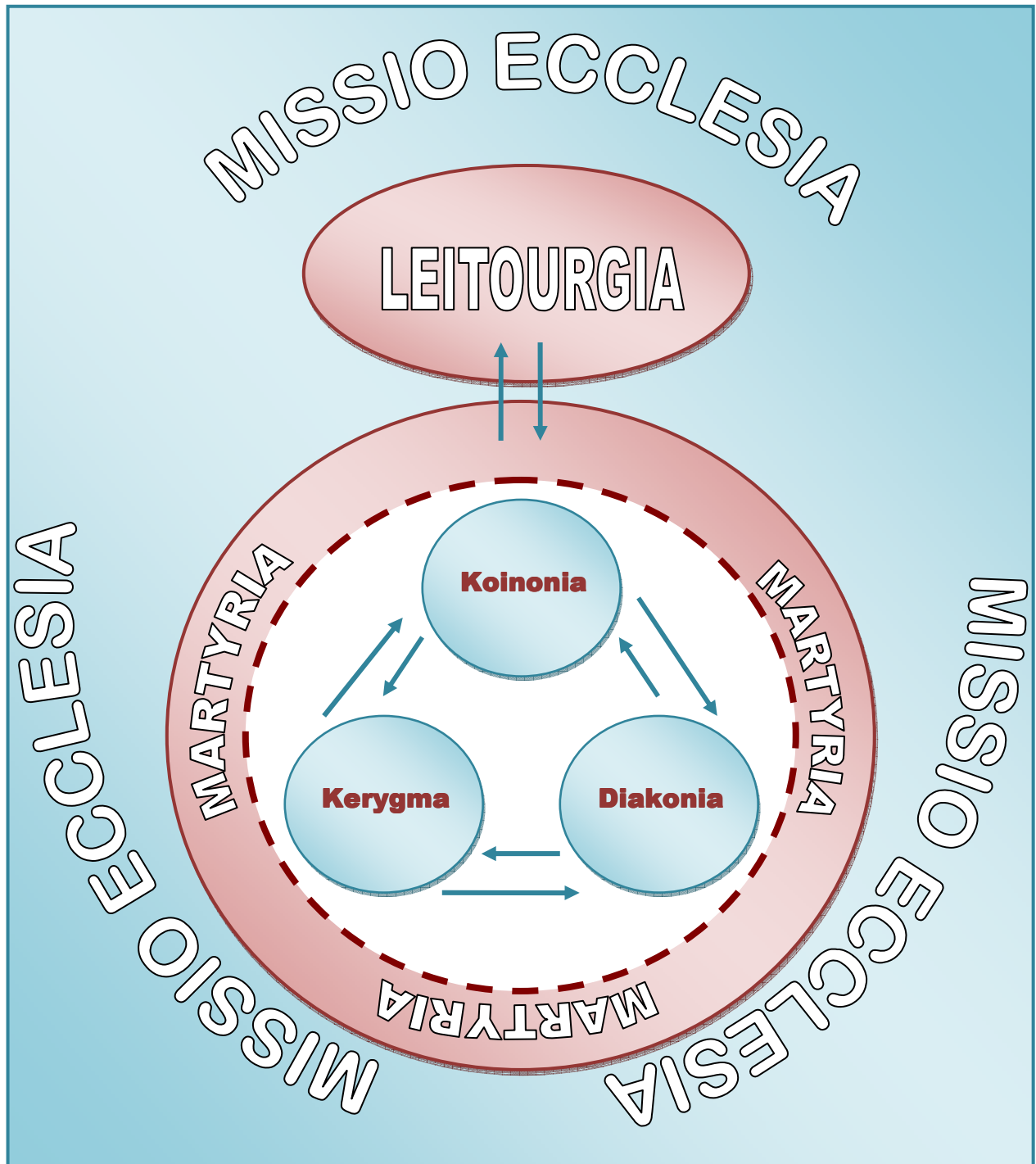
The church is called by Christ and sent to the world to work on His behalf in all spheres of life. According to Van Engen (1993:89), it is important for Christians to examine the purpose of the Church’s life in the world, as that which is derived from the Church’s nature as a fellowship of the redeemed. All that the church does in mission must be related to the missionary of God. The church has a vital role in *missio Dei*, but it dare not allow her status as a mission agent to result in an inflated view of her own importance (Murray 2001:39). Kritzinger et al (1994:44) further indicated that the church should not merely concern herself with her own affairs. An inward-looking church is not an agent of God’s intention.

At this point Christians are reminded of some well known scriptural words which reflect a many-sided description of the Church's reason for being. Four of these words are κοινωνία, κερύγμα, διακονία, and μαρτυρία. According to Kritzinger et al (1994:36), the church must address people in their total environment. This implies that the various dimensions of comprehensive approach should be expressed in terms of the church's task of *kerygma* (proclamation), *diakonia* (ministry of service), and *koinonia* (communion or fellowship). Under these three rubrics, the total missionary task of the church could be accommodated: preaching, witnessing, healing, teaching, developing, and the building up of the church. All the above three rubrics are ways of witnessing Christ (*Martyria*) which is the fourth rubric (Kritzinger 1988:34). The fifth added rubric indicated by Kritzinger et al (1994:36) is *leitourgia* (worshipping, glorifying God through Christian mission).

The thesis of this chapter is that the missionary church emerges when her members increasingly participate in the church's being-in-the-world through the above mentioned five rubrics: *kerygma*, *koinonia*, *diakonia*, *martyria* and *leitourgia* (Van Engen 1993:89, Kritzinger et al 1994:36). The Gospel must be realized both visibly and verbally. To employ one means only without the others is to truncate the Gospel. Christians are taught to address people in the totality of their needs. Next the application of the five rubrics mentioned above in the Church's life is discussed. *Firstly*, the five rubrics will be illustrated by a diagram; and *secondly*, an explanation of the diagram will be given, and *thirdly*, each of the five rubrics will be discussed separately; and *lastly*, their relationship will be illustrated.

4.2 THE COMPREHENSIVE DEFINITION OF THE CHURCH'S MISSION IN AN URBAN SETTING

4.2.1 Diagram illustrating five rubrics or dimensions of mission (Fig 4.1)



4.2.2 Explanation of the above diagram illustrating five dimensions of mission

According to Spindler (1995:130), the biblical basis for understanding “witness” as the concept of mission is usually found in Acts 1:8 “... and you will be my witness in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (NRSV). The church is called by Christ to be His witness to the world (Ac 1:8) (*missio ecclesia*). This is indicated by the word “*martyria*” in the above diagram.

How should the church witness to Christ in an urban area? This should be done by proclaiming the Word of God to the people (*kerygma*), by serving people (*diakonia*), and by entering into fellowship of love with people (*koinonia*). The terms *kerygma* (preaching), *koinonia* (fellowship) and *diakonia* (service) in combination describe the main aspects of the witness (*martyria*) of the Kingdom of God (Kritzinger 1988:34). This is indicated by three interlocking circles.

From the above diagram, it is quite clear that *kerygma*, *koinonia* and *diakonia* are ways of witnessing (*martyria*) Christ in the world. When the church is witnessing Christ through *kerygma*, *koinonia* and *diakonia*, it is true to her deepest calling of worshiping God (*leitourgia*), this is indicated by an arrow upwards. The arrow showing downwards from *leitourgia* indicates the interaction between the church glorifying God, at the same time being reassured of the presence of God through Jesus who, on sending His disciples, promised: “And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Mt 28:20) (NIV).

4.3 MARTYRIA

4.3.1 Martyria in an urban setting

According to Louw and Nida, (1993:418-419), the Greek word μαρτυρια is derived from the Greek word μαρτυρέω which means “witness”, or “to speak well of”. The word μαρτυρια has three meanings, which are as follows:

- The *first* meaning is “to be a witness”

This implies to provide information about a person or an event concerning which the speaker has direct knowledge. The scriptural example of this meaning is found in the Gospel of Luke 21:13.

- The *second* meaning is “testimony”

Testimony is the content of what is witnessed or said. One of the scriptural meanings of this meaning is found in 1 Corinthians 1:6. It is of great importance to specify the content of the witness and also to indicate the agent who is engaged in the witnessing.

- The *third* meaning is “reputation”

This refers to that which is said about a person on the basis of an evaluation of the person’s conduct. The example of this is found in 1 Timothy 3:7.

Within the scope of the above three meanings of *martyria* indicated by Louw and Nida (1993:418-419), the purpose of an urban Church is to make the fact that Jesus Christ is

present in the world tangible, real, visible, and effective. The people who do not know Jesus Christ in urban areas and all over the world are to come and know Him in the presence, the proclamation, and the persuading acts and words of the urban church. According to Van Engen (1993:97), just before Jesus' ascension, He told His disciples in Ac 1:8 that they shall be His witnesses, beginning in Jerusalem and spreading outward geographically and culturally to the ends of the earth. The Word Jesus said to His disciples still has the imperative command for Christians today. The imperative command of witnessing Him to the people should reveal the nature of the church. The urban church must not miss the full weight of Christ's words: "You shall be my witnesses" (cf Heyns 1980:62). The church's existence in urban areas shall be one of the witnesses in all places and cultures.

Acts provides a detailed description of the earliest days of the Church. It is made clear that loving *koinonia* fellowship, a communal life, a *kerygmatic* proclamation that "Jesus is Lord", a sharing with those in need through a loving *diaconal* ministry all brought about *martyria* - a powerful witness to the Church's missionary nature (Van Engen 1981:178-190). An urban church must witness to the fact that Jesus is alive and that He is the Head of the body, the Church, through loving *koinonia* (fellowship), through confession that Jesus is Lord (*Kurios*), and through actions of diaconal service. God's missionary people are to be a reconciled community who witness to the possibility of reconciliation in an alienated world. The apostle Paul, for example, in 2 Corinthians 5:18-21, asserts that Church members are ambassadors through the diaconal ministry of reconciliation. An urban missionary church should herself become the "righteousness of God" in Christ in exercising the ministry of reconciliation. The work of bringing God's reconciliation to the world is the heart and soul of the Church's witness. Through her loving *koinonia* which expresses her faith in *kerygma* and *diakonia* the church witnesses by saying to the world: "Be reconciled to God" (Van Engen 1993:98).

4.3.2 The *kerygmatic* dimension: “Jesus is Lord”

4.3.2.1 Definition of *kerygma*

The *first* way of witnessing Christ is through *kerygma*. What is *kerygma*? According to Louw and Nida (1993:417), the Greek word can best be translated as preaching of the Gospel or Good News. The most important dimension in mission and church planting is *kerygma* or proclamation of the Word (Kritzinger et al 1994:7).

With the *Kerygmatic* dimension Christians should therefore refer to all various forms of the ministry of the Word in mission such as preaching, witnessing, theological education, etc. The ministry of *kerygma* (proclamation) must run concurrently with ministries of *healing, serving, maturing, liberating, reforming, and empowering* (Kritzinger et al 1994:36). The announcement of the Kingdom of God must be both verbal and visible, and one can never say that one aspect is more important than the other.

Gordon J. Spykman (1995:380) is of the opinion that:

In the New Testament, therefore, historical reality (*martyria*) and its proclamatory meaning (*kerygma*) are inseparably interconnected. For, “the *kerygma* stands or falls with the factuality of the historical events of which it is the proclamation.” It is therefore “concerned with what happened once and for all, with what happened on our behalf”. For it can retain “its absolute meaning only when it is based upon the factuality of the historical redemptive event proclaimed in this *kerygma*”

4.3.2.2 Who should proclaim the Good News?

There is good enough evidence for Jesus' belief that those whom He called to be with Him would continue His mission of proclaiming and performing God's rule on earth. It would be virtually impossible to imagine any other reason for the existence of the new community of Christians (church) in Jerusalem and Judea and her survival under the pressure of persecution (Kirk 1999:52). The church which is the body of Christ is sent by Christ to proclaim His word to the whole world. The call to mission comes to the whole church. The whole Christian community is called to assume the responsibility of the body of Christ, to manifest the person of Christ in the world (Castro 1985:44; cf Heyns 1980:63-64). Van Engen (1993:92) agreed on this idea when he says, "The Lordship of Christ drives the Church outward in her proclamation of the Gospel to the world". Salvation of the people is an issue that the church and Christians must always face. Probably all Christians should acknowledge that the church has a mission to the cities, and we have not yet accomplished it (Copeland 1979:60). As followers of Christ, then and there, but also here and now, we are therefore entrusted with a three-dimensional task: witnessing, proclaiming and teaching the truth. These three ways of expressing the faith have a single focus: announcing in Christ the fulfilling of the covenant and the coming of the Kingdom of God as the decisive turning point in redemption history (Ac 28:31) (Spykman 1995:379-380).

4.3.2.3 The content of the Christians' proclamation

According to Kritzinger (1990:137) the first dimension of a missionary ministry in the city is the communication of the Good News. What then should be the church's proclamation? Bosch (1991:412) is of the opinion that: "The content of this ministry is the Good News that `God, Creator and Lord of the universe, has personally intervened

in human history and has done so supremely through the person and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth who is the Lord of history, Saviour and Liberator`". The church must preach nothing else but the message of Jesus Christ (Hedlund 1991:160). According to Mutavhatsindi (1996:57), all Christians' messages should be Christo-centric. According to K. Deddens (1993:76), all of Scripture is about Christ, and therefore all preaching must be about Him as well. He is the goal, the governing, viewpoint, the sum and "soul" of the Old Testament. Deddens further indicated that: "When the Word is spoken to us today through human mouths and in our own language, the power it possesses comes from the Holy Spirit. Therefore all praise for what the Word gives us must go to Him alone. The Word and the Spirit are bound inseparably together" (Deddens 1993:76). Although, in Christians' preaching they indicate judgement, admonishment, and the call to repentance, above all, the central theme of their messages is the proclamation of redemption (Bavinck 1960:129). The preaching of the nearness of the Kingdom of God, the call to repent and believe the Good News (Mk 1:14-15) is now further extended by the commission to proclaim repentance and the forgiveness of sins in the name of the crucified and risen Messiah (Lk 24:46-47) (Kirk 1999:52).

4.3.2.4 The proclamation in an urban setting

The Christians in an urban areas must know that the Lordship of Jesus Christ is not simply lordship in the church and over individual believers, but rather lordship with cosmic and universal proportions (Ac 4:25-30). The *kerygmatic* confession "Jesus is Lord" necessarily involves movement outward toward the world as the arena and recipient of the Church's *kerygmatic* proclamation. The Church of Christ exists when people confess with their mouths and believe in their hearts that Jesus is Lord, Lord of the Church, of all people, and of all creation (cf Col 1:15-20). Through this confession the Church emerges and become what she is, a missionary fellowship of disciples of the

Lord Jesus Christ (Van Engen 1993:92-93). In order to reach the unbelievers in urban areas, the Church must invite them to attend Christian services.

The mission of Jesus Christ becomes inescapable and utterly binding for all believers in the Church. Christians cannot confess “*Jesus is Lord*” without at the same time proclaiming His lordship over all people. The implication of this intimate, inseparable connection between confession and commission is that the fulfilment of the commission to the world over where Christ is Lord is itself a mark for the missionary church (Phlp 2:9-11) (Denkema 1995:57). The Church should play an important role in society. She must address the local government in matters where the government deviates from the Word of God. For example, the case of legalising abortion, oppressing the poor, is imposing in just structures etc. The Church has to continue to proclaim the Word of God to society so that corruption in the school, the government, etc. should end.

4.3.3 The *Koinonia* dimension: “love one another”

The *second* way of witnessing Christ is through *koinonia*. According to Louw and Nida, the Greek word *κοινωνία* has three meanings. The *first* meaning is an association involving close mutual relations and involvement - ‘*close association, fellowship*’ (1993:446). The *second* meaning is to share one’s possessions, with the implication of some kind of joint participation and mutual interest - ‘*to share.*’ (1993:569), and the *third* meaning describes that which is readily shared - ‘*willing gift, ready contribution.*’ (1993:569).

Fellowship means ‘having things in common’. To have fellowship is to share together in common experiences and common blessings. So Christians share in the grace of God (Phlp 1:7), in Christ (Heb 3:14), in the Holy Spirit (Heb 6:4), in the divine nature (2 Pt 1:4)

and a common salvation (Jude 3), a common faith (Tt 1:4) and a common hope (Eph 4:4). They belong together – indeed the very evidence of their new birth is their mutual love (Jn 13:34; 1 Jn 3:14). The basic unity determines the pattern of their worship. They do not come together as a number of individuals with particular needs and particular responses, but as a fellowship sharing together in the blessings of the Gospel, and in a shared response to a gracious God (Carson 1980:29).

According to Kritzinger et al (1994:38), in order to grasp fully the very important missionary implications of Christian *koinonia*, it is necessary to understand the church as the pilgrim people of God, for whom “there is no permanent city ... here on earth”, but who are “looking for the city that is to come” (Hb 13:14) (NRSV). The church has often become domesticated in certain contexts (for example in the entanglement between mission and colonialism), but in reality the church is everywhere in *diaspora*, called out of the world to be sent back into the world with the message of the world to come.

From a missiological perspective, the word *koinonia* can be viewed in two ways. i.e. the nurturing of Christians and ecumenical cooperation.

4.3.3.1 Nurturing of Christians

According to Rick Warren, the New Testament is very clear that God’s will for every believer is spiritual maturity. He wants every Christian to grow up. Paul said in Ephesians 4:13b-14: “We must become like a mature person, growing until we become like Christ and have His perfection. Then we will no longer be babies. We will not be tossed about like a ship that the waves carry one way and then another. We will not be influenced by every new teaching we hear from people who are trying to fool us. They

make plans and try any kind of trick to fool people into following the wrong path” (NCV) (Warren 1995:331).

Charles Van Engen is of the opinion that:

One of the simplest, but most complex words describing the Church of Christ is the command of Jesus: love. Not only did the disciples of Jesus understand *agape* love to be the way of life expected of the people of God; it had been the church’s duty from ancient times. Love of neighbour can be found early in the Old Testament (for example in Lv 19:18; Pr 20:22; 24:29). In fact, love of God and neighbour is the summary of the *Torah* (Mk 12:29-31). But Jesus brought an astounding new dimension to this Old Testament truth. “I give you a new commandment: love one another; as I have loved you, so you are to love one another” (Jn 13:34) (1993:90).

According to Van Engen (1981:167), Jesus injected the revolutionary factor in His command of love. This type of love was new in kind, though it had continuity from the Old Testament. It now meant a transformed kind of life, qualitatively new in its outward, sacrificial, self-giving sense. His disciples were commanded to reproduce in their mutual love, the love which the Father showed in sending His Son, the love which Christ showed in laying down His life. This love is a sentiment spoken from both emotion and a certain type of action which the Father and the Son have taken upon themselves for the sake of the world. This self-denying response is also commanded from the churches in urban areas.

The love of Christ constrains Christians to love one another. Non-Christians in towns and cities must experience that Christians in urban areas belong to a new family, the family of God (Eph 2:19). According to C. Peter Wagner, fellowship plays an important role in the Christians' relationship, he commented on this issue in the following way:

Fellowship, by definition, involves interpersonal relationships. It happens when Christian believers get to know one another, to enjoy one another, and to care for one another. But as the disease develops, and *koinonia* becomes *koinonitis*, these interpersonal relationships become so deep and so mutually absorbing, they can provide the focal point for almost all church activity and involvement. Church activities and relationships become centripetal (introverted and self seeking, rather than oriented toward mission in the community) (Wagner 1979:78).

Non-Christians must experience this through the way in which Christians care and support each other in times of stress and distress. They must hear this in the way Christians pray for each other and with each other in times of sickness, financial need and family strain (Pretorius et al 1987:155). Charles Van Engen is of the opinion that: "We cannot forget that all people will know if the disciples love each other within the Church, because this love is to be externalized. Otherwise we would fall into an unhealthy situation" (Van Engen 1993:91). For example, if one of the Christians is in grief, Christians should pay him/her a visit and pray for that particular person. Even during times of special occasions such as weddings, a birth day party, etc., Christians should support each other in such a way that the world becomes convinced that Christians really care for each other both in times of grief and in times of happiness. Members of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo are applying this in their daily city lives. The researcher has observed this on several occasions. By supporting one another in

times of both grief and happiness prevents the one who is in those particular situations from feeling alienated from other Christians because of the circumstances he or she is encountering. Terry J. Young indicates that:

In a great church there is a genuine spirit of concern for one another. In a real sense what affects one member affects all. Church members pray for each other and respond to each other's needs. This genuine concern for one another greatly reduces the possibility of misunderstandings and strained relationships within the church. This good spirit of fellowship provides an excellent atmosphere for productive and cooperative working relationships (Young 1978:39).

The support that Christians show to each other is a resemblance of Christ's love (Denkema 1995:54). Churches that lose *koinonia* lose fellowship with Christ who linked the promise "I am with you always" with the command to "go and make disciples" (Van Engen 1993:92). Christian love is not limited only to Christians, but they must extend this love also to non-Christians. They must experience this love through the way Christians show both love and care to them.

4.3.3.2 Ecumenical cooperation

Bosch (1991:368-389) is of the opinion that the missionary church must therefore become church-with-other, must truly incarnate the essential *koinonia* of the Body of Christ. The church must be equipped in such a way that she regards her existence in fellowship with other pilgrims on the journey through the world. The church's existence must be an open invitation to fellow pilgrims to join her to find sustenance and fellowship on the journey to the eschatological destination

Saayman (1991:16-18) indicated a number of arguments in favour of mission in unity. Some of his arguments are as follows:

The first argument in favour of mission in unity has to do with the acknowledgement of Jesus as Messiah and King. Neither church nor mission exists as an end in itself. Both are directed towards the coming of God's jubilarious reign in the world, which is the object of God's love (Jn 3:16). The crucial aspect of the coming of this reign on earth is the recognition of Jesus as Messiah and King. Jesus Himself - indicated how important it is that His followers should be united so that the world might come to this realisation (Jn 17:20-23). This makes clear that also the unity with which Christians are concerned is not simply a pragmatic or functional unity, in other words it is not merely a question of mission in unity 'working better'. On the contrary, it is an essential (in the sense of belonging to the very essence) unity based on the unity between three persons of the Trinity, which is, as the subject and origin of *missio Dei*. One would be hard pressed to find a more convincing argument in support of the theological connection between unity and mission.

The second argument in favour of mission in unity is to be found in the nature of the church herself. According to some of the oldest Christian creeds, which are accepted by all Christians, two essential features of the church are her catholicity and apostolicity²⁴. Catholicity as an essential feature of the church implies that the church is

²⁴ *Apostolicity* can be understood in a variety of ways. Some, especially in the Episcopal churches, understand this term as indicating the apostolic succession which can be traced back to the apostles of Jesus. Others, especially in the Reformed and Presbyterian churches, understand apostolicity as the faithfulness to the pure doctrine of the apostles. A third possibility, held by many Roman Catholics, but refined and emphasised especially by the Theology of the Apostolate, is to understand apostolicity as indicating the basic 'sentness' (apostle – one who is sent) of the Christian community in the world. It is in

universal, representative of the whole *ecumene* (that is, the whole inhabited world). It indicates in other words that Christians 'from every tribe and language and nation' are bound together into single new community – the Body of Christ. It is clear therefore that catholicity and apostolicity are intimately linked. For the church to be catholic, she has to be spread across the entire world and among all people. Where the church is so spread across the entire world by means of (apostolic) mission, the newly created communities may not exist in isolation, but must be united with believers everywhere by virtue of the inherent catholicity of the church. Hence the nature of the church brings the interrelation between unity and mission sharply into focus.

A *third* argument in favour of mission in unity is to be found in the person and ministry of Jesus. The nature, as well as the task of the church, springs from Him. Church and mission are therefore based on His person and ministry.

According to Bosch (1991:464-467), the mutual coordination of mission and unity is non-negotiable. It is not simply derived from the new world situation or from changed circumstances, but from God's gift of unity in the one Body of Christ. God's people are one; Christ's Body is one. It is therefore, strictly speaking, an anomaly to refer to the "unity of churches"; one can only talk about the "unity of the church". Holding onto both mission and unity and to both truth and unity presupposes tension. It does not presume uniformity. The aim is not a levelling out of differences, a shallow reductionism, a kind of ecumenical broth. Our differences are genuine and have to be treated as such. Whenever the church takes seriously her mission in respect to the various human communities which stand in conflict with one another – whether these conflicts are

this third sense, especially as understood by the Theology of the Apostolate that is used in this context (Saayman 1991:16-17).

doctrinal, social, or cultural in nature or due to different life situations and experiences- there is an inner tension which cannot be disregarded. Rather, this tension calls us to repentance. Mission in unity and unity in mission are impossible without a self-critical attitude, particularly where Christians meet with others, fellow believers or non-believers, who, by human standards, should be their enemies. Ecumenism is only possible where people accept each other despite differences. Our goal is not a fellowship exempt from conflict, but one which is characterized by unity in reconciled diversity.

Mission is the fundamental task of the church. The entire church of Jesus Christ is called upon to execute her task (Müller 1987:110). In her missionary work, even more than any other terrain of mutual interest, one denomination needs the hand of the other (Müller 1987:109; cf Young 1978:37). To be sure, co-operation is not always easy and confessional and other differences do exist – such as the fact that different denominations and churches adopt vastly different viewpoints in their missionary approach. Yet considerable progress has been made in this direction in the last century. Churches and missionary organisations have learnt the important lesson that when people begin to co-operate in the name of the Christ, they discover that their mutual differences fade into relative insignificance beside the vital issues on which there is mutual agreement and sympathy (Kritzinger et al 1984:4-5).

4.3.4 The *Diakonia* dimension: “Serve one another”

4.3.4.1 Exegetical analysis of the word *διακονια*

The *third* way of witnessing Christ is through “*diakonia*”. The Greek word “*διακονια*” is derived from the word *διακονέω* which means “to serve”. The word *diakonia* can be

translated as service, ministry (Kritzinger et al 1994:37). According to Louw and Nida (1993:460-741), there are several words in the New Testament which deal with the concept of *diakonia* or service:

- ☞ δουλεύω - service as a slave.
- ☞ θεραπεύω - willingness for service.
- ☞ λατρεύω - to perform religious rites as a part of worship.
- ☞ ὑπηρετέω - service to the master.
- ☞ διακονέω - very personal service to another.

4.3.4.2 Jesus Christ as the Great Diakonos

4.3.4.2.1 Jesus became a slave to His disciples

Jesus Christ became a model of witnessing to His disciples by words and deeds. In John 13 Christ is a good example of witnessing by words and deeds to His disciples. Exegetically speaking, in the New Testament times the work of washing the master's and any guest's feet was axiomatically regarded as slave work (cf Verkuyl 1979:208). Coetzee (1996:11) indicated that, "At the evening meal in John 13, Jesus, the Rabbi and Lord (*Kurios* here means *slave-owner*) was the Host". In John 13:2-10, we find the most extraordinary thing happened:

Jesus got up from the table where they all have already taken their seats, and He became a disciple at the feet of His disciples; their Lord knelt down and became a slave at the feet of those who were to have been His slave. He took of *ta himatia*, His clothing, which most probably refers to both His "over-coat" and His "under-coat". That means He now

only had on the small loin-cloth of slaves. Thus He knelt down, and even in His dressing and appearance became fully a slave working for and to His followers! (Mutavhatsindi 1996:40).

Johannes H. Verkuyl is of the opinion that the towel and basin used by Christ in John 13:5 symbolize His love to His people (cf Jn 13:10). They portray the foot washing of *Christos diakonos* (Christ the Servant), who assumed the form of a servant, kneeling down as would a slave to wash the feet of His disciples (Verkuyl 1979:208).

4.3.4.2.2 The meaning of what Jesus did to His disciples

In John 13:13 Jesus said to His disciples, “You call me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am” (NCV). Jesus here takes as His starting point to explain the meaning of His deed, the confession of the disciples themselves because they indeed were used to acknowledge Him as their Superior, as their Rabbi, and even as their *Kurios*. He further argued in verses 14-15 that, “If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example that you also should do as I have done to you” (NRSV). According to Coetzee (1996:23) Jesus here uses a figure of speech typical of the semantic world of the time (indeed of most languages), namely: *the argumentum a maiore ad minorem*. This means to argue from an accepted greater fact towards a consequentially and obviously smaller or lesser fact. Here then: If Christ, their Teacher and Lord, who could in full right, have demanded that His disciples and subjects do the work of slaves at His feet, how much more ought they to be willing to do the same to one another – to their equals. Christ indicated to them that what He did to them was an example of what they have to do one another.

In John 13:16 there is a confirmation of the foregoing statement with a general valid and accepted truth. This is introduced by the very strong “Verily, verily, I say unto you”. Jesus confirms and emphasises foregoing statement by the generally valid truth: “The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him” (KJV). According to Van Engen (1993:94), Christ said the above statement in John 13:16 as He washes the disciples’ feet – the lowest task of the lowliest servant. Such an attitude of humble service is thus also required of His disciples.

4.3.4.2.3 Jesus as the servant of the world

Christ identified Himself as the servant who came to this world not to be served, but to serve and to give His life to redeem many people (Mk 10:45) (Pretorius et.al 1987:156). He also showed a great concern to the lives of those afflicted by different circumstances. According to DuBose (1983:120), Jesus made it clear that service was integral to His missional purpose. In identifying with the Servant of the Lord of the Old Testament prophesy, He not only declared Himself to be sent to set at liberty those who were oppressed but also to preach Good News to the poor and proclaim release to the captives and the recovering of sight to the blind (Lk 4:18).

Spindler is of the opinion that in Luke 4:18, the proclamation of the Gospel is explained with two very modern-sounding qualifications: In the *first* place, a strong emphasis is placed upon the Gospel’s address to the poor. The Gospel is for the poor. *Secondly*, proclamation in word is closely linked with concrete deeds of liberation breaking through the structures of oppression and injustice that force the poor into their situation of poverty and hold them there by violence. Mission thus aims to restructure society as a whole on a global scale. It aims, that is, at the Kingdom of God (Spindler 1995:129-130, cf Bosch 1993:17).

Jesus clearly identified the content of His ministry in terms of the works the Father had sent Him to do. His works bear witness to the loving nature of the Father who had sent Him. Therefore in calling Christians into missional partnership with Himself (Jn 17:18; 20:21), the nature of their mission, therefore, is to bear witness to the loving nature of God through service (DuBose 1983:121).

4.3.4.3 The diaconal service of the church in urban areas

According to J. Andrew Kirk, God's calling to mission is a calling to serve (Kirk 1999:32). The world as a whole is the open arena for the Church's diaconal ministry (*diakonia*). Though lending a helping hand to "the household of faith" is a first line of duty, yet over and beyond that, "as we have opportunity," we are to "do good to all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." (Gl 6:10) (KJV). James says, "As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead" (Ja 2:26) (NIV). The avenues of sanctified Christian service are paved with the cobblestones of justified and justifying works (Ja 2:14:14-26). Faith in action is a demonstration of who Christians are and whom they seek to serve. Both word and deed along with identification with people in their needs are essential for a faithful witness (Goheen 2000:29).

Churches must learn that *diakonia* is a key to understanding the person of Jesus Christ and His Gospel, and therefore also a key to understanding the missionary task that the Christian church is called to fulfil (Verkuyl 1979:209). It is the responsibility of all Christians in urban areas to care for the jobless, the homeless and the hungry. They must battle against the wrongs in society that leads to poverty and malnutrition in a country of wealth and affluence. They must fight for the renewal of broken lives and broken homes. However, in all this they must experience that the driving force in their

lives is the love of Christ and that they can say with Paul: “We are ruled by the love of Christ” (2 Cor 5:14). Pretorius et al are of the opinion that:

The urban church must offer counselling strongly to the disadvantaged people in cities, towns and other parts of urban areas. This should not be the only work to be done; they must also be supported materially. The aim of the counselling is to comfort them with the Word of God and also to provide them with a care. The services of the church to those affected will bear witness and the hallmark of the love of God (1 Jn 4:7-8) (Pretorius et al 1987:156).

4.3.4.3.1 Ministries that should be developed by the Church in urban areas

According to Conn (1987:116), the church in the urban area must develop a holistic ministry for the city. This implies that the church must reach the whole city with her ministry of word and deed. The church must be available for both the spiritual needs and also for the physical needs or material needs.

4.3.4.3.1.1 Ministry of hospitality to the urban poor

From the very beginning, Christian charity has been a powerful form of witness. In the Book of Acts (2:47) it is written that: “They praised God and were looked up to by everyone”. And then: “Day by day the Lord added to their community those destined to be saved” (Ac 2:47) (NRSV). Love, which flows from God and embraces all men in charity, is “unintentional”; it simply wants to pour itself out, to do good. “The words of Jesus in Matthew 15:32 ‘I feel sorry for all these people’ have always had a special appeal, have given food for thought, and have opened people’s eyes. God is the motive

and standard of love and Christian charity is nothing but the overflow of the saving love of God. This is why charity is sign and witness” (Müller 1987:125). Turning to the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 5:4-9 (cf Lk 6:30-36), Christians notice those whom He pronounces blessed. They are those who comfort the mourners, who show mercy, who work for *shalom*, who provide hospitality without any thought of reward. The poor themselves are blessed, for in the coming of the Kingdom there will be sufficient for all (Lk 6:20-21). In the parable of the good Samaritan, Jesus was affirming that the Samaritan truly acted as God would act, taking care of the victims of unprovoked and naked aggression (Ps 146:7-9; 68:5-6) (Kirk 1999:115). The church must not proclaim the Word of God only to the middle class people but must also bring it to the poor (Samaan 1992:24, cf Verster 1989:23-28, 31). The poor must be freed from the low esteem they may have of themselves. They must be helped to have the freedom of being before God. Linthicum (1991b:33) states that the ministry of the church should help “to return self respect to the poor; to fashion people of pride and dignity who have been used and tossed aside; to free people from their bondage - in the Name of Christ”. This should be done as people are very important before God (Wolfaardt 1989:49).

According to Bosch (1991:166), hospitality therefore has to be offered to fellow-believers from other regions as well and Paul urged Christians in Rome to ‘contribute to the needs of the saints’ and ‘practice hospitality’ (Rm 12:13). Roger S. Greenway is of the opinion that:

In the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, what has often appeared to Christians as a dilemma finds a resolution. Jesus’ ministry is a model of the way the Christian’s twin responsibilities of evangelism and social involvement are to be integrated. Jesus preached, taught, and healed. His concern for the physical needs of people flowed from His love and

compassion for them as people, image-bearers of God, who are burdened down by sin and its consequences, hurting, hoping, seeking, and dying. His healing ministry served as a bridge to His preaching ministry, as He blended concern for the temporal and eternal dimensions of human existence (Greenway 1989e:175).

According to Grigg (1992:10), Jesus is Christians' model for mission. He told His disciples that, "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you" (Jn 20:21) (KJV). His first declaration of His own Great Commission says:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the lord (Lk 4:18-19). Surely with these words in Luke 4:18-19, our Lord Jesus Christ modelled the Gospel as primarily Good News for the poor. He defined ministry to the poor, declaring that the ministry to the poor is holistic, involving preaching, healing, deliverance, justice and doing good deeds, but is initiated by proclamation (and reception) of the Kingdom.

Greenway (1989e:175-181) pointed out four important things that should be taken into account by the Church in her responses to the urban poor.

➔ **The church must be able to see, learn and love the urban poor**

Understanding the poor is the first step towards trying to become more helpful. Friendship, acceptance and gratitude can never be taken for granted. The poor often regard help that they have not asked for as an insult or at least an intrusion into their

private world and a threat to their human dignity. This drives the poor to use their poverty to veto, which is their only weapon (Bruwer 2001:12). The gap in understanding and communication between the poor and the middle class is a large part of the problem. Effective Christian responses to the urban poor are frustrated at every level because the poor and their conditions are not understood. The Christian response to the poor in the city must take the form of planned visits, the development of trusting relationships, the exchange of ministries and resources, and growing demonstrations of Christian love.

➔ **The church must be present among the poor and share their needs**

Christians working among the poor must live among them, and identify with their conditions, and treat their spiritual needs and their physical conditions together. Grigg (1992:23) indicates that, for Christians to understand the process of bringing the Kingdom of God into squatter areas, they need first to live among them and learn their ways. But they must also come to understand the processes that are creating them.

Christians must not treat the urban poor as objects of charity and relief, but must begin to understand them as they are, and deal with the spiritual and social needs together in a genuine integration of word, deed, and life. Their mandate is to bring the poor communities under the authority of the Kingdom of God.

➔ **The church must establish urban diaconal task forces**

Neither a deed-only nor a word-only strategy is adequate in the city. Poor people need more than bread and more than verbal truth if their lives are to be changed and made

whole. There are principles that should be taken into account when the church is doing urban diaconal ministry:

- ✱ The *first* principle is that the goal of all Christian ministries in the city is the glorification of God through the salvation of sinners, the building of the church, and the extension of the Kingdom of God.
- ✱ The *second* principle is that the central to the task of the church in the city is the proclamation of the Gospel (Mt 28:19-20; Rm. 1:1-16). This task never competes with diaconal ministry, but accompanies it, complements it, and becomes the driving force of diaconal concern (1 Jn 3:16-18).
- ✱ The *third* principle is that diaconal ministry in the city begins with the poor among believers, for they are the church's first responsibility (Gl 6:10). But it does not end there. It extends to every needy person whom God makes Christians' neighbour (Lk 10:29-37).
- ✱ The *fourth* principle is that diaconal evangelism in the city is a natural outcome of a biblical understanding of the breadth of human need and the depth of God's provision in Christ. It recognizes that the ultimate need of every person is saving faith and reconciliation with God.
- ✱ *The last* principle is that diaconal ministry among the urban poor must be holistic, going beyond temporary relief to treating the long-range causes of poverty and the resulting conditions. Given the facts behind poverty, political involvement cannot be ruled out (cf Cole 1987:163; Minnaar 1992:55-67). Most poverty situations in urban areas are the result of some form of injustice and require political action and changes in government policies. To protect the victims of injustice is one of the church's responsibilities.

- ➔ **The church must see to it that there is an educational training for ministry among the poor**

The curriculum in Christian educational training institutions must give emphasis on Christians' help for the urban poor, love for the poor, pray for the poor, close relationship with the poor, and maintenance of a close relationship between evangelism and helping the poor.

4.3.4.3.1.2 Ministry to the street people

Who are the street people? According to Roger S. Greenway, "Street people" is a broad term that covers a heterogeneous population with one thing in common: its members are homeless. A wide range of individuals is included: runaway boys and girls, displaced families, legal and illegal refugees, prostitutes, alcoholics and drug addicts, the aged and senile, and the mentally retarded (1989c:184). Changes in the nation's economy have forced a great number of people out of jobs and onto the streets. Greenway (1989c:185) further commented about the alcoholics and drug abusers in the following way: "Because of their addiction, these people cannot get or hold a job, they cannot pay for decent housing, and they are not mentally alert enough to make adequate use of available community services".

- **What can the church do to help the homelessness?**

The church is God's primary agent for social change. When the Kingdom enters a community, and afterwards, it brings about economic transformation in the lives of individuals, families, and at times, of the community. The causes of squatter poverty are generated by the city. Here too, it is the church of the city that can bring

transformation, for the church can transform the spirit of the city (Grigg 1992:253). Those who are at peace with God will wish to be at peace with their neighbour. When Christians see that all the good in life has not been deserved but has been given by God, they will desire to share that good with others. The foundation for a just order, therefore, is a personal, active relationship with God (Linthicum 1991a:50).

Rescue missions must be instituted by the church to work with the homeless. The homeless in the city must be provided with food, shelters, and Christian counseling. Advocacy groups must be formed in the cities on behalf of the poor and the homeless

According to Greenway (1989c:191-192), there are five things that should be taken into account when ministering to street people:

- *Firstly*, the church must acknowledge that God is mighty, and His grace proves itself over and over again to change the most degraded individuals.
- *Secondly*, the church must have a great measure of love and perseverance to build positive long-term relationships with street people.
- *Thirdly*, Christian optimism must be tempered by realism as to how much improvement can be expected, especially in the case of the mentally retarded.
- *Fourthly*, the street is not a place where long-term and moral growth can be expected to occur – because it has too much evil, too many influences that entice, enslave, and beckon back. Street is a place where Christians can make contact with the destitute and homeless, show them love, build relationships of trust, and introduce them to Jesus. But after that the homeless should be taken to rehabilitation centers where their lives can

be recorded under the care of Christian disciplers. Christian rehabilitation centers deserve the loyal support of the churches.

- ☉ *Fifthly*, like everyone else street people need Ministers. A Minister's responsibility is fourfold: he must feed the sheep, to defend them, to guide them, and when they stray, to seek them out. Of all people, street people need Ministers.

4.4 THE LEITOURGIA DIMENSION: "MISSION AS AN ACT OF WORSHIP"

4.4.1 The exegetical analysis of the word *Leitourgia*

According to Louw and Nida the Greek word *leitourgia* is derived from the word λειτουργέω "to serve"²⁵. Λειτουργία means service, ministry (1993:461) and performance of religious duties (1993:533). There are two Greek terms which appear significantly in the New Testament and which have a prominent place in the Septuagint. They are *latreia* and *leitourgia*. They are virtually synonymous and reflect the merging of the concepts of worship and service in the light of the Gospel (Carson 1980:11). In the Septuagint, these terms are used to refer both to the act of public worship (sacrifice) and public service (DuBose 1983:110-111). For example, Paul in Romans 1:9 says, "For God is my witness, whom I serve (worship) with my spirit in the Gospel of His Son" (KJV). "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit," (Phlp 3:3) (KJV). In both the references above, the word is *latreuo* and reflects the usual inward dimension. In Romans 12:1 Paul used the same word in noun form to express a strong

²⁵ This refers to serve with the implication of more formal or regular service. This servanthood is not for the period of time, but it is for life. This implies that we must serve God to eternity and our fellow human beings to eternity (Louw & Nida 1993:461).

outward dimension: “I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship (service)” (NRSV).

Paul used the same analogy of sacrifice in illustrating not simply the outward dimension of worship but the missional dimension. He used the term *leitourgos*, from which we get our word *liturgy*. For example, in Romans 15:16, it is translated “minister,” against the background of the Septuagint’s use of the one who ministers or administers the public offering. Paul said, “To be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the Gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit” (RSV). Paul pressed the analogy on all points: one who offers sacrifice, in the priestly service, so that the offering ... may be acceptable” (DuBose 1983:111). Paul was not speaking of Christians offering themselves as a living sacrifice as an act of worship, but he was speaking of offering the Gentiles as an act of worship. Paul’s special ministry was a mission to the Gentiles (Ac 9:15; 26:17; 28:28). In the above passage he spoke of bringing the offering of Gentile converts to God as an act of worship. In other words, he understood his mission of evangelism in liturgical terms as a Minister of God. Here the ideas of mission and worship are not only antithetical but they relate integrally to each other. They are also integral to the ideas of evangelism and service in this context. Among other significant uses of *leitourgeo* is the reference in Acts 13. It was to a church in worship that the Holy Spirit spoke to send His servants on mission. The prototype of the corporate was sending - the church sent forth her missionaries under the corporate Spirit’s impetus - grew out of a church strong in worship. Worship is the liturgy of the apostolate.

From the beginning, worship has been linked with mission. The Passover grew out of the mission of God which delivered His people from Egyptian bondage. In the

significant recital hymns of the Old Testament, the people celebrated God's mission of deliverance (Ps 105:26-28) (DuBose 1983:109).

A new way of expressing the old principle or goal of mission indicated by Gisbertus Voetius, a Dutch theologian is the *glorificatio Dei* (Kritzinger et al 1994:1). This implies that mission is the enactment of our worship. We praise God; we offer our sacrifices by doing mission. According to du Preez in his unpublished paper, "Mission dimensions in the divine service", there is an indissoluble link between worship and mission (DuPreez 1997:1). The one is not the other: worship to mission and mission to worship (cf Webster 1992:73-75). Christians may go a step further and say: though worship is not itself mission, there are unmistakable dimensions of mission in true worship. And though mission is not itself worship, there are unmistakable dimensions of worship in true mission. These statements rest on biblical support. It is this: the Triune God of the Scriptures, who is to be worshipped, is a missionary God: the Father sends the Son into the world, the Father and the Son both send their Holy Spirit into the world, in order to create a people for the Father, a body for the Son, a community of saints for the Spirit (see Jn 3:16, 16:7-13). Through this people, this Body, this community, which is His church, the Triune God wishes His good tidings of salvation to be proclaimed to the whole world (cf Ac 1:8; 1 Pt 2:9-10). Davies (1966:10-11) is of the opinion that:

In the apostolic writings, the life and work of Christ are spoken of in terms both of mission and of worship. In John 12:49 we read, 'the Father which sent me, He hath given me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak', while in John 6:51 cultic language is employed: 'I am the living bread which came down out of heaven ... and the bread which I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world'. In the same chapter at verse 57 both mission and cult appear together: 'As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father; so he that eateth



me, he also shall live because of me'. Similarly the author of Ephesians describes Christ as one who 'gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odour for a sweet smell' (Eph 5:2), and to the author of Hebrews Christ is 'Apostle and High Priest' (3:1), His ministry thus being capable of being described as both mission and worship, which refer to a single totality.

When the researcher read the Bible he found that the New Testament emphasis upon the unity of worship and mission rests however upon a more solid basis than a collection of separate texts; it stems from its understanding of the Lordship of Christ, through whom God exercises His sovereignty, and from its perception that through Christ the wall of partition between the sacred and the profane has been broken down. Once Christians have recognized that in the New Testament Jesus Christ is the risen Lord, they are ready to recognise that the life of His people will stand constantly under His Lordship. This is true for the entire Christian life. Christians do not find life split into one area, of worship, where Christ is honoured, and another area in which man is more independent. If the Christians are to present the New Testament position, they can make no essential distinction between worship and daily life, and they may add, between worship and mission, since the latter takes place in daily life in the world. Life is not split up, and so there are not two realms or spheres, one over which God is sovereign and one from which His presence and activity are banished, one the sphere of worship and the other of mission.

According to Davies (1966:13), the contemporary disunity of worship and mission is in part the product of the dominance in Christian thinking of this concept of two distinct realms. One cannot term this error otherwise, has been very clearly expounded by

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who is therefore worthy of quoting at length on this issue. He argues that one of the main conceptions that has determined Christian thought is that:

Of a juxtaposition and conflict of two spheres, the one divine, holy, supernatural and Christian, and the other worldly, profane, natural and unchristian ... Reality as a whole now falls into two parts ... The cause of Christ becomes a partial and provincial matter within the limits of reality which is in Christ. It follows that these realities are acceptable by some way of their own, and otherwise than through Christ. However great the importance which is attached to the reality in Christ, is still always remains a partial reality amid other realities. The division of the local reality into a sacred and profane sphere, a Christian and a secular one, creates the possibility of existence in a single one of these spheres, a spiritual existence which has no part in secular existence, and a secular existence which can claim autonomy for itself and can exercise this right of autonomy in its dealing with the spiritual sphere.... So long as Christ and the world are conceived as two opposing and mutually repellent spheres. He seeks Christ without the world, or he seeks the world without Christ. In either case he is deceiving himself...There are not two realities, but only one reality, and that is the reality of God, which has become manifest in Christ in the reality of the world. The reality of Christ comprises the reality of the world within itself.... One is denying the revelation of God in Jesus Christ if one tries to be 'Christian' without seeing and recognizing the world in Christ. There are, therefore, not two spheres, but only one sphere of the realization of Christ, in which the reality of God and the reality of the world are united (Davies 1966:13-14).

In thus refusing to separate the sacred and the profane, assigning the one to worship and the other to mission, Dietrich Bonhoeffer is true to the New Testament, which in this particular case is to be contrasted with the Old. In the Old Testament the common or profane is that which does not pertain to God; it is thus to be avoided as a hindrance or impediment to man's approach to God. In the New Testament, because of God's approach to man in Christ, the situation is entirely different. "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common" (Ac 10:15) (KJV), Peter is informed. This act of cleansing has been affected once and for all through Jesus who 'made purification of sins' (Hb 1:3). The word 'purification' literary means 'cleansing'.

4.4.2 The worship of an urban church to God

This dimension deals mainly with the public service that church members render to God especially through worship. They can render their services directly to God (Ac 13:2) or indirectly to God by serving their fellow human beings (2 Cor 9:12) within and outside their areas. Urban church must see to it that she has regular weekly worship services, regular prayer meetings, Sunday School as well as women's and youth organisations (Pretorius et al 1987:154). Christians must invite those who are not yet Christians to attend their worshipping service.

For example, there are many occasions of public worship at the Reformed Church Tshiawelo. They developed the so-called "groups fellowship services". There is a "women's fellowship services, men's fellowship services, youth fellowship services, and Sunday School fellowship services". They have these fellowships not to be patronising; they have them gladly, because the greatness of God's love leaves them no other option (cf Kritzinger et al 1994:38).

4.5 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE FIVE DIMENSIONS OF MISSION

One of the great discoveries of the 20th century is the holistic definition of mission. Mission should not be defined partially; leaving some of its dimensions outside, but all dimensions of mission should be mentioned or incorporated in its definition. All the dimensions of mission are important, no one is useless, and they are all related.

4.5.1 The relationship between *kerygma*, *diakonia* and *koinonia*

4.5.1.1 Kritzinger's view

According to Kritzinger (1988:35), the relationship between the dimensions of mission can be illustrated by a pair of scissors:

Sometimes the word (*kerygma*) and deed (*diakonia*) are played off against each other as if there can be an either or choice. But they cannot function separately from the other – the two blades of the scissors need each other. As a matter of fact, neither can they function without fastened to each other by the pin, namely the fellowship (*koinonia*). In no way can God's mission of Word and deed be fulfilled without the generating power of fellowship between man and God and man and man.

4.5.1.2 Kritzinger, Meiring and Saayman's view

If Christians regard mission as a ministry to reveal the Kingdom of God across the length and breadth of the earth, they are liberated from the pseudo dilemmas. It is not a matter of either ... or, but of both three of them, *kerygma*, *diakonia* and *koinonia*. Kritzinger et al are of the opinion that:

The full and glorious Gospel message is to be proclaimed to all men in every sphere of life. *Kerygma* is important, for the Gospel must be proclaimed, but *diaconate* is equally essential, for the Gospel must be demonstrated. The third channel of proclamation is *koinonia*. For the communion of the saints, the existence of the church is in itself proclamation (Kritzinger et al 1984:39).

The mutual relationship between the above three dimensions, make it impossible to use one dimension instead of using them all. They are indissolubly bound together, if we lose one of them, we lose the other two.

4.5.2 The relationship between *koinonia*, *diakonia*, *kerygma* and *martyria*

According to Van Engen (1993:91), the church's *koinonia* as a fellowship of love is also the foundation for *diakonia*, *kerygma*, and *martyria*. But the absence of *diakonia*, *kerygma* or *martyria* may mean that the Church has turned inward upon herself to such an extent that there is no longer the kind of *koinonia* of which Jesus spoke.

4.5.3 The relationship between *leitourgia*, *kerygma*, *diakonia* and *koinonia*

The word *leitourgia* is the stem of witnessing Christ by the Church to the world. It is regarded as the stem because its branches are *kerygma*, *diakonia* and *koinonia*. Even though these branches of *leitourgia* are different, the church must know that *word*, *service* and *fellowship* are not three separate missionary activities, but are three colours cast in spectrum by a single prism (*leitourgia*) (Mutavhatsindi 1996:26).

4.6 CONCLUSION

From this chapter, the researcher managed to evaluate the work of mission, and develop a comprehensive definition of mission that should be used by the urban church in her own mission. It was quite clear that God is the subject of Mission. The church as an instrument of God in His mission to the world should be involved in the mission of God (*missio Dei*) with full force to obey God's commission. The church is the answer to all the physical, social, economical, and spiritual needs of the people. The next chapter focuses on the way the Reformed Church Tshiawelo is doing her mission in an urban setting.



CHAPTER 5

MISSION WORK OF THE REFORMED CHURCH TSHIAWELO IN AN URBAN SETTING

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In order to gather the relevant data concerning the mission work of the Reformed church Tshiawelo in an urban setting, the questionnaires were designed and handed to the church leaders and also to the members of this congregation (see appendix A and B), and they positively responded to those questionnaires. Besides the data collected from the questionnaires handed to the leaders and to the church members, the researcher was a participant observer in many occasions held by the Reformed Church Tshiawelo. For example, he attended many church leadership conferences, mission seminars and mission conferences, congregational conferences, congregational worship services and also anniversaries. He preached several times at some of the fellowship centers at Sunday worship services and also on Wednesdays' small groups' services of this congregation. The data collected from the questionnaires and also from what the researcher observed as a participant observer in many church services of this church were used in this chapter.

5.2 REFORMED CHURCH TSHIAWELO ²⁶

This church is found in Gauteng Province, and she is situated in Soweto Township. She was established in 1968 (*Die Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid Afrika*, 2005:410). This

²⁶ In this thesis, the Reformed Church Tshiawelo sometimes is abbreviated as **RCT**.

church falls within the REFORMED CHURCHES IN SOUTH AFRICA²⁷ - RCSA (DIE GEREFORMEERDE KERKE IN SUID AFRIKA abbreviated as GKSA). She is one of the Churches that previously constituted the Synod Midlands²⁸, and formed part of the Classis Moroka²⁹. In 2005 the Reformed Church Tshiawelo took a decision of being a member of the Synod Soutpansberg³⁰, and she wrote a letter to the Classis Moroka to request such a change. The Classis Moroka on its meeting held at Diepkloof during December 2005 (Rabali 2006: 9), decided to discuss the matter at its next assembly, and when it did so at its Kagiso assembly on 27th May 2006, granted permission to the Reformed Church Tshiawelo to apply for a membership at the Soutpansberg Synod as it was indicated in the letter written to the Classis Moroka by the Reformed Church Tshiawelo. The Reformed Church Tshiawelo was accepted as a member of the Synod Soutpansberg in the meeting of the Synod Soutpansberg held at Iyani Bible and Training Institute in December 2006. This brought a great joy to the Synod Soutpansberg as this process was long being waited by this Synod to occur. The important question that people who do not know the mutual relationship between the two (**RCT** and **SS**) can ask is, “why has the acceptance of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo by the Synod Soutpansberg to be one of its members, brought great joy to all the churches that constitute this Synod?” The question is relevant to those who do not know the great relationship between churches that constitute the Synod Soutpansberg and the

²⁷ There are three National Synods within THE REFORMED CHURCHES IN SOUTH AFRICA, i.e. Synod Midlands, Synod Potchefstroom and Synod Soutpansberg.

²⁸ Synod Midlands is composed of eight classis, i.e. Classis Moroka, Classis Tshwane, Classis Tlokwe, Classis Ditsobotla, Classis Itheke, Classis Mangaung, Classis Kwa Thema and Classis Monti (cf *Die Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid Afrika* 2005:4; 409-436).

²⁹ The churches that form the Classis Moroka were as follows: Diepkloof, Dobsonville, Dube, Jabavu, Kagiso, Meadowlands, Mohlakeng, Muldersdrift, Tarlton and Tshiawelo.

³⁰ Soutpansberg Synod (**SS**) is formed by the following congregations: De Hoop, Fundudzi, Hosiyata, Malamulele, Mutale, Niani, Nzhelele, Seshego, Tshitandani and Tshiawelo (Since December 2006).

Reformed Church Tshiawelo. But to those who know much about the great impact of the reciprocal relationship between the Synod Soutpansberg and the Reformed Church Tshiawelo, the above question is irrelevant. The relationship between the two (SS and RCT) was built on the following two reciprocal aspects:

First aspect, the Synod Soutpansberg entered into partnership with the Reformed Church Tshiawelo on urban mission (urban church planting) with the special focus on the Gauteng Province. *Second aspect*, the Synod Soutpansberg also entered into partnership with the Reformed Church Tshiawelo on the theological training of the students at Heidelberg Theological Seminary. The above factors strengthened and enriched the mutual relationship between the churches that constitutes the Synod Soutpansberg and the Reformed Church Tshiawelo in such a way that all students from those churches that constitutes the Synod Soutpansberg who migrated in great numbers to the Gauteng Province to further their studies in institutions that are located in Gauteng Province, were encouraged to associate themselves with the Reformed Church Tshiawelo. And also those members who migrated to Gauteng Province to look for jobs were encouraged to associate themselves with the Reformed Church Tshiawelo. Even today, those church members from those churches who are presently migrating to Gauteng Province are being encouraged to associate themselves with the Reformed Church Tshiawelo (RCT). The reality is that the Reformed Church Tshiawelo is formed by almost 75% or more of members who are from the churches that constitute the Synod Soutpansberg. The researcher was a participant observer of this reality; he observed this reality in many congregational gatherings and congregational worshipping services of this congregation. Even the Church Council members of this congregation is composed of almost 80% or more members from the churches that constitute the Synod Soutpansberg, who came to Gauteng Province to study at institutions in this province, and also those who came to work at this province. That is why when a researcher

explains the urban mission of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo, is always forced to speak about the contribution and co-operation of the Synod Soutpansberg to the mission work of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo. A clear explication of this contribution and co-operation of the churches that constitute the Synod Soutpansberg for urban mission of the RCT is given in this chapter. This fact is clearly elucidated in the partnership between the two, the Reformed Church Tshiawelo and the Synod Soutpansberg, where the two vital areas of mutual partnership were expounded; namely, partnership on urban mission (urban church planting) and also partnership on theological training of Ministers at Heidelberg Theological Seminary.

5.2.1 The partnership between the RCT and the Synod Soutpansberg

Within world Christianity, 'partnership' expresses a relationship between churches based on trust, mutual recognition and reciprocal interchange. It rules out completely any notion of 'senior' and 'junior', 'parent' and 'child', or even 'older' and 'younger'. It is a term designed to show how different parts of the Church belong to one another and find their fulfillment through sharing a common life. It implies a relationship in which two or more bodies agree to share responsibility for one another, and in which each side meaningfully participates in planning the future of the other (Kirk 1999:184). Perhaps the nearest word in the New Testament to partnership is *koinonia*. Its most basic meaning is 'partaking together in' a group which has a common identity, goals and responsibilities (Kirk 1999:188). The two vital areas of partnership between the Reformed Church Tshiawelo and the Synod Soutpansberg had great impact on the urban mission of the church. In other words, they all contributed a lot to the flourishing of urban mission of this church.

5.2.1.1 The partnership on urban mission

According to J. Andrew Kirk, 'partnership in mission' belongs to the essence of the church: partnership is not so much what the Church does as what it is. Churches (theologically) belong to one another, for God has called each 'into the fellowship (*koinonia*) of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord' (1 Cor 1:9) (Kirk 1999:187). In March 1998 the Church Councils of the Churches that constitute the Synod Soutpansberg together with the Church Council of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo held a great leadership conference at Tshipise. The conference was well attended by almost all Church Council members of "all congregations that form the Synod Soutpansberg"³¹ and also by Church Council members of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo. The conference was led by Professor T.C. Rabali, and the main theme of the conference was: "*Tshivhumbeo tshashu sa Kereke ri tshi pfuka nwaha wa 2000*" which means "*Our form as a church when we pass the year 2000*". This conference was a wake up call for the congregations to prepare for the year 2000 and beyond. The matter of urban church planting was also indicated as the agent and a serious call for the church (Rabali 1998:16). During that conference, Church Council members started vigorously to understand and see the necessity of urban church planting especially in the Gauteng Province. This was also motivated by the fact that there was a great number of youth who were migrating to the Gauteng Province in order to study at the universities, technikons, technical, colleges, and other institutions located in the Gauteng Province. During that time most of the youth were migrating to Gauteng, to cities like Pretoria and Johannesburg for studies. Besides youth, there were also other men and women who were also migrating to big cities in the Gauteng Province for work. This played an

³¹ The leadership conference was attended by Church Council members from the following Reformed congregations: De Hoop, Hosiayata, Malamulele, Mutale, Niani, Soutpansberg, Nzhelele, Tshitandani, and also from the Reformed Church Tshiawelo.

important role of seeing urban mission as an urgent and serious work to be done. After the conference, Professor T.C. Rabali was requested by many people to write a booklet about the teachings he delivered during the Church Councils' conference he led at Tshipise. He wrote a booklet titled the theme of that conference: *Tshivhumbeo tshashu sa Kereke ri tshi pfuka nwaha wa 2000*. Many church leaders together with the church members of the churches that constituted the Synod Soutpansberg together with church leaders and church members of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo bought that booklet, and it opened their minds to see the necessity and urgency of urban mission in the Gauteng Province. This booklet is the basis of the mission that has been carried out in urban areas by the Reformed Church Tshiawelo. This booklet is still recommended by Professor T.C. Rabali as the basis for urban mission which is being carried out by the RCT in cooperation with the churches of the Synod Soutpansberg; and in most of his written mission books, he has quoted this booklet as the basis of this mission.

During the same year (1998) of the Church Councils' conference held at Tshipise, the Synod Soutpansberg at its meeting held at Iyani Bible and Training Institute took a decision of urban church planting, especially in the Gauteng Province. In most of the Synod Soutpansberg meetings, the matter of urban mission is highlighted as one of the most important issues. According to the Acts of the Synod Soutpansberg of the Reformed Churches in South Africa³² (RCSASSA 2000:8), the mandate number two of the Mission Deputies of the Synod Soutpansberg was to continue looking for a place where urban mission should be carried out in South Africa. They were mandated to find a strategy in which they can utilize mission in the Gauteng Province. The Mission Deputies in their report to the Synod held in December 2000 at Iyani Bible and Training

³² In this chapter the Acts of the Synod Soutpansberg of the Reformed Churches in South Africa will be abbreviated as "RCSASSA".

Institute (Sibasa) indicated that they have contacted Professor T.C. Rabali concerning the mission work in Tshiawelo, Pretoria and Johannesburg. Professor T.C. Rabali indicated that those Churches are growing tremendously. He recommended that what the Mission Deputies of mission have to do was to see that those churches have fulltime Ministers (RCSASSA 2000:9).

5.2.1.1.1 The rebuilding of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo

Mission is also concerned with the founding of new church communities. That is the way Paul saw mission and is the way the Church has functioned throughout ages (Müller 1987:34). This was how the Reformed Church Tshiawelo comprehended mission. As it is indicated above that the Reformed Church Tshiawelo was established in 1968 (*Die Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika* 2005:410), but she was a local church without any outposts before 1999. Her first outpost or fellowship center was established outside the township of Soweto in 1999; this was done in co-operation with the churches that constitute the Synod Soutpansberg (Rabali 2006:2). This was after rebuilding the church herself. The Reformed church Tshiawelo was a local church without fellowship centres for a long time. But now she is one of the churches that are flourishing well. According to the statistics of this church, in 1995 she had less than 30 members, but presently she has more than 1000 church members (see Appendix F). She has many new fellowship centers (zwitasana). Presently, the Reformed Church Tshiawelo consists of wards in Soweto townships (Tshiawelo, Dube, Senaoane and Protea Glen) and wards in the city centers (Johannesburg and Pretoria)³³, and other wards in Midrand suburb, Katlehong

³³ The ward in Johannesburg is in Braamfontein and in Wits University Campus, while the two wards in Pretoria are in Sunnyside.

township, Medunsa campus, Pretoria Technikon campus, Vaal Triangle campus, Meadowlands, Muldersdrift and Middelburg in Mpumalanga.

The way this church is growing and flourishing, one can agree 100% with the researcher that there is something great done by this church under the leadership of Professor T.C. Rabali who started to work in this congregation in 1995 after the agreement between the Church Council of the Reformed Church Mutale and the Church Council of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo. Before Professor T.C. Rabali started to work in this congregation, there was no sign that this church will grow the way she is growing now. Professor T.C. Rabali is a man of great faith, vision, courage, ability, and so on. What he did was to work very hard in all spheres of this church. In 1999 the Reformed Church Tshiawelo was a congregation that was in a position to become instrumental in establishing new fellowship centres which were developed and planted as five daughter churches of RCT during her 40th anniversary which was celebrated on the 15-17th of August 2008. Anyone who knew this church (RCT) before 1995 would ask this crucial and burning question which the researcher asked the church leaders of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo in his questionnaire in order to gather information. "What did the Reformed Church Tshiawelo use or do to re-build the church to the extent that by 1999 she was in a position to become instrumental in establishing new fellowship centers (zwitasana) which are being developed to become local churches in August 2008?" All leaders who answered the above question mentioned their Minister as the pioneer, leader whom God used to have a vision of rebuilding this church, he had a vision about the future of the church and he also worked very hard to succeed. He developed clear and understandable goals to be reached within limited times, and he worked very hard to reach the reputable goals. 100% of the church leaders of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo indicated that there are many things done in the process of rebuilding this congregation under the leadership of their Minister, Professor T.C. Rabali. Some of the

things done by the church leaders and church members to bring this church to this stage are the following:

5.2.1.1.1.1 Sunday preaching

Preaching is the most important tool to change the hearts of people. Through preaching one can lead people to a spiritually bright future. This was in the case of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo. 96% of the church leaders who answered the question “What did the Reformed Church Tshiawelo use or do to re-build the church to the extent that by 1999 she was in a position to become instrumental in establishing new fellowship centers (zwitasana) which are now being developed to become local churches in August 2008?”, indicated that there was Sunday preaching (people who listened to the messages from 1995 to 1997) which invited many others to come to the church. They further indicated that their Minister is enthusiastic in preaching. He prepares his message in such a way that through his message, God touches the hearts of the people, and bring changes. This is what the preaching should do; it must change peoples’ hearts, lifestyle and also behavior. When Professor T.C. Rabali preaches the Word of God, one can feel that he is preaching what he knows and not his own message, but God’s message. His sermons are well organized, written and in an understandable language which everybody in the church understands. He takes preaching as a serious and important obligation to be faithfully done in the church. When he stood on the pulpit, he preached as a man who is given a last chance to preach, who will no longer get a chance to stand on the pulpit again. He gives himself a long time for preparation and also for preaching in church services. He knows that the power of changing the hearts, minds and behavior of people is by preaching. As a participant observer, the researcher observed this in many church services led by this Minister at Tshiawelo. The Minister of this congregation was the researcher’s principal and lecturer at the Heidelberg Theological Seminary from 2000 to

2004. If one wants to seriously hurt the mind of this Minister, it is by preaching a dull sermon. If you want to please him, prepare, write your sermon and faithfully devote yourself with your sincere heart to the deliverance of your sermon to the congregation, and also be a faithful, hard worker in church activities. All this indicates that preaching in this congregation is regarded with great importance and it has great impact in the flourishing of her mission.

If Christians read the Bible, they will find that preaching was also taken seriously by Jesus Christ, by the apostles, and also by the early Church. The Risen Lord said quite unequivocally to the disciples: “Proclaim the Good News to all creation” (Mk 16:15) (NIV). Peter and John testified before the Sanhedrin: “We cannot keep quiet. We must speak about what we have seen and heard” (Ac 4:20) (NCV). It was a matter of course for the newly converted Paul to preach “boldly and open in the name of Jesus” and to bear witness to Him (Ac 9:27). When Paul claimed the honorary title “apostle”, he understood himself as “herald” (praecox), that is, the official announcer of Good News. He is a servant of the Good News (Rm 15:16; Col 1:23). He calls himself “herald, apostle and teacher” of the Gospel (2 Tm 1:11) (Müller 1987:142). Anyone who has experienced the full power of the Christ-event should feel a compulsion to cry out this event just like the Apostle of the Gentiles; like Paul, Christians should feel the duty laid upon them: “Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel” (1 Cor 9:16).

5.2.1.1.1.2 House visitation

Churches should have a group of members committed to and involved in evangelistic visitation. These members will not only invite others to attend, they will try to lead lost persons to Christ, even before they can be persuaded to visit the church for the first time. These experienced members will be active in a regular visitation program of the

church and in specialized evangelistic programs, such as Evangelistic Explosion or Continuing Witness Training, but they may be more effective as agents of growth through their everyday activities. As witnessing Christ becomes a normal part of life, they will reach their friends, family members, co-workers, and acquaintances for Christ (Hadaway 1991:31). House visitation is the other thing that brought success in urban mission of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo. This is what Professor T.C. Rabali did with his Church Council members. The researcher still remembers the day he was discussing with one of the church leaders of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo. One day he was commenting to one of the church leaders of the RCT who has served in an Eldership office in this congregation for a long time. The researcher commented that he is very pleased to see the way the Reformed Church Tshiawelo is flourishing and growing. Because the researcher realized that the particular church Elder was one of the church leaders who have worked with Professor T.C. Rabali for a long time, he asked him, the following question, “How did you manage to rebuild the Reformed Church Tshiawelo to be what she is today?” He replied, “We managed this by engaging ourselves in house visitation. The coming of our Minister in 1995 to the Reformed Church Tshiawelo was a blessing to this church. He encouraged us to do house visitation during weekends and holidays. During the week, house visitations were conducted during the evening. I still remember during that time, the Reformed Church Tshiawelo was unable to pay him enough money for petrol as he was traveling time and again from Vanderbijlpark to Tshiawelo using his Nissan 1400 van “*bakkie*”. During that time he was using his own money for petrol. Because he is a man of vision, he tolerated those difficult circumstances. He always encouraged us by repeating his courageous words, especially when things are tough ‘*kha ri kondelele, zwidoluga*’ which means ‘*let us persevere, it will be fine*’. He also indicated the importance of house visitation in his book, “*Nga Vhudele na nga Mulayo*” which was published in 1993 by Sunsetview Publishers (cf Rabali 1993:16-28).



The leaders of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo in responding to the above question confirmed the importance of house visitation carried out by this church. They indicated that, they did a lot of house visits on Saturdays and holidays, in fact all holidays and most Saturdays were utilized in this way, reaching out to people by visiting homes and also following up on those who were attending Sunday services. The desire to reach others for Christ was vigorous among the members and nearly all church members, and was also mobilized and channeled into action, especially in the form of prospect visitation. Kirk C. Hadaway extended on what the Reformed Church Tshiawelo is doing concerning house visitation by saying that:

The concept of visitation should be expanded beyond showing up at someone's front door for an appointment or an unannounced visit. In fact, in an urban setting, meeting someone for lunch may be more appropriate than visiting them at home. Similarly, talking to homeless persons on a street corner or making a point to talk to an unchurched friend during a break at work, at the health club, at the grocery store, over coffee, or across the back fence can be, and should be, seen as prospect visitation. Prospect visitation is more difficult in some settings than in others, but in any setting, greater success results from visiting prospects who are already linked to the church or to church members in some way. Clearly, the best prospects are those who have already visited the church. If a church is not visiting these persons, it is literally begging to decline. Churches which have few visitors should start with those they do have and develop ways to attract others. Various forms of social ministry can all be used to draw visitors and develop a list of viable prospects. The names are wasted, however, if they are not followed up quickly (Hadaway 1991:24-25).

5.2.1.1.1.3 Targeting of various groups

The Reformed Church Tshiawelo targeted on various groups of people in cities. The first targeted group was the people who migrated from rural to urban areas, especially those who came from churches that constituted the Synod Soutpansberg. Amongst those people are those who came looking for jobs and also the students who came to study at the institutions that are found in the Gauteng Province. Even those church members from churches that constituted the Synod Soutpansberg who got jobs in the Gauteng province were also on target. Another very important thing done was to target the various groups in the church with more teaching and involvement in outreach visits. The other targeted group was the unbelievers; this was done especially during mission campaigns. This helped the Reformed Church Tshiawelo to prosper in her mission. This is an indication that she is engaged in mission work. According to Müller (1987:35), a church that is not missionary, that is, which does not reach beyond herself that does not transcend herself, is no real church.

5.2.1.1.1.4 Catechism classes

The church leaders of this congregation realized that for people to have faith, more knowledge of the Bible, and the Reformed doctrine, they must be instructed. 98% of the leaders who responded to the above question indicated that those people who came to this church for the first time, who did not profess their faith, were encouraged to attend the catechetical classes. The church leaders indicated that their membership class (catechetical classes) for those seeking membership was also more effective, they approached this with the purpose of turning such candidates into becoming more committed and active members. They were taught the Heidelberg Catechism and

Reformed doctrine. Those who were teaching the catechism classes were also instructed so that they can conduct classes well. After the examination of the catechism class members, they were baptised to become members of this congregation. This played an important role of building up the church through indoctrinated members.

5.2.1.1.1.5 Small groups services

The other thing that was utilized in order to rebuild the Reformed Church Tshiawelo was to use small groups' services. This was confirmed by 65% of the church members who indicated that their spiritual lives were developed by involving themselves in small groups' services organized by the church. They have cell groups in some of the wards, women services, men services, youth services. During the week, some of the fellowship centers had cell groups, where they rotate in the homes of church members. Women services, men services, youth services, and Sunday School services were conducted after Sunday morning services (Hadaway et al 1987:230). Their programmes include Bible Studies, singing, topic discussions, etc. They enjoyed this fellowship. 35% of the church members who completed the questionnaires indicated that in their fellowship centers small groups' services are inactive. This means that the members of those fellowship centers are missing fellowship in small groups. The church should activate small group services in those fellowship centers that have become inactive, as these services are essential for the growth of those fellowship centers, and the growth of the entire congregation. This is why many missiologist writers encourage fellowship of Christians to worship in small group services as it is essential for church growth.

A great church is one which has a good fellowship among its members. It gives a living demonstration that the essential nature of a church is a fellowship in Christ. This kind of fellowship is essential for any church to



experience a degree of success. With this fellowship almost any obstacle can be overcome. Without this fellowship the church is severely handicapped, if not doomed (Young 1978:38).

Small groups in the community of the church present a good place to begin and to continue the process of training. In the home meetings of the church the opportunity for service becomes tangible. It is in the small group that members become involved with the needs of the community as people share their concerns (Conn and Ortiz 2001:466). The fellowship of church members is based on their fellowship with Christ. Just as there is a bond of love between the individual believer and his Lord, so there is also a bond of love that unites believer with believer. A Christian's experience of salvation is essentially a relationship of love which expresses itself vertically, between the believer and Christ, and horizontally, between the believer and his fellow believers (Young 1978:38). This is what members of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo are experiencing.

The good fellowship maintained in a church is a constant witness in the community. Visitors in the church, as well as those who may observe it somewhat more remotely, are impressed by the demonstration of mutual love and the spirit that they see among the church members. Conversely, a church which does not have this spirit of fellowship, particularly one that is marked by periods of tension and feuding, may have an exceedingly difficult time in enlisting others into her membership (Young 1978:39).

5.2.1.1.2 Equipping and mobilizing Christians for mission

Luke 9:1-17 is a remarkable passage. Jesus prepares His disciples to send them out for service. He takes them through three stages: a plunge into the community, interrupted, and learning through doing. These three stages are essential for the Christians to

prepare themselves for true leadership for transformation (Bruwer 2001:91). To be true to her calling the congregation of Tshiawelo realized that the members of the church needed to be equipped and trained for the task of urban church planting. This was done through leadership training, mission seminars and conferences, mission campaigns and anniversaries.

5.2.1.1.2.1 Leadership training

Equipping the laity for urban ministry begins with the vision of the Minister and the leadership. The leadership of the church must have a commitment to mobilize the church for worship, the Word and mission to the world. Neil Braun is of the opinion that if the churches are to move into an era of church multiplication based primarily upon evangelism, the training of the laity must be assigned as a high priority (Braun 1971:140). It is the church's leadership which must cultivate the sense that laity mobilization is a high priority. John Mott is of the opinion that:

The secret of enabling the home church to press her advantage in the non-Christian world is one of leadership. The people do not go beyond their leaders in knowledge and zeal, nor surpass them in consecration and sacrifice. The Christian Pastor, Minister, Rector – whatever may be denominated – holds the divinely appointed office for inspiring and guiding the thought and activities of the church. By virtue of his position, he can be a mighty force in the world's evangelization (Mott 1998:21).

Leadership that follows the instructions of the Bible brings the church to maturity and to service. In the city, as in other places, a vision for the renewal is needed. In the case of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo, the Minister of this congregation who is a visionary

leader, when he started to work at Tshiawelo, immediately equipped and motivated leaders for mission work. Since that time up to this date, there are many conferences and workshops that are being conducted at this congregation. This was confirmed by 91% of the church leaders who completed the questionnaire. They indicated that the most important aspect of their training was not only theoretical teachings, but was to make sure that they are taken along when mission house visits are undertaken. In other words they are trained not primarily by being lectured upon alone, but also by being involved in doing the work (showing them how to do this as well as allowing them to do the work) (cf Mutavhatsindi 2000:37). They indicated that they also have major urban mission conferences in which they give church leaders and church members the vision and the theoretical or biblical basis of evangelism for urban church planting. They are also provided with some notes that they can read. What Professor T.C. Rabali is doing is mentoring, and this is very important in equipping people for mission so that they can use the spiritual gifts which God gave them.

It is wise to mentor people in the use of their particular gifts as part of the training component. Mentoring assists the growth of the individual but also provides accountability. Churches should keep in mind that there are areas of ministry in which all Christians should be involved, such as giving, teaching and evangelism, and that training should also provide for those areas of service (Conn and Ortiz 2001:465).

The Minister of this congregation usually writes every sermon or teaching he preaches. He also wrote books specially for equipping leaders. Some of the books are, *Nga vhudele na nga Mulayo* (Rabali 1993), *Khuvhangano ya Nyambedzano dza vhafunzi* (Rabali 2005). The purpose of writing those books is for equipping the leaders and church members for mission work.

5.2.1.1.2.2 Mission conferences and seminars

One of the mandates given to the Mission Deputies of the Synod Soutpansberg by the Synod was to organize urban mission workshops focused on Gauteng Province in co-operation with the Church Council of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo (RCSASSA 2005:20). This mandate is being regularly carried out by deputies of mission together with the Reformed Church Tshiawelo. This was clearly confirmed by 98% of the church leaders responding to the question which appeared in the questionnaire which says, “How many urban mission conferences or seminars were conducted by Reformed Church Tshiawelo? Name the *venues, dates, and objectives* of those conferences or seminars”. In answering the above questions, they indicated that, they regularly have mission conferences and workshops. They have basically not less than three mission conferences every year. The primary purposes of such mission conferences are to develop their mission vision, to motivate members for mission as well as to share experiences on how to do mission work especially in urban areas. Over and above these regular local church mission conferences, they also have had major urban mission conferences in which they invited the churches from the Soutpansberg area as their partners in mission work. They held the following major urban mission conferences: in 2000 (at Tshiawelo); in 2003 (at Tshiawelo); in 2005 (at Johannesburg); and in 2007 (at Pretoria). The primary aims of these four major urban mission conferences have been to clarify their church vision, plans, and objectives with their urban mission programme; also to advance and motivate a passion for urban mission; to have leaders and members understand the strategic value of their urban mission; also to make sure that they strengthen their partnership with the Soutpansberg churches with respect to urban church planting.

Professor T.C. Rabali had many teachings delivered on urban mission to the Reformed Church Tshiawelo and also to churches that constitute Soutpansberg Synod. Some of his teachings are included in his book on mission, *Vhurumiwa na Doroboni-vho!*, which was published in 2005 by Plantinum Press in Vanderbijlpark. He wrote this book after many people requested him to write a book after a mission conference which was held at Soweto in 2000 (Tshiawelo). The book includes the three urban mission teachings delivered to the leaders and other members of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo; and to the church members constituting the Soutpansberg churches in 2000, 2003 and 2005 (see Rabali 2005).

5.2.1.1.2.3 Mission campaigns

Both the church members and church leaders emphasized that mission campaigns played an important role in equipping and motivating church members to involve themselves in urban mission. 90% of the church members and 94% of church leaders indicated that they also utilized mission campaigns in which they were strengthened by those Christians sent to assist them from the Reformed Churches in the Soutpansberg area (for example, the Reformed Church Mutale started doing this in December 1995 till today). They encourage the churches from Soutpansberg area to be responsible for sending their church members to assist during the mission campaigns of this congregation, and they in turn fund the transport fee for all church members from the Soutpansberg churches when they return back to Limpopo after the mission campaigns. This strengthens and also broadens both the partnership and the relationship between the Reformed Church Tshiawelo and churches that constitute the Synod Soutpansberg.

5.2.1.1.2.4 Anniversaries

The Reformed Church Tshiawelo usually has anniversaries as a thanksgiving to God who helped her to achieve some specific goals. There are many anniversaries held by this congregation. In the questionnaire distributed to the church leaders of this church, the researcher asked them to explain all the anniversaries held by the Reformed Church Tshiawelo (*indicating the dates, venues, and purposes or objectives of those anniversaries*). 98% of the church leaders indicated that this congregation had four celebrated anniversaries. Their *first anniversary* was held at Tshiawelo in 1998, it was 30 years anniversary. This helped the church to understand that she is no longer a child and that therefore she should reject all forms of paternalistic tendencies. They used that major celebration to lead the church to a commitment with respect to their status as a church that will be fully accountable to God for what God expects His church to do; this was an important event because they used it also to emphasize that it will not do to keep on blaming the past (such as apartheid) as an excuse for failing to be what God expects them to be. Their *second anniversary* was held in Pretoria in 2004, they were celebrating the five year anniversary of their fellowship center in Pretoria. This was used primarily not only to thank God but to assess what had been done and what needed to still be done around urban church planting. Their *third anniversary* was held in Dube in 2005. Basically to highlight the need for rebuilding churches that died out (rebuilding ruins). The *fourth anniversary* was held in Johannesburg in 2005, they were celebrating the Johannesburg fellowship center's five years existence.

Besides the four anniversaries indicated by the church leaders in answering the questionnaires, there is a *fifth anniversary* which was held on the 15-17th of August 2008. It was the celebration of the 40 year anniversary of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo. On the 16th of August 2008, five daughter churches were planted by the

Reformed Church Tshiawelo: *Reformed Church Vaal, Reformed Church Pretoria, Reformed Church Johannesburg, Reformed Church Protea Glen, and Reformed Church Midrand*. It was done with the aim of also establishing a Classis, and it was established the same day as Classis Gauteng of the Synod Soutpansberg. According to the Church Order of the Reformed Churches (Church Order of Dordrecht), the Church Councils of the new planted local churches will send (delegates) representatives to assemble at the Classis. The idea is that these new local churches together through mission deputies of the Classis will facilitate the planting of more churches leading to more Classes in the future. If all goes well, it is hoped that in 10 years to come (say around 2018) they should be having churches organized in several Classis so that there may be a need for a regional Synod if the churches are to be related to each other properly to assist and expand together effectively.

5.2.1.2 The partnership on the theological training of Ministers

According to Kritzinger et al (1984:6), partnership between churches in theological training of students is very essential especially the theological seminary which originated as a result of the missionary work of the church. Kirk (1999:11) is of the opinion that there can be no theology without mission – or, to put it another way, no theology which is not missionary. This is partly a matter of observation in that theology is, by its nature, about fundamental concerns which affect life at all levels. People engaged in theological reflection invariably take up positions on a whole host of important matters, even if they do so from vastly different stances, with conflicting results and sometimes without being aware of what they are doing. Theology, even when it claims to be nonpartisan, is in reality thoroughly committed, as has so often been pointed out in recent years. In countless respects, it is in the business of persuading others to believe and act in specific ways. The missionary nature of

theology is unavoidable. This is also on the case of mission work of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo, the Heidelberg Theological Seminary has an impact on the mission of this congregation. Development in the congregation of the Reformed Tshiawelo and in the Soutpansberg Synod has impacted on one or another during the years. In order to understand this development and the mutual partnership of the two, the Reformed Church Tshiawelo and Synod Soutpansberg, on the theological training of Ministers, a short historical background of the Heidelberg Theological Seminary is given.

5.2.1.2.1 The establishment of the Heidelberg Theological Seminary

The Synod Soutpansberg was established in 1961 as a Synod for churches composed mainly of Venda and Shangaan speaking people. This Synod had close relationship with Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid Afrika (Synod Potchefstroom). The training of Ministers of the Gospel who were to serve in the churches of the Synod Soutpansberg was at first done by the Afrikaans churches, which make up the Synod Potchefstroom. The Afrikaans churches involved went to great lengths to ensure that the Black churches they have helped to plant would have Ministers. The theological school they established for the Black churches was at first located at Dube (Soweto) but was later re-located to Hammanskraal. It seems those who were training the Ministers for the Black churches were themselves not part of the Black churches and had a limited knowledge and understanding of the context within which the churches they were training Ministers for operated. The training was also done without the real participation of the churches in the Soutpansberg. It was of course; at first, not possible to meaningfully involve the Black churches in the training of their Ministers as these churches were still small and young. The non-participation of the Black churches was later dealt with by allowing the Black churches to appoint advisory curators. The Synod Soutpansberg was not satisfied with this and kept on striving for meaningful

participation in theological training at Hammanskraal. This was not however possible and this state of affairs resulted in the training not being experienced as being effective enough to answer the ministerial needs of the churches. Many white missionaries belonging to the white churches, which make up the Synod Potchefstroom, because of their knowledge of the conditions within Black communities were also critical about the training of Ministers as it existed and operated during the 1970s through to the 1980s. The Synod Soutpansberg finally decided to end the paternalism involved in theological training when it established its own theological school in 1990 at Iyani Bible and Training Institute (Sibasa). The new institution, the Heidelberg Theological Seminary, made it possible for the churches within the Synod Soutpansberg to have a training programme that was more sensitive to the needs of the churches, and which was controlled by the churches themselves (cf RCSASSA 2000:138-139). It started with 3 students. The researcher is one of those first three students of the Heidelberg Theological Seminary. The Ministers from the congregations that constitute the Synod Soutpansberg were giving lectures to the students. The Presbyterian churches in Australia that have a partnership with Synod Soutpansberg sent Rev Ken Thomas Martin to help in lecturing the students at Heidelberg Theological Seminary. He came with his wife (Gill), three sons (Luke, Paul and Andrew), and one daughter (Rachel). Rev Ken Thomas Martin was a Minister who was assisting at the Reformed Church De-Hoop by delivering spiritual services. During that time, the congregations gave strong support financially and also spiritually to the theological seminary. The students admitted at the Heidelberg Theological Seminary from 1990 until 1994 were ten.

5.2.1.2.2 The merging of three Theological Seminaries

In 1994, the Potchefstroom Synod approached Synod Soutpansberg to phase out its seminary, and merge with Potchefstroom Theological Seminary. The other theological

seminary that was phased out to merge with the other two theological seminaries was Hammanskraal Theological Seminary. The Synod Soutpansberg interpreted that request as indicative of a change of heart on the part of Potchefstroom. It was then hoped that the previous paternalism would not be continued in theological training and that the one theological school in Potchefstroom would not only belong to all the churches involved but that it would be shaped to ensure that there would be an emergence of a more relevant ministry with respect of the needs of all the communities in South Africa (RCSASSA 2000:139).

In 1994 there was an agreement between three theological seminaries (Potchefstroom Theological Seminary, Hammanskraal Theological Seminary and Heidelberg Theological Seminary), that they should merge. Early in 1995, the deputies for Theological training of the Synod Soutpansberg transferred the students of the Heidelberg Theological Seminary to Potchefstroom. In Potchefstroom, those students from Heidelberg Theological Seminary began studying together with those who had been at Hammanskraal and Potchefstroom. The two members of the board of curators from the Synod Soutpansberg who were responsible for overseeing the studies and lives of the brothers involved at the Heidelberg continued to pray that they be given grace to persevere as the move to Potchefstroom also entailed many challenges and adjustments. Many of the church Ministers, church members from the Synod Soutpansberg saw this development as indicative of better things to come in the partnership of all the segments making up the Reformed Churches in South Africa. It was seen as a step that would hasten more manifestations of their unity as churches of the same faith. Many Christians from the Synod Soutpansberg expected that the churches were to see growth in the numbers of those preparing to become Ministers within all their churches at the one seminary in Potchefstroom. The churches making up the Synod Soutpansberg were therefore encouraged to view the Potchefstroom

Theological Seminary as theirs and accordingly to support it with their prayers and financial sacrifices. Indeed, the merging of the three theological seminaries made many of the Christians from the Synod Soutpansberg together with their Ministers more positive even with respect to the search for better arrangements regarding the enhancement and manifestation of their churches' oneness through a restructuring or reorganization of the church assemblies. People were very positive and hopeful that everything will be possible (RCSASSA 2000:115). Some of the students from the Soutpansberg Synod who were studying at Potchefstroom Theological Seminary were helping at the Reformed Church Tshiawelo during weekends and holidays. They were doing home visits and preaching on Sunday worship services. They were also involved in the mission of the church. Those students played an important role in the up building of the RCT. The RCT was financing the trips of those theological students from Potchestoom to Tshiawelo (Soweto). Some of them, after they completed their studies, were called to be Ministers of this congregation.

5.2.1.2.3 The reestablishment of the Heidelberg Theological Seminary

The Church Council of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo took a decision in 1998 of entering into partnership on theological training with the Synod Soutpansberg. The Synod Soutpansberg also took a decision to work in partnership with the Church Council of Tshiawelo in theological training (RCSASSA 2002:49). According to Carl S. Dudley, the partnership of congregations may be a way to a fruitful future (Dudley 1987:173).

The Synod Soutpansberg experienced no change even after seven years of amalgamation; theology was still in the hands of the White churches. Black churches were treated as junior partners and questions or challenges arising from the context of

the Black churches continued not to receive proper attention (RCSASSA 2000:139). The April 2001 Soutpansberg Synod therefore decided to bring its partnership in theological training with Potchefstroom Synod to an end by seeking and establishing a theological training programme which can help to ensure that both the Word of God and the context are taken seriously. It seems that it had become evident to the Synod Soutpansberg that the sidelining of Black churches in theological training programme was not good for the churches of the Synod Soutpansberg. It was their hope that they can achieve these objectives through a partnership with the faculty of theology of the University of Pretoria. They hoped to have a training programme in which the churches will play a meaningful role in the selection, supervision, training, and examination of those who train with a view of entering the ministry of the Reformed Churches making up Synod Soutpansberg (RCSASSA 2000:139).

On the 02nd June 2001 the deputies of theological training sat with different Church Councils to organize how the re-establishment of Heidelberg Theological Seminary will be done (RCSASSA 2003:59). After the meeting the churches motivated each other, and as a result the Heidelberg Theological Seminary was re-established, and the students are studying through the University of Pretoria. The Synod elected Professor T.C. Rabali and Rev T.E. Liphadzi to teach some courses during the years, which are not offered by the University of Pretoria. Up to now, the seminary has four students who are still studying, two completed their studies in 2007 and they are already called to be Ministers. One of them was called by the Reformed Church Tshiawelo, and the other one was called by the Reformed Church Hosiyata (Giyani). There are two young men from the Reformed Church De Hoop who will be studying at Heidelberg Theological Seminary next year (2009).

5.2.1.2.4 The impact of the theological training in the mission of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo

According to Donald A. McGavran, the theological seminaries should prepare their students to multiply Christian congregations in the tremendously complex mosaic of humankind. He further indicated that theological students are the most segment of society in the world today (McGavran 1988:12). The theological seminary must train students who will be establishing sound Christian congregations in every ethnos, tribe, tongue and people in their own nation and every other nation (McGavran 1988:137). The theological students who are studying at the Heildeberg Theological Seminary have brought a great impact to the mission work of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo. The theological seminary has urban church planting programme on its curriculum. During their sixth year of studies, the theological students are given a chance to plant a church in a new area in order to see whether they can establish a church or plant a church in that area. They are involved in the mission campaigns of this church, some of them are teaching *catechetical classes* of those who are being prepared to profess their faith and to be baptised. The theological students are also *preaching at several fellowship centers* during Sundays, and they *are leading small groups' services* like Bible Studies, Wednesday services, etc during the week. The Reformed church Tshiawelo has two established fellowship centers that are being led by the theological students. The one is in Gauteng Province (Muldersdrift) while the other one is in Middelburg in Mpumalanga Province. The theological school is preparing students to be urban mission minded, especially in urban church planting programmes. By focusing on this programme for a long time, the church will be able to reach many cities within Gauteng Province and outside Gauteng Province with the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ rapidly and with

ease. By following this programme, the Synod Soutpansberg together with the Reformed Church Tshiawelo will plant churches in other African Countries and also in overseas countries with ease. In order to achieve this, the Synod Soutpansberg together with the Reformed Church Tshiawelo must recruit and encourage many spiritually matured men and young men to study for ministry. The more the theological seminaries have many good quality students, the more the chances of planting new churches are possible. The real fact is that when churches want to plant many urban churches, they must train good, quality, visionary theological students who will take this programme as their responsibility for life.

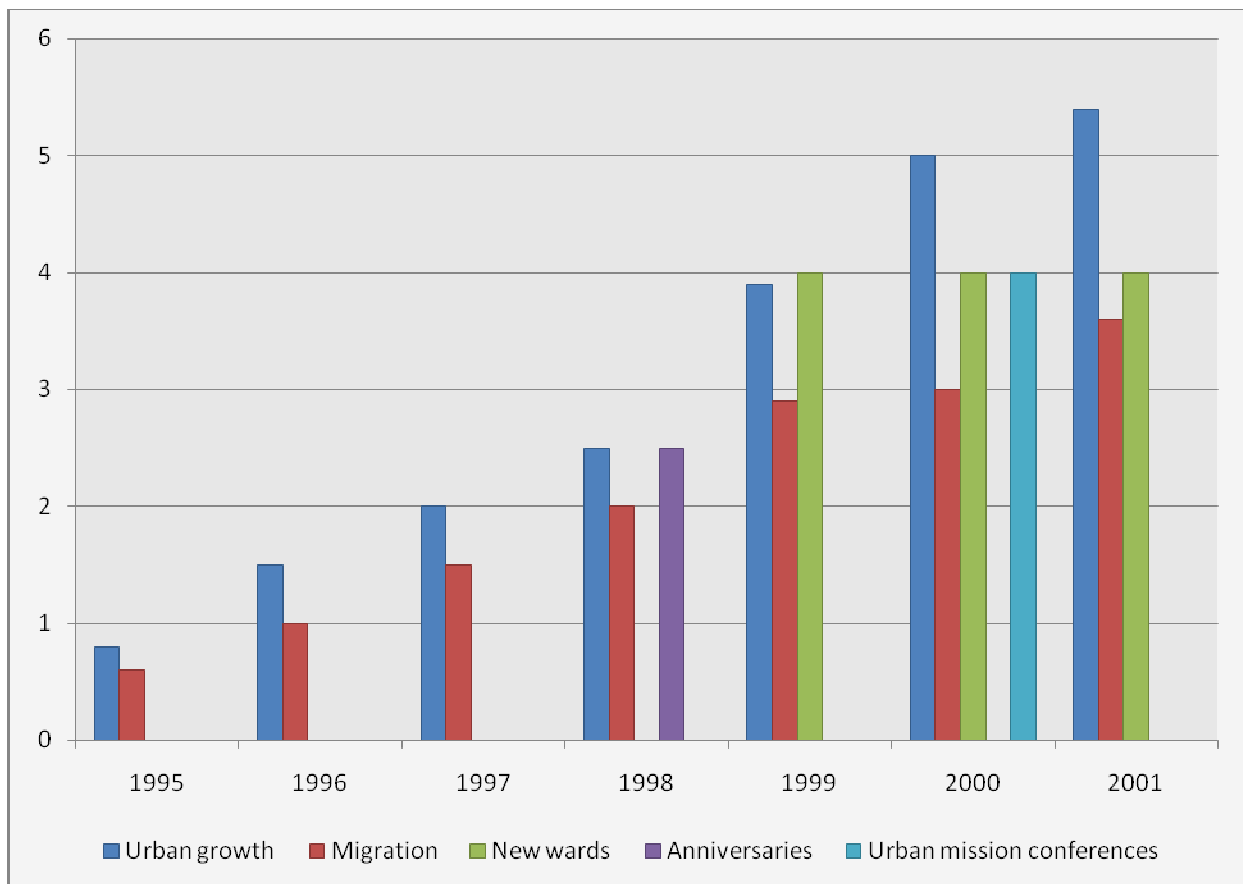
5.2.1.3 The growth of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo

As it was already said that the Reformed Church Tshiawelo was established by missionaries in 1968, but her growth was not good. During the period between 1970s and 1980s the church membership was declining. Some church members moved to other churches while others decided to go nowhere but decided to stay at their homes. The few people who remained were also discouraged and they were pessimistic about the future, that the church could be rebuilt again and grow tremendously. During this period, the church was about to be closed down because she suffered a serious decline of her membership. This was confirmed by Mrs Phampha who grew up in this congregation from her childhood, attended Sunday School, youth activities, and other church activities at this congregation. She testified this on the 16th of August 2008 at Tshiawelo during the celebration of this congregation's 40th anniversary. Church Elder, Mutheiwana George, who served at this congregation in the office of Eldership in that period and is still serving in this office, experienced that painful period of membership decline, also confirmed during the 40th anniversary of this church that he felt hopeless about the possibility of the rebuilding of the RCT during that period. Here the

researcher will indicate the growth of this church from 1995-2008. This is illustrated in two tables, one indicates the period of rebuilding this church, from 1995-2001, and the last one indicates the climax period of establishing new worshipping service centres, planting daughter churches, and constituting of new Classis of Synod Soutpansberg (Classis Gauteng) which was constituted by RCT and her daughter churches planted on the 16th August during her 40th anniversary at Tshiawelo (see Appendix F).

5.2.1.3.1 Church growth from 1995 – 2001

Figure 5.1: This table indicates church growth from 1995 - 2001

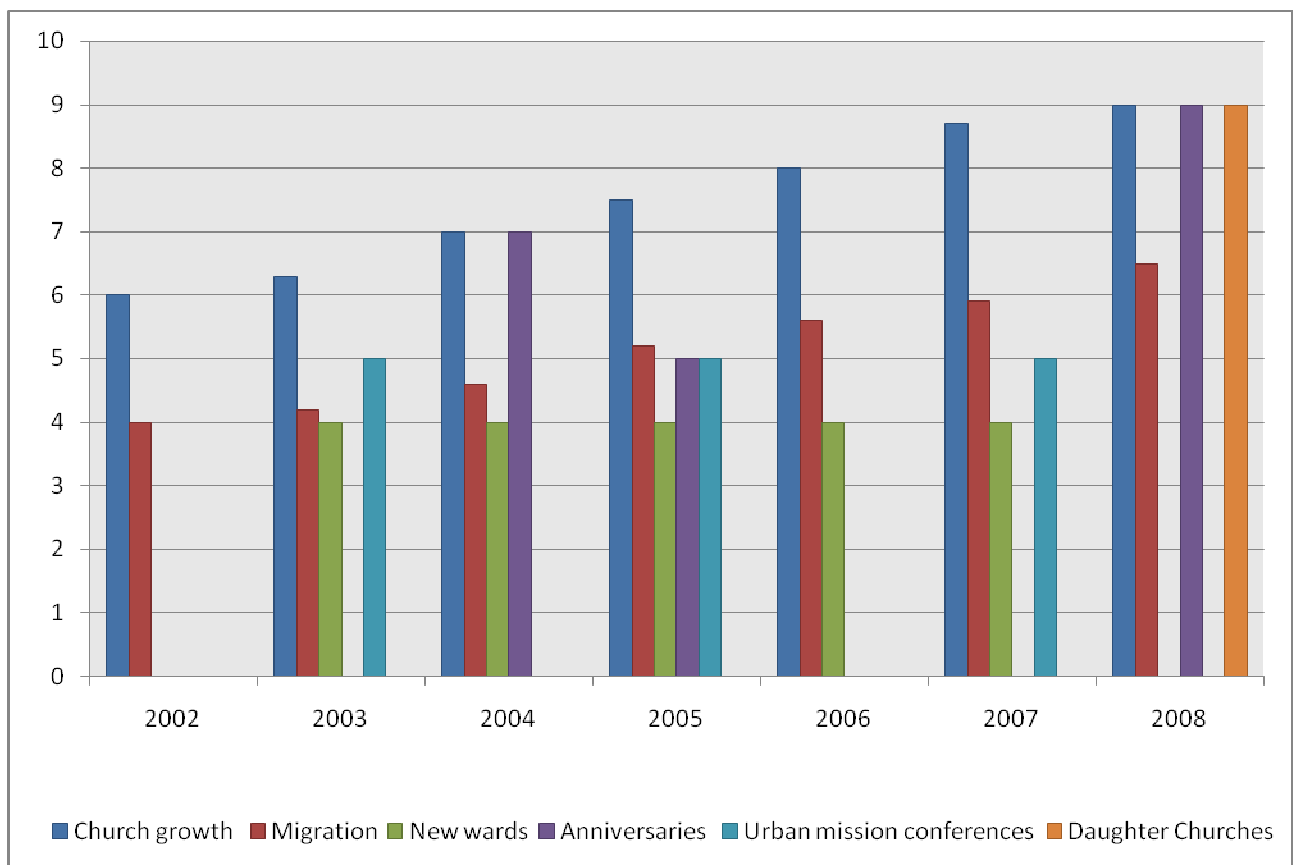


From the table above it is clearly indicated that in 1995, the church membership was very small. Although there was a few people who migrated to urban areas in the Gauteng Province who came to attend this church, but there was no great change in the membership of the church. The church during this year had less than 30 members. After the hard work of the Professor T.C. Rabali together with a few Church Council members, it uplifted membership in 1996. The number of migrants from churches that constituted Synod Soutpansberg who came to attend church services was also increased. In 1997 the church growth was boosted by the many young people who came to study at institutions in Gauteng Province. Most of the students, who associated themselves with this church, were equipped to become mission minded members. Some of them were trained to be church leaders. Those young men who showed commitment in church activities were ordained as Church Council members after they had undergone training. In 1998 the Church Council took a decision of establishing new fellowship centers outside Soweto. In her 30th anniversary held at Tshiawelo in 1998, the vision of establishing new fellowship centers outside Soweto was sold to the church members. The same year (1998), a Tuesday evening Bible study and prayer group was already in place in a flat in Pretoria. The members of the cell group in Pretoria worshipped at Tshiawelo on Sundays. The Church Council transformed this group into a fellowship center with Sunday services and midweek meetings by the year 1999. In 1999, there was a great number of migrants (students and old people who came to work at Gauteng Province) who associated themselves with RCT. There were a great number of people from Johannesburg area who travelled by train, taxis and also by car who always came to this church to attend worship services. By seeing the great number of people who were always travelling to Tshiawelo to attend church services, the Church Council established a new fellowship center in Johannesburg in the year 2000. During the same year, the Church Council organized an urban mission seminar which was held at Tshiwelo. It was well attended by people from different areas.

Churches that constituted the Synod Soutansberg sent their members in great numbers to attend this urban mission conference. In 2001, the church continued to grow, and the Church Council established a new fellowship center in Protea Glen.

5.2.1.3.2 Church growth from 2002 – 2008

Figure 5.2: This table indicates church growth from 2002 - 2008



The church continued to grow spiritually and also in numbers. The mission conferences, preaching and home visits, uplifted the standard of growth in this congregation. In 2003 the church established a new fellowship center in Midrand. During this year, the Church Council organized an urban mission conference at Tshiawelo, and Christians were inspired and encouraged to engage themselves in

urban mission. In 2004, two new fellowship centers were established, one in Katlehong and the other in Vaal. During the same year, the church celebrated the 5th anniversary of her fellowship center in Pretoria. The anniversary was held in Sunnyside (Pretoria). In 2005, the church had two anniversaries; the first one was the 5th anniversary of her fellowship center in Johannesburg and the other one was held at Dube. During the same year (2005), there was an urban mission conference which was held in Johannesburg. In 2006, a new fellowship center was established in Muldersdrift. In 2007, two fellowship centers were established, one in Meadowlands, and the other in Middelburg (Mpumalanga Province). (The one in Meadowlands was established after Classis Moroka indicated to the RCT that, due to the fact that the RCT is no longer one of the churches that constitute this Classis, RCT must no longer use the church building of Dube which was under this Classis. The RCT then started a fellowship center in Meadowlands and many of the church members that used to worship at the church building of Dube, moved to Meadowlands). During the same year (2007), there was an urban mission conference which was held in Pretoria. The Reformed Church Tshiawelo came to her climax stage during her 40th anniversary which was held in Tshiawelo on the 15-17 August 2008. The function was well attended. The members from the Synod Soutpansberg, some members from the Madison Avenue Christian Reformed Church (USA) and members from the local churches attended this function. The growth rate of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo is sudden, in 1995 it had less than 30 members, but in 2008, her members are more than thousand. This was confirmed by Rev Thiofhitshithu Rabali who led the worship church service on the 17th August 2008 (see Appendix F). On the 16th August, Professor T.C. Rabali preached from the Book of Isaiah 54, where he encouraged church members to see the necessity of planting churches in South African cities, African cities, and also indicating the great possibilities of reaching even European countries with the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. They were encouraged to extend the scope of their mission, "Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent

curtains wide, do not hold back; lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes” (Is 54:2) (NIV). He strongly emphasized this fact of enlarging the tent, and to stretch their tent curtains wide. He made it clear to the congregation that four Reformed doctrinal terms played an important role in their faith to bring the church to her present stage, those *Latin* terms are *Sola Scriptura* (Scripture alone), *Sola Fide* (by faith alone), *Sola Christus* (by Christ alone) and *Sola Gracia* (glory to God alone) (Muller 1985:283-284). Words from Isaiah 54:2 together with the above mentioned Reformed doctrinal terms (*Latin* terms) were printed on the handbags, T Shirts, etc that were sold during this anniversary as a reminder to the church members. Rev A.E. Liphadzi delivered his paper on how the church can comprise of both the Reformed and African character. The celebration came to its climax this day (the 16th August 2008) when the Reformed Church Tshiawelo planted five new daughter churches at the same time: Reformed Church Vaal, Reformed Church Protea Glen, Reformed Church Pretoria, Reformed Church Midrand and Reformed Church Johannesburg (see Appendix F). On behalf of the deputies of the Synod Soutpansberg, the researcher handed out an *Act of New Constituted Churches*³⁴ to the leaders of the new planted churches. After planting these daughter churches, a new Classis (Classis Gauteng) of the Synod Soutpansberg was constituted the same day. The researcher on behalf of the deputies of Synod Soutpansberg handed out an *Act of New Constituted Classis*³⁵ to the leaders of the

³⁴ *An Act of New Constituted Churches* is a letter given to each of the new planted churches as a confirmation that a new church is instituted, with the name of the new church and her commitment to work according to the rules indicated in the Church Order. This letter was signed by two Church Council members of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo, three members of the Deputies of the Synod Soutpansberg and three members from each of the two neighbouring churches (Mutale and Niani).

³⁵ *An Act of New Constituted Classis* is a letter given to the leaders of the new constituted Classis (Classis Gauteng) as a confirmation that a new Classis is instituted, with the name of the Classis, the names of the churches that constitute it, and also the rules that should be followed by the churches when they send their deputies to the Classis meetings. This letter was signed by two Church Council members

churches that constitute Classis Gauteng. The Classis Gauteng is constituted by the Reformed Church Tshiawelo and her five daughter churches. This was a blessing to the Synod Soutpansberg which is now constituted by three Classis which are: Classis Gateway³⁶, Classis Gauteng³⁷ and Classis Luvuvhu³⁸. Three people were given a chance to convey greetings and well wishes to the Reformed Church Tshiawelo together with her daughter churches. Mr D.A. Muhali spoke on behalf of the Reformed Church Mutale, Mr N.J. Ramantswana spoke on behalf of the deputies of the Synod Soutpansberg, and one delegate from USA spoke on behalf of the Madison Avenue Christian Reformed Church (USA). Mrs Phampha and Elder Mutheiwana George gave the history of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo. On the 17th August, Rev Thiofhitshithu Rabali led the Sunday Church service. On the 6th of September Classis Gauteng held its first meeting at Tshiawelo. On the 7th of September all the churches that constitute Classis Gauteng had their first worship service together in Tshiawelo. The worship service was led by Rev N.P. Makhuvha of the Reformed Church Protea Glen. The first youth conference of Classis Gauteng was held on the 13th of September at Pretoria. Professor T.C. Rabali led the conference. From the above two diagrams, it is clear that the Reformed Church Tshiawelo is a church that is growing well.

of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo, three members of the Deputies of the Synod Soutpansberg and three members from each of the two neighbouring churches (Mutale and Niani).

³⁶ *Classis Gateway* is constituted by the following Churches: Reformed Church Fundudzi, Reformed Church Nzhelele, Reformed Church Seshego and Reformed Church Tshitandani.

³⁷ *Classis Gauteng* is constituted by the following Churches: Reformed Church Johannesburg, Reformed Church Midrand, Reformed Church Pretoria, Reformed Church Protea Glen, Reformed Church Tshiawelo and Reformed Church Vaal.

³⁸ *Classis Luvuvhu* is constituted by the following Churches: Reformed Church De Hoop, Reformed Church Hosiayata, Reformed Church Mutale, and Reformed Church Niani.

5.3 THE CHALLENGES OF THE REFORMED CHURCH TSHIAWELO

5.3.1 Money

67% of the church leaders of this congregation in responding to the question about the challenges or stumbling blocks they are encountering in their urban mission indicated that one of their challenges is money. They indicated that they have money, but it is not enough to carry the work. This is caused by the fact that not all church members are faithful in tithing. According to the researcher, there are three groups of people in the church: the *first* group is composed of those members who are tithing faithfully; the *second* group is of those who are tithing below their income (the amount they are supposed to give according to their income) and the *last* group is of those who do not tithe at all.

What should be done is that: more home visits focused on encouraging Christians to be faithful in tithing. This should be clear that to tithe below the real tithing is to rob God and also to be unfaithful. Even those who are not tithing must be taught to repent and tithe. Every church member should be led through preaching to dedicate himself or herself to God with his or her being and also his or her belongings, which includes money (cf Mutavhatsindi 2000:67). They must know that money does not belong to them, but it belongs to God, thus why God demands it from every Christian (Hg 2:8). When they tithe faithfully, God opens the windows of heaven and pours His blessing on to them, but if they do not tithe, He promises not to open the windows of heaven and He will not pour His blessings (MI 3:8-10) and those people must know that what they are doing is robbing and disobeying God (Mutavhatsindi 2000:67).

5.3.2 Church buildings

Even though the RCT is flourishing in her urban mission, but the lack of sufficient church buildings is a serious challenge of this church. In her 16 fellowship centers, only 3 fellowship centers have church buildings. In most of her fellowship centers, Sunday worshipping services are held at hired buildings. This was confirmed by 97% of church leaders who completed the questionnaire; they indicated that there are many fellowship centers which have no church buildings. They further indicated that they have this problem because at this moment they do not have enough money to erect their own buildings but they are presently working on this issue so that they can have their own buildings. They are teaching members to involve themselves faithfully in tithing so that they can have their own church buildings.

If the church does not have her own church building, she sometimes encounters some disappointment. To cite an example, the fellowship center of this congregation in Pretoria Sunnyside attends her church services at the church building of the Reformed Church Harmonie, sometimes it is not possible to use the building during the week. Even if the Reformed Church Tshiawelo has an agreement with the owners of the church buildings, but the problem is that, the ownership of the building still remains with them, they can do what they want about their building, they can allow other people to share with RCT the same building, and by so doing, their services will always not be stable, they could be disturbed any time. The disturbance of services creates terrible confusion to the church members. The consequences might be of losing many church members, and losing important church services that should benefit church members by leading them to spiritual maturity.

5.3.3 Commitment of all members in mission work

71% of church members and 64% of church leaders who responded to the question asked in both questionnaires of church members and church leaders which says, “How do Christians involve themselves in urban mission?”, indicated that the involvement of members to urban mission is good. 23% of church members and 25% of church leaders indicated that the involvement of members to mission is poor. The researcher was forced to ask one of those church members who indicated the poor involvement of members in mission of the church. The church member told the researcher that he responded in that way because most of the people who are involved in mission campaigns of the church are youth, and not all youth are involved. He further indicated that old people are less involved in urban mission of the church. He was concerned that all members must commit themselves to mission work of the church. The reflection of Christian commitment of members in the RCT is not 100%, there is still more work of teaching all the youth and older people, men and women to fulfill their full commitment in mission work of the church, especially in mission outreach or mission campaigns.

Christians should know that Christ called them from the world, not because of their good works or by being righteous, but because of His grace. And He called them for a purpose, to be servants of the message of salvation to the heathens. This is clearly indicated by Karl Müller who gave an example of Paul, and says:

Paul regards himself as servant of the message of salvation. He has been “specially chosen to preach the Good News” (Rm 1:9), it is his charism to be “a priest of Jesus Christ and ... to carry out (his) priestly duty by bringing the Good News from God to the pagans” (Rm 15:16; he



is not sent “to baptize but to preach the Good News” (1 Cor 1:17); he knows that the servant of the Gospel can only plant and water, but God makes things grow (cf 1 Cor 3:6).

But what does this service of the Good News aim at? The “announcing” – *keryssein* – of an apostle is not an end in itself and neither is its object the satisfaction of the listeners’ curiosity. What the apostle preaches is official proclamation, that is, the announcement of a “herald”. The apostle proclaims the Gospel of the Kingdom of God which is an appeal calling for and involving a personal decision. Paul says quiet plainly in Romans 1:5: “Through him we received grace and our apostolic mission to preach the obedience of faith to all pagan nations in honor of his name”. The “obedience of faith” is contained in the intention of God and the intention of God is also that of the apostle: “What I am presuming to speak of, of course, is only what Christ Himself has done to win the allegiance of the pagans, using what I have said and done by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Rm 15:18-19.). According to Romans 16:25-26 everything – the proclamation of St. Paul, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the revelation of the mystery kept secret for ages but now revealed – serves to bring the pagans everywhere to the obedience of faith (Müller 1987:72-73).

5.3.4 The misunderstanding of the GKSA

Another problem indicated by church leaders of this congregation (RCT) is their experience of being misunderstood within the larger denomination (the GKSA). 93% of the leaders who completed the questionnaire indicated that it seems there are many who oppose mission work done by this congregation and they seem to think that it

empowers reformed people who happen to be Black to the extent that it might be detrimental to church unity. They experienced that the hatred of members of this congregation for racism and paternalism is not appreciated by many and therefore they are misunderstood as people who do not want to forgive the wrongs done in the past by those who were deeply involved in apartheid.

From all the challenges that are experienced by the churches in their mission work, they are called to carry on with the work of Christ, of proclaiming His Word to the people. The church of Smyrna in the Book of Revelation 2:18-11 is an example of churches that continued to be faithful even in times of challenges. The church is called to bear. According to Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the Body of Christ, which was given for Christians, which suffered the punishment of their sins, makes them free to take their share of suffering and death 'for Christ'. Now they may work and suffer for Christ, for the sake of Him who did everything possible for them. This is the miracle of grace Christians enjoy in their fellowship in the Body of Christ (Phlp 1:25; 2:17; Rm 8:35-39; 1 Cor 4:10; 2 Cor 4:10; 5:20; 13:9). Although Jesus Christ has fulfilled all the vicarious suffering necessary for their redemption, His suffering on earth is not finished yet. He has, in His grace, left a residue ($\psi\sigma\tau\epsilon\pi\eta\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$) of suffering for His church to fulfill in the interval before His second coming (1 Col 1:24) (Bonhoeffer 2001:182-183). He further indicated that the church is called to bears as the Almighty God bears:

For God is a God who bears. The Son of God bore our flesh, He bore the cross, He bore our sins, thus making atonement for us. In the same way His followers are also called upon to bear, and that is precisely what it means to be a Christian. Just as Christ maintained His communion with the Father by His endurance, so His followers are to maintain their communion with the Christ by their endurance. We can of course shake



off the burden which is laid upon us, but only find that we have a still heavier burden to carry – a yoke of our own choosing, the yoke of our self. But Jesus invites all who travail and are heavy laden to throw off their own yoke and take His yoke upon them – and His yoke is easy, and His burden is light. The yoke and the burden of Christ are His cross. To go one's way under the sign of the cross is not misery and desperation, but peace and refreshment for the soul, it is the highest joy. Then we do not walk under our self-made laws and burdens, but under the yoke of Him who knows us and who walks under the yoke with us. Under His yoke we are certain of His nearness and communion. It is He whom the disciple finds as He lifts up His cross (Bonhoeffer 2001:47).

According to Johan H. Bavinck, God breaks through each barrier. He breaks down all obstacles and removes all hindrances. The deepest motive of the Book of Acts, therefore, is not the deeds of the apostles, but the mighty works of the risen Jesus Christ. For in spite of the church's reluctance and opposition, Christ takes the church with Him on His triumphal march through the world (Bavinck 1960:276-277).

5.4 THE FUTURE PLAN OF THE CHURCH

From the studies done in this chapter, it was clear that the Reformed Church Tshiwelo is a church with a promising future, concerning urban mission. Even though there are some areas that should be considered, the fact is that the capability and potential in this congregation is noticed. The reality that is being experienced in this era is the migration of people to urban areas in great numbers. There are many people who are moving to the metropolitan cities which are outside Gauteng Province, for example, Durban, Cape Town, Bloemfontein, Port Elizabeth, Kimberley and etc. They are moving to those

metropolitan cities because of various reasons, for example, some for study purpose at the tertiary institutions, some for working purpose, and etc. The researcher asked the church leaders this question in the questionnaire, “What are the plans of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo for planting churches in those metropolitan cities which are outside Gauteng Province?” In answering to this question, 77% of the church leaders indicated that they have been speaking about this for a long time but not much has been done to date. They only were able last year (2007) to start their first fellowship center outside the Gauteng Province (in Middelburg which is in Mpumalanga Province). Their intention was to do this in other major cities too. They intend to facilitate this by following up on their members and also making use of technology (for example, by using e-mail to send through Bible study material and sermons which members can use when they meet with others around them). They also intend to continue using their campus ministry to achieve this. Already they have students from major universities attending their tertiary conferences with this in mind that they will be organized to form such structures.

The Reformed Church Tshiawelo is becoming slow in her implementation of this most important mission work to the metropolitan cities. Besides the church members who migrated to those metropolitan cities from the Synod Soutpansberg, the cities themselves have many people who should be reached with the Gospel of Christ. What should be done is that RCT must start implementation of her intention to those cities as soon as she can, with the help of proposed strategies for urban church planting indicated in Chapter Six.

5.5 EVALUATION OF THE URBAN MISSION OF THE REFORMED CHURCH TSHIAWELO

5.5.1 Evaluation through the “Seven I’s” Programme

The “Seven I’s” Programme developed at the *University of Pretoria* will be used as an instrument to *diagnose* the missionary quality of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo and for a *prognosis*, to help this prosperous inward-looking church to be motivated and to become the dynamic oriented missionary congregation. The “Seven I’s” Programme is so called because of the seven catchwords used (Kritzinger et al 1994:48) namely; Inspiration, Information, Interpretation, Involvement, Instruction, Investment and Intercession. The researcher will start by indicating what the church is being expected to do under each of the Seven I’s Programme, and lastly he will evaluate what is being done at the Reformed Church Tshiawelo under each of the ‘Seven I’s Programme’.

5.5.1.1 Inspiration

Under inspiration, the church is expected to inspire her members through preaching of the Word of God so that they can engage themselves in mission. Mission work is not supposed to be of few people, but for all, young and old, men and women, boys and girls. The preacher’s task is to preach in such a way that everybody within the church accepts the responsibility of involving himself or herself in the mission work of the church. The preacher can do this through preaching in the pulpit during church services or through home visitation. In their preaching, the preachers must remind church members that they are of great importance before God, they are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God (cf Heyns 1980:49), that they may declare the praises of Him who called them out of darkness into His wonderful light. It

should be made clear that God called them through Christ, they were not a people, but now they are the people of God; once they had not received mercy from God, but now they have received mercy through Christ (1 Pt 2:9-10) (Heyns 1980:47). Every member within the congregation should be inspired in such a way that he or she takes as his or her obligation to proclaim the Word of God to other people, and they must not be ashamed to do it as God wants to bring the unbelievers to salvation (Rm 1:14,16) through them.

The Reformed Church Tshiawelo is inspiring her members through preaching for mission work. What is being emphasised in the preaching in this congregation is the fact that everybody must be involved in mission work, as it is not the work of few but the work of all church members (Kritzinger et al 1994:48). The Ministers are inspiring Christians sometimes through house visitation. The leadership of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo inspires the members to get involved in the mission work of the church. The believers are taught to be faithful and consecrated to the Lord (Williams 1988:22). All Church members, through preaching, conferences, seminars are led to proclaim openly that "Jesus is Lord" (Phlp 2:11, cf Col 3:17) (Pretorius et al 1987:175, cf Boer 1961:74).

Even though they are inspired through preaching to involve themselves in mission work, but the real fact is that not all members are involved in the mission of the church. During mission campaigns most of the people who are involved are youth. More inspiration through preaching, house visitation, and also through literature writing should be done to let every member know they are important before Christ and be ready to be involved in mission work, and be able to proclaim the Word of God to other people.

5.5.1.2 Information

Information plays an important role in the conviction of people to be involved in mission work of the church. If people lack information, it is difficult to involve themselves in the program or activities of the church. For people to have knowledge, they must be provided with information. The information should be on everything that is happening in the church and also what the church is planning to do in the future should be provided to the church members. How can the congregants be informed? There are many ways that can be used to provide the congregants with information. This can be done by providing pamphlets to the church members. The church should have her own newsletters where her church news can be written (Kritzinger et al 1994:50). Christians should be encouraged to have the church newsletter so that they can be informed about the church news or activities. This should depend on the particular church whether her newsletter could be published every week or every fortnight or every month. Missionary magazines, books and pamphlets describing the activities within the Church and outside her should be made available to the whole congregation (Williams 1988:23). Technology makes it simple nowadays to spread information to church members. There are telephones, e-mails, etc that can be used to spread the information with ease to church members. Those who do not have access to the technological ways of spreading information can be provided through home visits.

The Reformed Church Tshiawelo uses many ways of spreading information to her members. They use e-mails, circulars, telephone, etc. People have knowledge of what is being done in the church. Sometimes information is spread to the members verbally, especially during congregational conferences or congregational church services. This makes it easy for the church members to be informed about the church's vision, and her plan. Every year, the Reformed Church Tshiawelo provides her members with year

calendar, where all church meetings, Holy Communions, conferences, etc are clearly indicated. Besides this, there are books that Professor T.C. Rabali wrote in order to spread information to the members at large. For examples, he wrote a book titled, *“Kereke ya Tshandululo Tshiawelo, Iwendo Iwashu Iwa uyo vha Kereke dzi vhumbaho Kilasisi Gauteng ya Tshinodo Soutansberg”* which could be translated as *“The Reformed Church Tshiawelo, our journey to be Churches that constitute Classis Gauteng of Synod Soutpansberg”*. He wrote this book in order to inform the church members about the future of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo, and also the decision taken by this congregation of being one of the churches that constitute Synod Soutpansberg. He indicated all the procedures followed by the Reformed Church Tshiawelo in her preparation to be one of the churches that constitute Synod Soutpansberg. In that book he also informed the church members the problems encountered by this church in her preparation for this process (Rabali 2006:1-10). But the ways of spreading information are not all used in this congregation; the congregation should also develop a church newsletter to spread information. Nowadays there are technologies that are also good in spreading information, for example, through videos, compact disc or DVD and radio cassettes. In the places where there are church buildings, notice boards should be used for placing information for the church members.

5.5.1.3 Interpretation

The full interpretation of what the Gospel of Jesus Christ is all about, should be done accurately in the message of the church. The preacher must interpret the contents as well as the Gospel demands from the congregants. The preacher must also fuel the expectation on how the vertical and horizontal dimensions fuse into one message of the Kingdom of God. It should be made clear in the message that God loved the world in

such a way that He gave His only begotten Son Jesus Christ so that whoever believe in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life (Jn 3:16). It should also be made clear that those who do not believe in Jesus Christ, will perish (Jn 3:36). Reiteration Sunday after Sunday that the Kingdom of God has everything to do with everyday lives, with the needs and cares of people around Christians is very crucial (cf Heyns 1980:22). It is of great importance in interpretation of the Word of God to indicate that visiting the inmates of local prison, caring for the sick, visiting strangers into their homes, finding jobs for the jobless, etc, are Christians' part and parcel of their message (Kritzinger et al 1994:51). Ministers and other people who preach the Word of God should be in great pains to interpret the Word of God to the church members, what the Gospel message really is, what the consequences of believing in Jesus Christ in both society and in their day really are.

The interpretation of the message, the full interpretation of what the Gospel of Jesus Christ is all about, as well as the demands of the Gospel is well interpreted by leaders of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo to the congregation. This was confirmed by 82% of the church members who indicated in response to questionnaires that they develop their spiritual life by attending Sunday worship services, Wednesday services and through group services where the Word of God is well interpreted by the church leaders. They reiterate, Sunday after Sunday that the Kingdom of God has everything to do with their everyday lives, with the needs and cares of people around them. They are taught to obey the command of love, which implies that they must involve themselves in proclamation of the Word of God to non-believers. Kritzinger et al (1994:51) is of the opinion that to motivate the congregation to be a missionary minded congregation, the leaders should take great pains to interpret to the believers what the Gospel message really is, what the consequences of believing in Christ, in our society, in our day, really are, that is what the leaders of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo are doing.

5.5.1.4 Involvement

What is necessary in the church is the involvement of church members in church programmes or activities. They should also be involved in the proclamation of the Word of God. For church members to proclaim the Word of God, they must be equipped and be given the opportunity to preach. They can preach it in small group services, in church outreach, or they can preach it every where they go to everybody. In witness by deeds, Christians are expected to live what they preach. Before they can be involved in the mission of the church, a careful and thorough planning is necessary. The leaders of the church should create opportunities for the church members and involve them in mission. If opportunities for involving the church members in mission are not created, what happens is that, the church members distance themselves from the mission work of the church. They will not take mission as their obligation to do, but as others' obligation. For Christ involved His disciples in mission work, they also knew that they were involved in His mission. Every Christian is very important before God, he or she is an important member of the Body of Christ. Christ expects every member of His body to be involved in obeying His command of love, in bringing the non-believers to repentance.

The leaders of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo always involve their believers, not only telling them what to do, what to say, but also to get them to the actual point of doing it. They involve them in the proclamation of the Gospel (Rabali 2006:26). To involve the church members in mission work requires careful and thorough planning. Opportunities are created for Christians of RCT to be involved in mission work. The plan made in some of the fellowship centres of this congregation, is to group members in small cells, so that everybody can learn and involve himself or herself in proclamation of the Word. They are also given opportunities to proclaim to anyone the Word of God. They are

also encouraged to engage themselves in mission campaigns and also in church outreach. According to Kritzinger et al (1994:52), to enthuse men and women, to call them to commit themselves to mission work, without providing them with the opportunities to do something, borders on the unethical. It provides a guaranteed inoculation against all future missionary enthusiasm and involvement. All believers are taught to acknowledge that they are important before God. They are taught that no one should regard himself or herself as of less importance before God, and as a result, distance himself or herself from doing mission work. They are an epistle of Christ ministered by Him, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God (2 Cor 3:3) (Boer 1961:111).

5.5.1.5 Instruction

People require proper instruction, training and mission education so that they can involve themselves wholeheartedly in mission work. This helps the Christians to enjoy the mission work, but if they are not well instructed or trained, mission of the church will be unsuccessful because they will be lacking knowledge on how to do mission. The church should include training courses in her programmes. Instruction of church members could be done in small group services like confirmation classes, cell groups, Bible Study groups, etc. Besides in small groups, instruction could be done in congregational worship services, mission seminars and conferences. Church leaders must not just instruct people for the sake of doing it, but they must spend time in doing this so that they can be quite sure that instructed church members will be able to do the work correctly. Christ spent enough time in instructing His disciples for the work (Mt 10). When He sent them to do the work, He was convinced that they could do the work the way He expects them to do it.

Instruction of members for mission work is one of the vital roles Reformed Church Tshiawelo is doing tremendously. It was noticed in this congregation that people required a proper instruction, training and mission education so that they can understand mission work and involve themselves in it. Training conferences are being offered in this congregation. Those members who are involved wholeheartedly in mission work of the church are those who were positively involved in training offered by the church leaders. Instructions are also given in small groups like cell groups, Bible Study groups. Besides in small groups and training conferences, instructions are given in congregational worship services through sermons, in mission seminars and also in mission conferences. In this congregation, there is teaching and preaching that motivates each member to consecrate himself or herself fully to the Lord for the fulfilment of His purpose (Rabali 2005:46-88). The missionary responsibility of each believer is set forth from the Word of God. Thus there is a consistent education and motivation of the entire congregation regarding their missionary responsibility in urban areas (Williams 1988:18).

5.5.1.6 Investment

Everything in life needs money. In order to do mission work very well and succeed, the church must have money. This means that the church that wants to do urban mission, especially urban church planting must have enough money for the work. In order to equip Christians for mission and to buy necessary equipments for mission work, money is essential. The church must see to it that in her annual budget, there is some % budgeted for mission work. This can be done by agreeing on some % from tithing that will be budgeted for mission work. Mission work must be prioritized in the church, even in the budget of the church, it must be given enough %. Besides the annual %

budgeted for mission work, the church could occasionally have fund specifically for the mission work of the church.

The Reformed Church Tshiawelo is aware that money is essential in everyday life, even in the wellbeing of the church. In her annual budget, there is some percentage budgeted for an urban church planting programme. The money is used to finance the mission campaigns, equipping members for mission work, mission seminars and conferences. In section A of both the questionnaires answered by both church members and church leaders, there is a question which says, "Does Reformed Church Tshiawelo make a budget for urban mission?" In response to this question 100% of both church members and church leaders responded that Reformed Church Tshiawelo makes a budget for her urban mission. They responded positively because they are updated time and again about church finances. The researcher observed this in many congregational worship services where the treasurer of the church gives reports about the income and the expenditure of the church. And by so doing, they are able to do their mission work. What the church could do as she is intending to plant more churches in metropolitan cities outside Gauteng Province, is to increase her mission percentage annually in her budget so that she can be able to reach those metropolitan cities outside Gauteng Province with ease. The provision for some percentage for mission is very important in doing urban mission. This was confirmed by Kritzinger et.al (1994:53):

As most other human activities – indeed, church activities – mission, also runs on money. To be able to involve as many as possible, to equip the faithful, to send missionaries into the field, nearer to home as well as further a field, may prove costly in a monetary sense. The financial committee, therefore, needs to be persuaded as to the real

priorities in the life of the church. If the annual budget becomes a missionary budget, the battle is won!

5.5.1.7 Intercession

Prayer plays an important role in mission work of the church. Preaching and teaching about the importance of prayer should instantly be done. Christians must be taught to pray for the mission work of the church, so that God can bring unbelievers to repentance through the mission work of the church. Through prayer, Christians should be able to ask power, strength and good health from God so that they can do mission without any problem. They should be able to see the necessity of many Christians who should engage themselves in mission as Jesus Christ saw the necessity of many labouring (Mt 9:37-38). Christians should be encouraged to have prayer partners. Prayer groups within the congregation should be developed. The people who are unable to participate in mission because of age, and other circumstances, can be involved in mission through prayer.

The Reformed Church Tshiawelo is a praying congregation. The leaders of this congregation sometimes preach on the importance of prayer, and also on the impact of prayer in the life of a Christian. Teaching and preaching about prayer are done in prayer groups, and also in different conferences. Christians are also encouraged to pray in their homes. Prayer teams and Impact groups are formed in such a way that every believer is encouraged to pray. Through constant and disciplined intercession every member of the congregation, young and old, are encouraged to become co-workers, partners in prayer, in mission work and this motivate them to involve themselves in mission work.

5.5.2 General evaluation

5.5.2.1 Self evaluation

What Reformed Church Tshiawelo is doing, of evaluating herself through anniversaries is very good. She critically appreciates all what she achieved, thank God for those achievements, plans on what to be done to achieve the outstanding plans. She also critically shares with her members everything they failed to achieve during the previous years, and encourages each other to have more focus on those things in her future plans.

5.5.2.2 The Reformed Church Tshiawelo will succeed in her mission

The researcher's opinion is that Christians live in the most exciting time in history for the church. Unparalleled opportunities and powerful technologies are available to their congregations. More importantly, they are experiencing an unprecedented movement of God's Spirit in many parts of the world today. More people are coming to Christ now than at any other time in history (Warren 1995:15). The researcher believes God is sending waves of church growth wherever His people are prepared to ride them. What church leaders have to do is to discover the needs of the community to fit those needs with the people they have in the church. This was confirmed by Conn and Ortiz (2001:461) who says:

Discovering the needs of the community is not enough to have a ministry. The church must then fit those needs with the people God has given them. This requires knowing the gifts and personalities God has provided for that particular church as embodied in its members



We believe that the Lord has provided the essential gifts for the church in community to do the necessary work of the ministry. The gifts divinely distributed (1 Cor 12:7; Eph 4; 1 Pt 4:10) to all Christians at the time of regeneration. All Christians have a duty to exercise their gifts (1 Pt 4:10). In Ephesians 4:16 (cf 1:22) it is clear that the ministerial power of Christ is delegated to the church in the form of spiritual gifts. This is the continuing work of Christ in the world. This enablement of the church is for service. Therefore, there is a plan for the church to be equipped to minister in its particular context. When the church utilizes the power of God in community, more and more people come under the lordship of Christ. The result of this is that the church grows qualitatively and quantitatively (Conn and Ortiz 2001:461).

After completing his research on the mission work of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo, the researcher, as a participant observer, is 100% convinced that if the Reformed Church Tshiawelo can go on with her program of equipping and motivating church members to involve themselves in urban mission, there is nothing that will stop her success in urban church planting within Gauteng Province and also outside Gauteng Province, especially in the metropolitan cities. The researcher does believe that God who provided this church and lifted her up from where she was will continue lifting her up to better circumstances than where she is today.

5.6 CONCLUSION

From the research done, it was found that the Reformed Church Tshiawelo is one of the few churches progressing in urban mission. It was quite clear that the leadership of Professor T.C. Rabali together with his co-workers played an important role in bringing the church to her present stage. Christians are taught, motivated, and involved in



mission work. But there are many areas of concern in the mission work of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo. The lack of sufficient church buildings, involvement of some members in mission work, lack of sufficient money, etc requires serious attention.

CHAPTER 6

STRATEGIES THAT THE REFORMED CHURCH TSHIAWELO CAN UTILISE TO PLANT CHURCHES IN METROPOLITAN CITIES OUTSIDE GAUTENG PROVINCE

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the strategies that the Reformed Church Tshiwelo can utilise to plant churches in metropolitan cities outside Gauteng Province, e.g Cape Town, Durban, Bloemfontein, Port Elizabeth, Kimberley, East London, etc. As the Reformed Church Tshiwelo planted five new congregations on her 40th anniversary which was held on the 15-17 of August 2008 at Tshiwelo (Soweto), the strategies indicated in this chapter will also apply to those new congregations. The researcher developed vital strategies that should be taken into consideration when planting urban churches. He divided those strategies into four phases which are: Visionary Phase, Planning Phase, Preparation Phase and Establishment Phase. These strategies will be clearly illustrated by four diagrams. A clear explanation of each of the four diagrams will be presented. Before the church starts with these strategies, she must first of all know God's plan and also her missionary task. This chapter will also focus on the principles of urban church planting indicated by Mulphurs, Wingerd and Carey. Church planting methods will be the last issue to be discussed in this chapter.

6.1.1 God's plan

God's plan for "filling the earth with His glory" is directly related to the kind of evangelism that results in the formation of reproducing Christian communities. Only God makes the

church grow. Only God can breathe new life into a valley of dry bones. Only God can create waves – waves of revival, waves of growth, and waves of spiritual receptivity (Warren 1995:14). As Paul pointed out about the church at Corinth, “I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow” (1 Cor 3:6) (NIV). Notice the partnership: Paul and Apollos did their part, but God caused the growth. The sovereignty of God is a factor overlooked in almost all current church growth literature. Rich Warren indicates the following, concerning church leaders:

Our job as church leaders, like experienced surfers is, to recognize a wave of God’s Spirit and ride it. It is not our responsibility to make waves but to recognize how God is working in the world and join Him in the endeavor. Watching surfers from the shore makes catching waves look pretty easy. Actually, it is quite difficult and requires great skill and balance. Catching a spiritual wave of growth isn’t easy, either. It takes more than desire or even dedication; it takes insight, patience, faith, skill, and most of all, balance. Pastoring a growing church, like surfing, may look easy to the uninitiated, but it isn’t. It requires a mastery of certain skills (Warren 1995:14).

McGavran states emphatically that “the essential task, in a world where three-fourths of all men and women have yet to believe in Jesus Christ as God and only Saviour, is that of planting new churches” (Hesselgrave 1980:7). Among the educational tasks necessary to initiate a movement of church multiplication is the preparation of leaders who understand and are able to interact with the dynamics of expanding church movements. Two key words in movements thinking are *momentum* and *multiplication*. Momentum is increased activity towards the goal. Multiplication is the replication of the main ingredients in the mix – in this case, disciples and effective leaders who will lead

new churches. It is not enough to have exciting happenings that bind people together to fulfill a compelling vision. It is not enough to have many people coming to Christ. Powerful movements are the result of Spirit-anointed leaders; leaders who have the ability to form an interdependent ministering body out of a diverse mix of believers, leaders who specialize in selecting and training emerging leaders and instill in them the vision, skills, and motivation to “do it again” (Thompson 1996:141-142).

6.1.2 The missionary task of the church

According to Bop Hopkins, the heart of the church planting explosion should be threefold: a) Church planting is mission through the local church, b) church planting is church reproduction by multiplication, and c) church planting is incarnation (Hopkins 1991:14). On the third point, incarnation, he goes on to say:

Church planting means making the body present in new places and for new people. Church planting is neighbourhood evangelism. It represents an opportunity to turn the Church inside out and help it to break out of any Christian ghetto it has become. Church planting means multiplying centres of worship and witness, to make the Church more accessible to multiply points of contact in the community. It also multiplies the available modes of Church life, in response to the mosaic of cultural, social and ethnic diversity. It could be one key for effective mission in urban priority areas (Hopkins 1991:14).

With this statement, especially the last sentence, the researcher agrees 100% with Bop Hopkins. It is very clear that church planting is a) a necessity, b) can be seen as a method, and c) is also a strategy for reaching the lost. Therefore, to talk about missions

is to talk about church planting. Church planting is a tool of mission, not the final purpose of mission (Carey 1991:31). The whole church planting program succeeds or fails depending on the type of Christians who enroll in the training program (Patterson 1989:1). There are many reasons for giving church planting a central position in planning strategies for church ministry and mission. But here the researcher will spell out few reasons which he regards as main reasons.

6.1.2.1 Church planting is biblical

The New Testament way of extending the Gospel was church planting. If the churches can trace the expansion of the church through Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth they will see that church planters led the way. This is a Kingdom activity, strongly endorsed by God our King. Collectively, as a community of the Kingdom of God, Christians can scarcely feel that they are obeying God if they fail to plant churches and plant them intentionally and aggressively.

6.1.2.2 Church planting means denominational survival

One of the absolutely essential ingredients for reversing the decline is vigorously planting new churches. The churches that do not see church planting as a way and means of preventing the decline of the denomination, do experience loss of their membership, and also become inactive churches.

6.1.2.3 Church planting develops new leadership

The most important institutional variable for the growth and expansion of the local church is leadership. In the local church no individual is more important for growth than

the *senior Pastor*³⁹, but effective senior Pastors make it a point to see that lay leaders also take responsible positions in the ministry of the church. For the most part existing churches have unconsciously placed a ceiling on both clergy and lay leadership, and as a result upward mobility of new people into positions of ministry is difficult. New churches open wide doors of leadership and ministry challenges and the entire Body of Christ benefits.

6.1.2.4 Church planting stimulates existing churches

Some are reluctant to start new churches for fear of harming those churches that are currently located in the target community. They feel that doing so could create undesirable competition between brothers and sisters in Christ. This should not be the case, what is required is the co-operation between the church that intends to plant a church in those particular areas with the local churches in those areas.

6.1.2.5 Church planting is efficient

There is no more practical or cost effective way of bringing unbelievers to Christ in a given geographical area than planting new churches. There are imperatives that confirm the need for new churches as an essential part of evangelistic strategy on new mission fields or new places where new churches should be planted.

The first one is a biblical imperative. As the apostles and evangelists moved out to the unevangelized frontiers they planted new churches. The Apostle Paul said, "It has always been my ambition to preach the Gospel where Christ was not known, so that I

³⁹ Senior Pastor in this thesis refers to the experienced pastor in the congregation. From the Reformed perspective, all Pastors are equal.

would not be building on someone else's foundation" (Rm 15:20) (NIV). Paul went to new places and planted churches.

The second one is a demographic imperative. There are many people who migrated to the metropolitan cities such as Cape Town, Bloemfontein, Durban, East London, Kimberley, Port Elizabeth, etc who are not born again, and it is the responsibility of the Church to notice the population increase in those areas. Those people will be won to Christ if the churches move across into their culture with the love of Christ and begin to plant churches.

6.1.3 Leadership of the church

According to Wagner (1984a:46) the *first* Pastor's price for growth is the assuming the responsibility of growth. The *second* price is hard work (1984a:50). *Thirdly*, Pastors must share their ministry. This must be done with other program staff as well with laity (1984a:55). The Pastors who do not understand their leadership role, who are visionless, lazy, and selfish, could not lead the church to growth.

6.1.3.1 Leadership qualities

Roger S. Greenway indicated some special qualities of leaders (Greenway 1999:109) that should be taken into account when doing urban church planting project.

- *Vision:* Leaders have spiritual 'eyes' that let them see what God can do through the church and her ministry.
- *Tenacity:* Leaders can be counted on to keep on doing the work of the Lord despite difficulty and opposition



- *Integrity*: Leaders can be trusted morally with money and with the care of people's souls.
- *Excellence*: Leaders want the church to function well in order to please God and serve people's needs.
- *Servanthood*: Leaders do not work for honour and power, but for the welfare of others and the glory of God

6.1.3.2 The task of the church leadership

The task of church leadership is to discover and remove growth-restriction diseases and barriers so that natural, normal growth of the church can occur (Warren 1995:16). If a church is not growing it is dying. When congregations are healthy, they grow the way God intends. Healthy churches don't need gimmicks to grow – they grow naturally. Paul explained it like this: "It is from Him that all the parts of the body are cared for and held together. So it grows in the way God wants it to grow" (Col 2:19) (NCV). Church leaders must know that God wants His church to grow. If their church is genuinely healthy, they won't have to worry about it growing (Warren 1995:17).

6.1.3.3 Periodic meetings

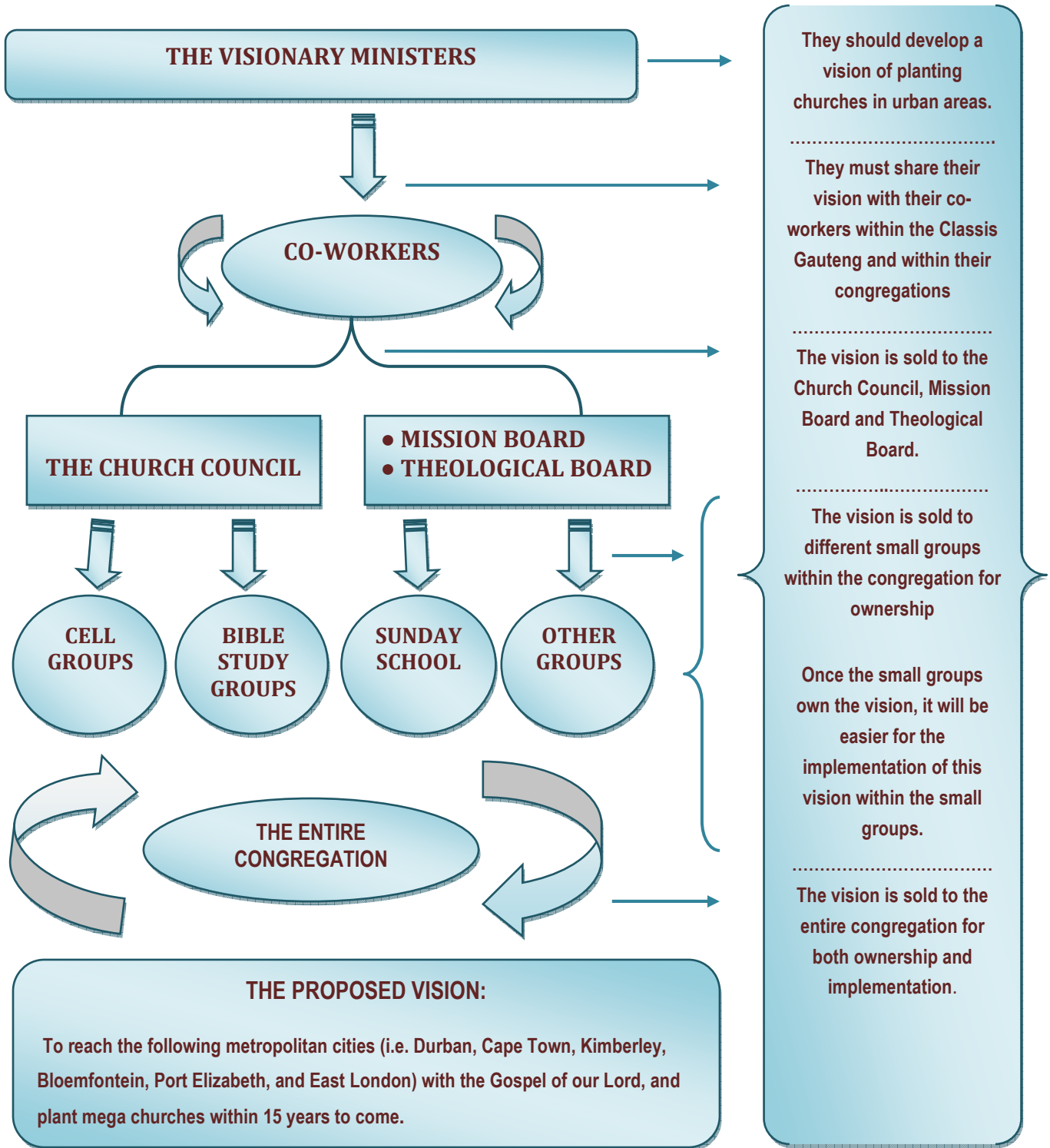
There should be periodic meetings of the leaders involved in an organization if that organization is to function effectively. According to Donald A. McGavran every living Christians should have a band of ardent Christians who meet regularly; it might be once a week or once a month to make sure that their congregation does win the lost in their

community and give birth to daughter congregations within at home and also abroad (McGavran 1988:46). No team can function as a team without practice and planning together. The organization within a church, whether a committee, Sunday School class officers, deacons, elders, and other committees must meet periodically to make plans and solve problems and generally strengthen the organization (Young 1978:42). Accepting and sharing responsibility should be done accurately and each and everyone should report back to the next meeting about the work assigned to him or her. Leaders should commit themselves to the work or responsibility assigned to them; this brings progress to the church. The church leaders, who constantly apologise for not doing the work assigned to them, become a stumbling block to the progress of the church. Leaders have more responsibility to bring progress to the church they are leading. The Christians follow their leaders, because they have great influence on the entire congregation. That is why leaders have to meet more frequently than other church members to discuss church matters, make plans and also to share the problems they are encountering in their church and seek ways and means of solving them.

6.2 THE STRATEGIES FOR PLANTING DAUGHTER CHURCHES IN URBAN AREAS

6.2.1 Diagram illustrating STEP 1: VISIONARY PHASE

Figure 6.1: DIAGRAM ILLUSTRATING STEP 1: VISIONARY PHASE
PROPOSED STRATEGIES FOR URBAN CHURCH PLANTING TO THE REFORMED CHURCH TSHIAWELO



6.2.1.1 Visionary leaders

6.2.1.1.1 Vision

The church leaders of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo must hear the plea of our Lord Jesus Christ, “Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields” (Jn 4:35) (KJV) and see the opportunities before them. According to J. Terry Young (1978:31), one of the tragedies of Christianity today is that so many of the church members have no dream or vision for their church or for their own personal Christian lives. If some of the churches could just catch a vision of reaching people; of helping people; of growing stalwart Christians; of influencing a city, a state, a nation, a world; of sending out a host of young people into Christian vocations; of starting new churches in unreached communities; of reaching into the inner city with a ministry. A church with a vision is a winning church, but “where there is no vision, the people perish” (Pr 29:18) (KJV). As we have learnt in Chapter 5, Professor T.C. Rabali is a visionary leader; he managed to lead the Reformed Church Tshiawelo to fulfill his vision of planting urban churches. The leaders of other churches, especially those planted by the Reformed Church Tshiawelo, must learn from the way Professor T.C. Rabali developed his vision and also led to its implementation. Church leaders should be able to see the necessity and urgency of urban church planting.

(a). The significance of a vision

The daughter churches that were planted by the Reformed Church Tshiawelo must know that vision must be possessed by and must possess the Minister of the congregation. If the Minister does not have the vision, probably no one else will (Havlik 1976:83). It is critical to the ultimate success of the new church that it has a single, clear vision. The church must know where it is going. Without a vision, the church will quickly plateau and

simply begin to maintain herself. Maintenance will be followed by a downward spiral that will eventuate in her ultimate, untimely demise (Malphurs 1998:119). Some churches have several visions. Where there are multiple visions, there will be multiple struggles and much unhappiness. In reality, many of these churches are “splits waiting to happen”. In fact, they are already down on the calendar; it is just a matter of time. The reason is that each leader tends to push for a particular vision, which often results in lots of fireworks in the board meetings.

(b). Type of a vision

What type of a vision should the Reformed Church Tshiawelo and her daughter churches have? The vision of the church must be a Great Commission vision. According to Malphurs (1998:121-127) the Great Commission mandate consists of three components that unfold chronologically.

(i) The pursuit of the lost

The *first* component of the Great Commission is the intentional pursuit of the lost people. This is reflected in the word “go” found at the beginning of the commission in Mathew 28:19: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”. It is also indicated in Mark 16:15: “He said to them, ‘Go into the world and preach the Good News to all creation’. Jesus is exhorting His people, the church, to pursue or seek lost people, which involve an “invasion” mentality. This was true in the first century, and it is true today.



(ii) The evangelism of the lost people

The *second* component of the Great Commission is evangelism. In Mark 16:15, Christ says, “Go into all the world and preach the Good News to all creation” (NIV). A Great Commission church makes evangelism a high priority. The church in general and the people in particular are not just actively seeking lost people; they are reaching lost people. And this is evident in the fact that these churches are growing numerically.

(iii) The edification of the saved people

The *third* component of the Great Commission is edification. When the church reaches lost people, she does not drop them there but enfolds and disciples them. The goal is to equip them to reproduce themselves. This is the process of edification, which involves bringing new believers to Christ-likeness (Eph 4:11-16).

6.2.1.1.2 They share their vision with their co-workers

As the new churches that were instituted from the Reformed church Tshiawelo, have one Minister each, but will be working close to each other as Ministers of the same Classis Gauteng which is under Soutpansberg Synod, they must share their visions. Besides sharing as Ministers of the same Classis, they must also share their visions with their co-workers within the congregations they are ministering. They must work as a team, with their efforts coordinated and moving in the same direction at all times (cf Young 1978:73). The visionary leaders must share their vision to the active leadership

within the congregation, so that they can form team to work on the selling of the vision to the small groups and also to the entire congregation.

6.2.1.1.3 They sell their vision to the Church Council, Mission and Theological boards

From the Reformed tradition, the local church is led by the Church Council. The Ministers must sell their vision to the Church Council. Terry J. Young indicates that:

Pastor and deacons share the responsibility for the spiritual life and development of the congregation. Most congregations are far too large for the Pastor to render adequate personal ministry to each individual. Therefore, the deacons assist the Pastor in ministering to the members of the congregation. They meet regularly with Pastor for prayer and for discussion of the needs of the church. They may share burdens about particular individuals and make plans for better ministry to them. The Pastor will honor his deacons as men who were selected by the church because of their own spiritual maturity. He will honor their confidence and seek to develop the closest possible relationship with them. Like wise, the deacons will seek to assist their Pastor in every possible way and will uphold his ministry at all times. They will tactfully deal with many little problems which otherwise would adversely affect the Pastor's ministry if he had to deal with them himself (Young 1978:75-76).

From the perspective of the Reformed Church, the Church Council is formed by Minister, church Elders, and Deacons. The way Young describes the responsibility of the Deacons above; simply indicates that the Minister is associated only with the Deacons. In addition to what Young has indicated above there is church Elders who

also work hand in hand with the Minister. This means that the vision will be sold to the Church Council formed by the Minister, church Elders and Deacons to own it. If the Church Council accepts the vision, then the vision is no longer the Minister's vision, but a vision of the Church Council.

From there, the Church Council must sell this to the mission committee or mission board. The mission board is a relevant board because it is responsible for mission work. Urban church planting needs visionary, dedicated or committed Ministers. Where do the churches get this type of Ministers? It is obvious that, in the case of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo and her five daughter churches, that the Heidelberg Theological Seminary is a relevant source for their Ministers. This means that this vision of urban church planting must also be sold to the board of curators of Heidelberg Theological Seminary. This will help the theological school to have a revised curriculum which caters for urban church planting. And the board of curators must see to it that the theological students are equipped in such a way that they see as their responsibility planting churches in metropolitan cities especially outside Gauteng Province.

6.2.1.1.4 They sell their vision to the small groups

Priorities of the church must be stressed over and over so that members will be reminded that the church takes them seriously. Sermons must be used as a positive motivator (Hadaway 1991:82) in small groups like Bible studies, cell groups, Sunday School classes, women's fellowship, men's fellowship, youth fellowship, etc. The small groups must understand the vision and own it, and prepare themselves to sell also to other people within the congregation at large.

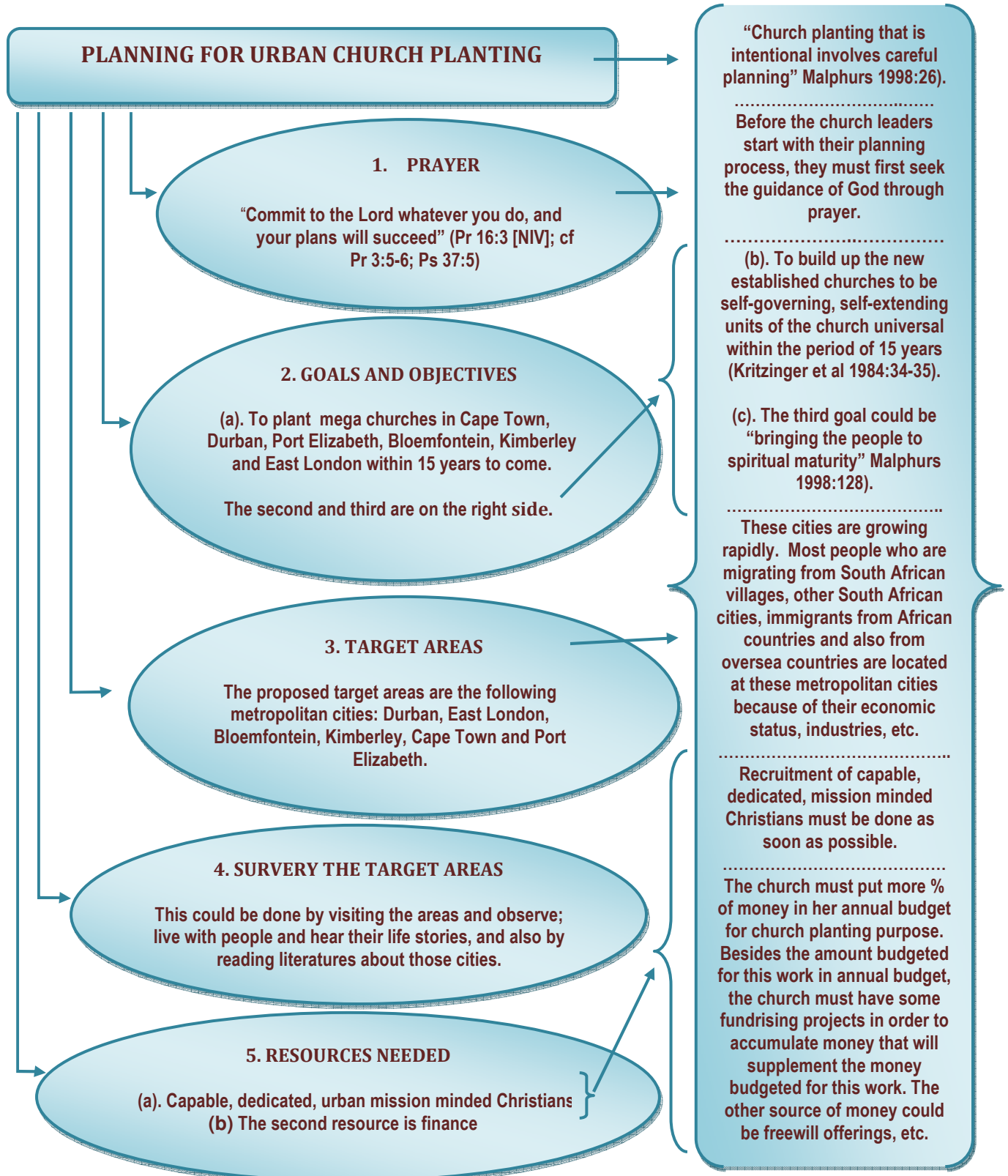
6.2.1.1.5 They sell their vision to the entire congregation for ownership and implementation

The Ministers must formulate a vision and begin to articulate and “sell” this vision to the congregation as a whole. The vision must be communicated meaningfully. Good communication grabs people. People must be led to understand the vision through clear and engaging communication (Mutavhatsindi 2000:72). Powell notes that, “we must challenge our people to do great things; otherwise they will stagnate into mediocrity (Powell 1982:33). A compelling vision for the future has the potential for capturing the imagination of the members and providing motivation for action but only if it is “caught” by a large proportion of the congregation. To facilitate this, the Minister must preach and live the vision, and if necessary he must also begin acting on the vision before it has been generally accepted. When things start moving, more and more members may become excited about the possibilities and begin to actively work towards the dream. Throughout this process, continual efforts must be made to develop allies among the exciting lay leadership of the church and to create new leaders among those who are most excited about the vision. The goal is unity or a “oneness of purpose” around a vision for what members hope the church will become (Johnson 1989:115). Ministers should use their sermons to articulate a vision for the church and to reinforce the purpose and priorities of the congregation. New members and uninvolved members who were not directly involved in the creation of the vision, may not understand this dream for the future the first two or three times they hear it, but by the fourth or fifth time it may begin to sink in – that this is what the Minister and members want the church to become (Hadaway 1991:82).

6.2.2 Diagram illustrating STEP 2: PLANNING PHASE

Figure 6.2: DIAGRAM ILLUSTRATING STEP 2: PLANNING PHASE

PROPOSED STRATEGIES FOR URBAN CHURCH PLANTING TO THE REFORMED CHURCH TSHIAWELO



What is planning? Planning may be defined as a managerial activity which involves analyzing the environment, setting objectives, deciding on specific actions needed to reach the objectives, and also providing feedback on results (Migliore et al 1994:4). Planning as part of the managerial process is crucial to the success of the church in planting healthy growing churches. From the biblical point of view of planning, the Bible has abundant evidence of God's plan. God is the greatest planner of all. Before creation He devised a plan for man and history that took every contingency into account. When Christ was ministering on earth, He had a plan for developing His disciples and getting the Kingdom message to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Mt 10:1-42). After His death and resurrection Jesus revealed the basis of His plan for the discipling of the Gentile nations (Mt 28:18-20; Ac 1:8) (Hesselgrave 1980:43-44). Plans that are to be used by many people need to be communicated, usually in writing because they permit people to evaluate whether what they want to do can, in fact, be done. Jesus reminded Christians that one does not sit down to build a tower without counting the cost. In order to count the cost they need to plan (Dayton and Fraser 1980:47). "Church planting that is intentional involves careful planning" (Malphurs 1998:26). "It is not enough to see faulty assumptions which prevent maximum multiplication of sound churches. We must go on to devise and operate intelligent and adequate plans for establishing church after church throughout the whole populations" (McGavran 1980:440). Terry J. Young is of the opinion that:

A church will do no more than it plans to do. Planning sets both the target and the limit of achievement. If nothing happens, probably the reason is that we did not plan for something to happen. If the results are small, perhaps our planning was small. You may not do as much as you plan to do, but it is certain that you will do more than you plan to do. In the final analysis, to fail to plan is to plan to fail. But, even expertly laid



plans are not enough. Hard, dedicated work must follow the praying and planning. Even though we may have prayed as though all depends upon God, we must now work as though all depends upon us. The most carefully detailed plans perfected to the highest degree of expertness are worthless until translated into action. No plan left unused in a committee chairman's notebook ever won an advance for a church. The walls of Jericho did not crumble before Joshua, even though he had prayed and planned, until Joshua and his people had carried out the last details of the plan. Things don't just happen - you have to do something! (Young 1978:47).

Putting such plans into operation is the true goal. A good plan on paper does nothing (McGavran 1980:441). Part of strategic planning is the team-building approach of developing leaders and involving people in the plan (Migliore et al 1994:1). Knowledge has to lead to action for which planning is needed. Thoughts should be put into action, or the process falls apart. More than mere intellectual exercise is needed (Bruwer 2001:37). There are many questions that the church planters should first ask in planning to plant churches in urban areas. Some of the basic questions to be firstly asked are as follows:

- Who is supposed to be involved in mission?
- What is our broad objective, what do we wish to achieve?
- When are we supposed to start our work?
- Where do we want to work, what are the needs and specific challenges?
- Who shall we achieve this (methods)?

6.2.2.1 Prayer

It was clear in Chapter 5 that the Reformed Church Tshiawelo is a praying church. That is why God led her to her present stage. It must be clear to the five daughter churches planted by the Reformed Church Tshiawelo that Prayer should be the first priority that church leaders must put forth before a desired result can be obtained. “Prayer is a crucial element of Christian life. When believers spend time in prayer, spiritual maturity, and Godly direction results” (Mutavhatsindi 2000:71). No church advances without the power and blessing of God through prayer. Only through prayer do we recognize our greatest needs for advance. Beyond the recognition of a need for something to happen prayer is the key that unlocks the first door toward victory (Young 1978:46-47). Before the church can start with her planning, she must commit herself to prayer. Prayer should be the first thing tackled because the success of the church’s plans is from God, the Almighty. “Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed” (Pr 16:3) (NIV).

6.2.2.2 Goals and objectives

A goal is a statement about what people wish to achieve and when. No actual planning is possible without fixing goals (Kritzinger et al 1984:153). Goals are essentials, especially in a task as important as that of planting churches cross-culturally. Goals are necessary if Christians want to be effective, faithful stewards of the resources God has given to them (Hesselgrave 1980:117). Goals provide clarity of purpose, a sense of progress, and a measurable standard for evaluation (Dudley 1987:124). “Churches that really want to grow will set bold goals for growths” (Wagner 1984a:56) and the goals should be clear (Hadaway 1991:112). The Christians’ goal should be to devise an intelligent plan for establishing churches – one which fits their population, is similar to

plans which have multiplied churches carried out with the resources which God has put into His hand. The plan should be adequate (McGavran 1980:440). Once a vision has been created, shared, and largely accepted, the Minister must take the lead in moving the church toward new goals which flow out of the vision (Hadaway 1991:84). After the establishment of goals; members should feel ownership because they had a hand in the development of the goals; and they should be motivated to reach the goals (Hadaway 1991:89). Goals of any sort are meaningless unless they flow out of the accepted purpose or “role” of the church and are owned by the congregation (Hadaway 1991:33). According to Dayton and Fraser (1980:437-438) whether it is long-range goals or a short-range goals, whether they are primary goals or intermediate goals, each goal needs to be owned by someone.

The goals or objectives of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo could be as follows:

- To plant mega churches in metropolitan cities like Cape Town, Durban, Port Elizabeth, Bloemfontein, East London, and Kimberley within the period of 15 years.
- To build up the new established churches to be self-governing, self-supporting and self extending units of the church universal (Kritzinger et al. 1984:34-35) within the period of 15 years.
- The third goal could be “bringing the people to spiritual maturity” within 5 years (Malphur 1998:128)

6.2.2.3 Target areas

According to Harvie M. Conn, the church must target the cities they intend to reach with the Gospel of Jesus Christ; the church must not flee those cities (Conn 1987:105). What are the steps that should be taken in reaching the cities with the Gospel? There are many things that should be taken into account in order to reach the cities with the Gospel, but here the researcher will mention three of the crucial things that should be taken into account, those things are as follows: .

6.2.2.3.1 Identify the place to plant new church

Say for example, the leaders of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo want to start a church in Bloemfontein. Their *first* step, then, must be to go to the area and for a feasibility study in order to find out options for target audiences. The *second* step is to identify their audiences and also to find where their audiences are. When the leaders see their primary task as winning people to Christ and establishing them in the faith and in the churches, they will have come a long way in their understanding. But even that is just a beginning. Before they can get on with the task, they must decide on definite areas and peoples that will become the *foci* of their immediate attention and labors. According to Hesselgrave (1980:93), one of the fundamental problems with much of the study of church growth is that principles are studied without incorporating them into a plan for reaching a specific target area. In a very real sense the task does not become clear until Christians decide the questions of “whom” and “where”.

In the Book of Acts, when Paul’s extensive missionary endeavors are related to a specific area, the reference is usually to a city. He considered an area evangelized when a church was planted in her major city. In church-extension evangelism there is

much to be said for giving certain priority to cities. But that does not end the matter. Roland Allen indicates that “all the cities, or towns, in which Paul planted churches were centres of Roman administration, of Greek civilization, of Jewish influence, or of some commercial importance” (Allen 1962:13). Walter Liefeld adds that those cities were located on major trade routes oriented towards Rome (Liefeld 1967:150, cf Hesselgrave 1978:179). Each of these characteristics should be pondered, for each has its significance. When Paul chose a target city for missionary endeavor, he looked beyond the city to the surrounding region. That is why these characteristics were important. Liefeld’s further words are instructive: “Paul’s abortive attempt to evangelize northern Asia Minor should probably not be seen as a change in strategy, i.e., to visit sparsely settled areas, but rather as a determination to preach in several cities which lay on the northern trade route” (Liefeld 1978:179).

Allen’s conclusion to the matter merits careful consideration on the part of proponents of urban or rural strategies. He insists that more than the natural advantages for outreach which characterized certain cities of Paul’s day should be considered when analyzing Paul’s strategy. Roland Allen is of the opinion that, “To seize a strategic centre we need not only a man capable of recognizing it, but a man capable of seizing it” (Allen 1962:16). In other words, one significant reason that cities became important in Paul’s ministry was that he was the kind of man who was capable of seizing them for Christ.

6.2.2.3.2 Choose the real estate

Choosing the real estate for the church structures should be done as soon as possible. This should be done to avoid the increase in the price of properties which are rising daily. Churches should not become comfortable when using buildings hired from other

churches or institutions. Using the buildings of others has many disadvantages, some of them are:

- There is no ownership of the building; the church will have limited use of the building.
- The owners can break the contract or agreement for the use of their building anytime and this can disturb church services.
- The owners can allow many churches or institutions to use the same building, and this of course will disturb the stability of church programmes.

6.2.2.3.3 Building a nucleus of members

The first step in actually planting the church, once the planning has been done and you know where you want the church to be located, is to begin to build the nucleus. “If a church rushes into its first public worship service without having developed properly, it can suffer the same fate of a miscarried or aborted child. On the other hand, if a church spends too much time in prenatal development it will lose life-giving momentum and vision as a child loses life-giving blood and nutrients with the breakdown of the placenta” (Logan 1986:8).

The critical question might be, “how long must it take to build the nucleus?” C. Peter Wagner is of the opinion that:

If the proper planning is done and a competent feasibility study produced, it is well to plan for a nucleus building phase of four to six months. A longer period might have been called for in the past when we did not have today’s know-how. But any church planter who is up to



date on the field should have the techniques to make it happen in four to six months (1990:97-98).

6.2.2.4 Surveying the target areas

According to Roger S. Greenway, the church leaders must investigate a particular city. They must begin by studying a map of the city and identifying her different parts – commercial areas, industrial zones, and residential neighbourhoods. Look closely at the areas that are growing in population and the kinds of people and cultures found there. Then they must choose one neighbourhood and study its people – their religions, cultures, languages, and social conditions. The leaders must inquire about their spiritual, social, and material needs. They must find out if there are vital churches in every language group. And they must also think about ways to advance the Kingdom of Christ in that particular neighbourhood (Greenway 1999:120).

The target areas themselves require analysis. Christians can not completely understand their task until they are able to define it in relation to the particular areas to be entered. That will require continued study. But analysis should begin before workers actually enter the target areas. According to Hesselgrave (1980:100), “no area should be entered with a church-planting effort simply because some believer, however saintly, has a desire or vision for a work, however noble and lofty. We need corporate study of demographic data of the kind that is readily available in many areas of the world”. The Christians can get the information of the map with data on residences, businesses, parks, roads, zoning, and future plans.

Hiebert and Meneses (1995:260) indicated that the sociologists and the anthropologists have different approaches of surveying the city. The sociologists have taken one

approach in studying such large and complex socio-cultural systems. They try to understand the city as one operational whole. To do this, they take a “helicopter” view of the city, looking at it from above. They map the physical, social, and cultural features to understand population densities, ethnic and class compositions, migration patterns, transportation and communication systems, religious distributions, and so on. They compile statistics on a great many demographic variables.

Anthropologists have taken another approach to the study of the city. They use the ethnographic methods they used to study tribes and peasant societies to examine the city from the street level. They live with people and hear their life stories. They participate in neighborhood activities and observe life in its everyday flow (cf. Malphurs 1998:270). Christians need to use both micro and macro approaches – both helicopter and street-level views - to help them understand the great complexity of it all.

When a target area has been adequately surveyed and studied, it should be possible to make some meaningful projections as to growth potential in the new work. Even when based upon sound data, any such projections will be expressions of faith for only God can ‘grow a church’. But just that kind of faith is needed. Such projections will have two primary aspects: the number of people they anticipate will be brought into the local body of believers, and the time required reaching successive stages of growth (Hesselgrave 1980:122-123). According to Dayton and Fraser (1980:112) Christians need to understand the people whom God has called. They have developed under different conditions and parent materials. Each person has his or her own particular language, world view, social structure, economic and technological base, and religious sensibilities.

6.2.2.5 Resources required

There are many resources needed in urban church planting. In this thesis three most vital resources needed for the project of urban church planting are given, these three resources are: money, capable people and church structures. The researcher is not undermining the other resources, but these are the most vital ones. In order to substantiate this fact, a short explanation of the importance of each of these resources is given:

6.2.2.5.1 Finance

One of the major problems in planting a church is financing the venture. The costs can be high for a core group, especially if it pursues its community through a mailer or a technigrowth program. Some planted churches have the momentum to implement the vision but are slowed in the process because of a lack of funding (Mulphurs 1998:381). Denominations need to have well funded and well staffed departments for the specific purpose of church planting (Hinton 1985:205). According to Dayton and Fraser (1980:466), in order to raise finances, there has to be someone committed to raising finances. One of the challenges indicated by the church leaders of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo is lack of sufficient funds for doing urban church planting and also for erecting church structures. As it is factually true that everything goes efficiently with money, the church must try by all means to raise funds by using different methods like, asking members to increase their tithing. The other methods of raising funds is through selling Christian literatures, T- shirts, plates, mugs with church's name et cetera. This implies that the church should provide more Christian literature so that Christians could find them nearby. This should motivate church leaders, especially Ministers to write many books. The availability of more literatures will also equip Christians. Although the

Reformed Church Tshiawelo sells hand bags, T-shirts, some literature, etc especially at special functions and anniversaries; to do this occasionally will not be enough for raising funds, but nevertheless should be done frequently.

The churches must have financial stability. Samuel D. Faircloth is of the opinion that:

Stewardship is closely related to financial stability. Giving should grow proportionately with growth in numbers. The church should live within its means and not be led to believe that living on other people's help is a healthy situation; it is not! Adults should live on their earnings; they should not forever be dependent upon their parents and friends. If a new local church receives financial aid for one reason or another from the "mother" church or from any other outside source, it should be encouraged to free itself as soon as possible for its own good. Financially dependent churches do not plant new churches (1991:180).

6.2.2.5.2 Capable people

Multiplication of congregations must become a part of the joyful obedience of every denomination, every seminary, every minister, and every Christian (McGavran 1988:32). Where do the churches find capable people who could bring joyful obedience by being involved in the multiplication of congregations? As it has already been indicated in chapter 5, Christians can not speak well about the mission of the church and leave out the theological seminary. There must be a close relationship between the church and the theological seminary. The source of capable people to carry out the work is the theological seminary. Theology is the major tool for training leaders of Christian communities (Kirk 1999:13). According to Roger S. Greenway, until there are

enough people who have prepared themselves for urban mission by gaining a firm hold of an adequate theology for the city and a biblical understanding of ethnicity, evangelistic efforts among urban ethnics will continue to be weak and faltering (1989:79). The theological seminary should be the source of teaching Christians to carry this responsibility of planting churches in urban areas. This should be done with the help of the local congregations. Theological Seminaries must have a curriculum in urban church planting which does not cater for only theological students who are training for ministry, but it must also cater church members who should be equipped for this programme. According to McGavran (1988:136), as theological training schools begin to see the theological necessity that all congregations carry on effective evangelism, great growth will certainly follow. As theological training schools see the enormous members of the unreached in today's and tomorrow's world, they will educate their students in effective evangelism. They will recognize that there is a vast number of people who are nominal Christians that characterizes so many of today's church members. They will not close their eyes to the tidal wave of secularism, materialism, and nominalism that has swept over the Western world and all the branches of its church. The need for revival and renewal within the church, resulting in great multiplication of living, Spirit-filled congregations, will dominate their thinking. Church growth at home and abroad will become one of their principal emphases.

6.2.2.5.3 Church structures

The churches must build their own church structures. Church structures should be developed as soon as possible. Lack of church structures is one of the challenges of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo as indicated in Chapter 5. This congregation must try by all means to have her own church buildings. How can they have their own church buildings? They can look for those who are selling their old buildings as this can be

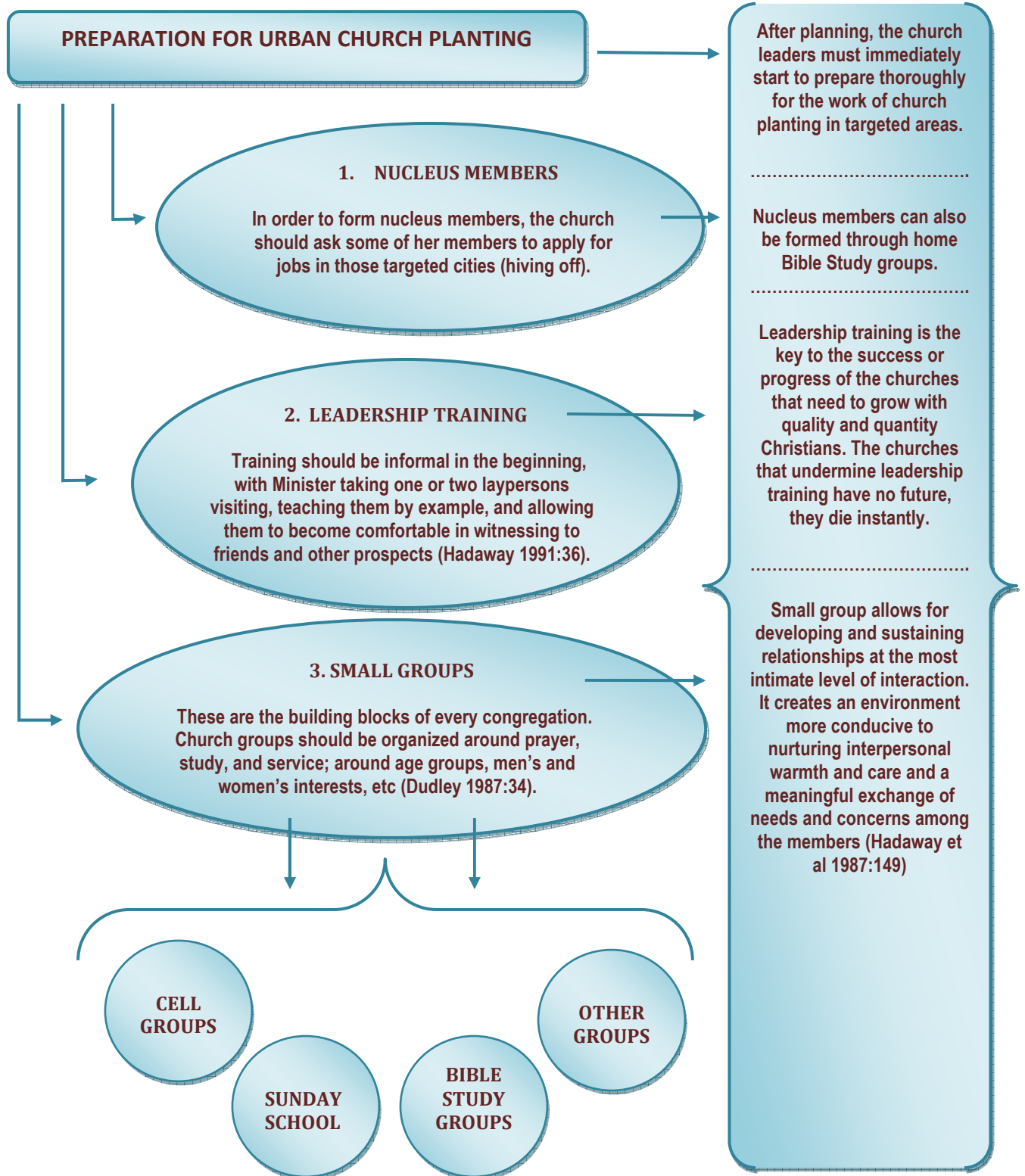


cheap, and they can renovate those buildings up to the standard they want their buildings to be. There are important things that should be taken into account by the church when they want sites for their church structures. Church structures should be visible in such a way that everybody can see them. Eddie Gibbs writes that: "But church growth experts almost unanimously stress the importance of visibility and accessibility for churches in an urban setting. Frequently, visibility is the only way people will be able to find a church and be free to window-shop for a church to their liking as urban Christians like to do" (Gibbs 1981:227). They must be built in places where accessibility of reaching them is simple. They must have parking areas so that church members who have cars could park their cars within the premises for security sake.

6.2.3 Diagram illustrating STEP 3: PREPARATION PHASE

Figure 6.3: DIAGRAM ILLUSTRATING STEP 3: PREPARATION PHASE

PROPOSED STRATEGIES FOR URBAN CHURCH PLANTING TO THE REFORMED CHURCH TSHIAWELO



6.2.3.1 Nucleus members

By the term “nucleus members” the researcher refers to the initial group of people that the church will need to work on in the area where the new church is to be planted. Since a church is people, the first objective for a new church needs to be centered on people. There are many models that can be used to form nucleus members in a new area. Some of them are as follows:

6.2.3.1.1 Hiving off

Here the church can select the model of hiving off a group of members from an existing church as her church planting methodology. How can it be done in the congregation like Reformed Church Tshiawelo? The church can do this by convincing her leaders to take this issue of church planting seriously. The Church Council should ask some of her church members to apply for jobs in the cities like Bloemfontein, Cape Town, Durban, Port Elizabeth, East London, Kimberley, etc. The Christians who could opt to apply for jobs in the above mentioned metropolitan cities, should be convinced that they are doing that for the sake of the Kingdom of God. Those people must be 100% convinced that God wants to use them in those particular cities to establish His Kingdom. They must be committed and dedicated to the building of the Kingdom of God. Men like Rich Warren are needed for the spreading the Kingdom of God countrywide. Knowing the importance of longevity in growing a healthy church, Rich Warren prayed, “Father, I’m willing to go anyplace in the world you want to send me. But I ask for the privilege of investing my entire life in just one location. I don’t care where you put me, but I’d like to stay wherever it is for the rest of my life” (Warren 1995:32).

6.2.3.1.2 Home Bible Studies

A very common way of building the nucleus is to organize one or more home Bible Study groups that meet once a week, usually on a weeknight evening in order to accommodate those who work during the day. The Minister or church planters must keep in mind that the function of these particular Bible Studies is to organize the nucleus for a new church. The Minister must seriously study the Bible so that he can lead the Bible Study groups well prepared (Young 1978:72). Studying the Bible is recognized as beneficial by all churches (Hadaway et al 1987:12). The church planters must know that it is very important to make each potential home Bible Study member aware that if they decide to become a member of the group, they should also be committed to be a part of the new church. The church leaders must know that it might take some a few days or weeks to decide that God wants them with the new church; the possibility should at least be a viable option for them. This does not mean that church leaders must just ignore them; they must convince them in such a way that they see no option other than being members of the new church. The church leaders must invest all the time and energy available to them to accomplish the task of building nucleus members.

For in the case of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo, if they want to start planting churches in metropolitan cities outside Gauteng Province, they are fortunate because some of their church members are studying at institutions that are in Bloemfontein, East London, Port Elizabeth, Kimberley, Cape Town and Durban. (For example, in Bloemfontein there are more than twenty students from churches that constitute Synod Soutpansberg who are studying at institutions in Bloemfontein). This makes it easy for the Reformed Church Tshiawelo to start operating on these big cities. What can be done first is to investigate the students who are studying and the people who are working in these big cities. This should be done with the help of the churches that constitute Synod Soutpansberg so that

they can provide RCT with the statistics of their members who are resident in these big cities. This implies that each and every church that form Synod Soutpansberg could list all her church members who are studying or working in those metropolitan cities and give those lists to the Reformed Church Tshiawelo. From there, the Reformed Church Tshiawelo can start operating in those cities using those church members who are working or studying in those cities as the nucleus members. What should be needed is the equipping of those who will be leading in home visitation, church services, also Bible study groups, etc. Theological students in their sixth year could be sent to those cities to assist those Christians in those metropolitan cities. Those Christians who will be leading in those church services in metropolitan cities should not focus only on the people who are from churches that constitute Synod Soutpansberg, they must focus also on all those people who are residing at the place where the church services will be held.

6.2.3.2 Leadership training

A regular training program ensures that the church has members who have the skills, motivation, and courage to visit and share their faith (Hadaway 1991:34). According to Young (1978:40-41), training is essential for realizing leadership potential. Training for effective leadership needs to be of several kinds:

First of all, good leaders need a good general education. In addition to the general education attained at school, there should be a good understanding of the Christian faith. *Second*, effective leaders must know what their Bible teaches, and how to use it. They must know what their church believes and why. In the *third* place, Christian leaders need specific training for the particular job they want to fill whether it be an adult teaching position, a worker with children, a music or a mission leader.



Dedication is the *third* essential for leadership. The Christian leaders must be committed to the task of serving the cause of Christ in their church. They must have a deep sense of responsibility – one is saved to serve. They need a measure of zeal or a sense of urgency if they are to apply themselves diligently. They need to have a basic Christian motivation for this service - a desire to serve God and help people rather than serve their own personal interests. Training should be informal in the beginning, with the Minister taking one or two laypersons visiting, teaching them by example, and allowing them to become comfortable in witnessing to friends and other prospects (Hadaway 1991:36).

6.2.3.3 Small groups

According to Young (1978:29), one of the responsibilities of the leadership of the church is to tend the spiritual life of the members so that the teaching and worship will be so rich and meaningful that the people are led to grow in understanding, personal experience, and joy in Christ. In this way a church can develop in vitality and the people, with warm and joyful hearts, will gladly serve and witness. When a church has such vitality, it will also draw others to it, or at least make it easier to bring others to it. According to Wagner (1990:23), it soon became evident that the small groups would eventually grow into churches.

6.2.3.3.1 Campus ministry

This ministry is one of the most important ministries that should be prioritized by the urban churches in their urban church planting. The church that ignores this ministry, cannot succeed well in her urban ministry because, the institutions' campuses are very full of people who are studying for different jobs. After completing their studies, they

work and settle in the cities. Before the church start campus ministry in any institution, she needs to study the type of institution where she intends to start campus ministry. Stuart Fowler is of the opinion that:

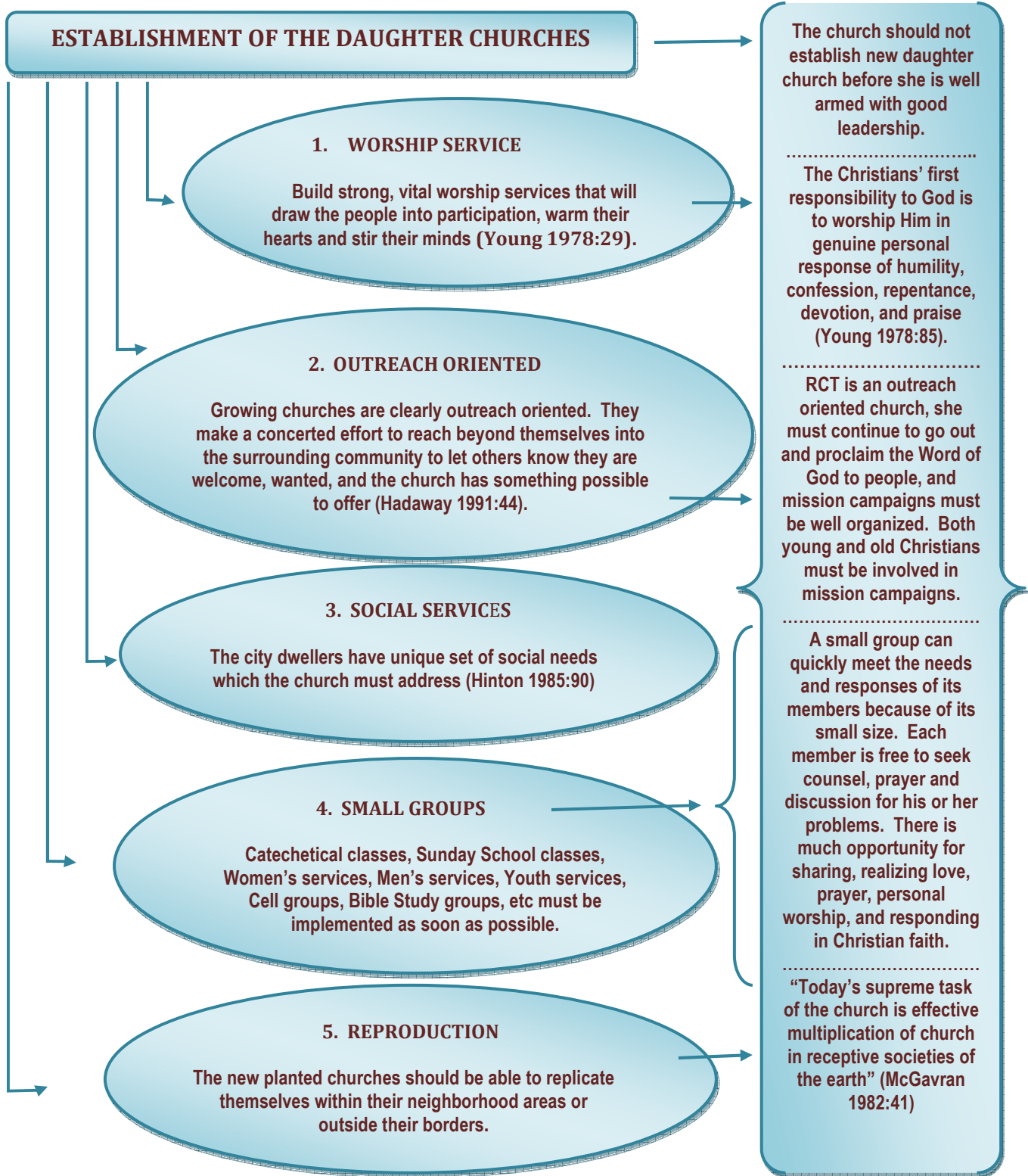
The Church leaders need to be aware of more than the organizational arrangements, campus layout, and availability of services and range of courses offered. They need to know more than how to work the system. They need to understand the underlying character of the university. They need a critical awareness of its religious roots (Fowler 1991:166). Stuart Fowler further indicated that in the modern university the main task is seen as secular. Except where courses are offered in Christian theology, the university is thought to be able to operate from a position of religious neutrality. It is not denied that some sort of religious faith may be important in the life of students. In recognition of this it is likely that there should be such things as campus ministers, chapels, and also Christian student organizations officially sanctioned and supported by the university (Fowler 1991:166). In adding to what Stuart Fowler said, even though everything will be done at the institution, the church should contribute more than the university does in campus ministry. The church must own the ministry more than the institution does.

6.2.3.3.2 Cell groups

The small cell group allows people to be accountable to one another, to pray and encourage one another on an intimate level. Bible study and prayer also provide the spiritual power for care and concern through the love of Christ (Hunter 1986a:94-95).

6.2.4 Diagram illustrating STEP 4: ESTABLISHMENT PHASE

Figure 6.4: DIAGRAM ILLUSTRATING STEP 4: ESTABLISHMENT PHASE
PROPOSED STRATEGIES FOR URBAN CHURCH PLANTING TO THE REFORMED CHURCH TSHIAWELO



6.2.4.1 Be sure about the basics of the nucleus members

Before establishing a church (to the public), it must be clear to the church planters that they are quite sure about the basics of the nucleus members: the spiritual dynamics and the lay leadership. Here the researcher will elucidate each of the above two basics.

6.2.4.1.1 Spiritual dynamics

It must not be forgotten that church planting is a spiritual enterprise. It must be borne in mind that the church is called by God to be in a spiritual battle in which Satan will do all he can to prevent the new church from starting or see that she is a crippled one if she does. This is why it is so important for the spiritual tone to be at its peak when it comes time to let the church be known to the public.

➤ Love

There are several dimensions to the spiritual tone of the nucleus that is soon to become a church. One of them is love. Love is the supreme fruit of the Holy Spirit. Loving God is the starting point, but members of the nucleus must extend it to the loving of one another and showing that love by their deeds. How can they develop this love? They can develop this love by fellowshiping together. There are many ways to accomplish this; such as home cell groups, visiting each other, etc.

➤ Faith

Faith is another fruit of the Holy Spirit and an extremely important spiritual characteristic for the nucleus to exhibit. What is faith? Faith according to Hebrews 11:1 is the

substance of things hoped for. The nucleus should be looking to the future, seeing what God wants the new church to be, and putting substance on that vision. They should believe with their whole hearts that God is going to use them to do a great work in the target community. They must also know that God gave them spiritual gifts, through those spiritual gifts; God wants to use them to build His Kingdom, by leading other people within the targeted community to repentance.

➤ **Prayer**

According to Maluga, one of the reasons that prayer is so critical for urban church growth and multiplication is the ferocious nature of spiritual warfare in the city. Strongholds of evil that sometimes have persisted for generations dominate life and do not yield easily. Many have gone into the city thinking to have great impact for God, only to withdraw in discouragement and defeat (1999:175). Prayer, along with the Word of God, is the congregation's chief spiritual weapon. "The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective" (Jas 5:16) (NIV). The leaders especially should be modeling their priority commitment to prayer in all aspects. Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes that:

We pray to God because we believe in Him through Jesus Christ; that is to say, our prayer can never be an entreaty to God, for we have no need to come before Him in that way. We are privileged to know that He knows our needs before we ask Him. This is what gives Christian prayer its boundless confidence and its joyous certainty. It matters little what form of prayer we adopt or how many words we use, what matters is the faith which lays hold on God and touches the heart of the Father who knew us long before we came to Him (Bonhoeffer 2001:109-110).

➔ Tithing

In the nucleus building phase they should have learned to exercise giving money with their heart. If possible they should tithe and continue giving far beyond the tithe. They should set the example for others. Their hearts should be really into starting a new church, and money is needed to start a new church. Jesus says, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Mt 6:21) (NIV). The leaders who do not tithe, do not set an example to the people they are shepherding. It is always difficult for them to preach or speak about tithing to others.

6.2.4.1.2 Lay leadership

Leaders are required in all human organizations. A great church has leaders who are trained, capable, and dedicated. Leadership makes or breaks any organization. Both the quality and the quantity of leadership are essential factors in the effectiveness of a church (Young 1978:40). The success or failure of any organization depends basically on the leadership. When electing leaders for urban mission, the church should pay close attention to the qualifications of leadership. What kind of leadership is needed in an urban setting? The church should consider the leadership style and qualification appropriate for urban mission.

First of all, it is necessary to have indigenous leaders. The leader should understand the life-style and characteristics of the people group that he or she is part of.

Secondly, the leaders must be someone who is mature in Christian faith and character. The leaders should have moral qualities based on the Christian faith. If the leader has a good reputation among the people, it is better. Therefore, spiritual maturity, character, morality, reputation, and the appropriate age are all important for a leader.

Thirdly, the leader must be open-minded and hospitable. He or she should be pleased to accept neighbours the way they are and love them as they are. The primary characteristic of an indigenous leadership is shown well in the “Good Samaritan” of Jesus’ parable. The leader has to have an open house for the neighbours, and be willing to share with the needy.

Fourthly, the leader must be a dedicated Christian with an enthusiasm to lead non-Christians to Christ. In order to lead non-Christians to Christ, the leader must have a genuine personal testimony of what God has done to him or hers, as well as an evangelistic message and method.

6.2.4.2 Worship service

The church should not start public worship services in a new church until she has organized a provisional board of local men who are studying and serving. Let them direct their own church from the beginning; it will be stronger (Patterson 1989:6). Strong and vital worship services should be built in such away that they will draw the people into participation, warm their hearts, and stir their minds. They must be fed from God’s Word, and led into deeper, fresh experiences with Christ (Young 1978:29). Members must regularly participate in the worship services scheduled by the church (Wagner 1984a:26). To worship God acceptably, Christians must do so ‘in spirit and in truth’ (Carson 1980:46). To come to worship the Almighty God, they must come with an unreserved commitment. With every part of their being they aim to honor Him. With all their powers they purpose to ascribe to Him the praise which is His due (Carson 1980:45). “True worship - bringing God pleasure – happens when you give yourself completely to God” (Warren 2003:78).

6.2.4.2.1 The importance of worship services

Worship is the basic or primary function of the church. In fact, all else that a church does will grow out of her worship. A church that neglects her worship will soon be negligent in her other responsibilities as well. Worship brings the people to deepening experiences with God. It provides nurture for the soul. It brings inspiration. Through it comes power and guidance. According to Rick Warren, “our motive is to bring glory and pleasure to our Creator. In Isaiah 29 God complains about worship that is half-hearted and hypocritical. The people were offering God stale prayers, insincere praise, empty words, and man-made rituals without even thinking about the meaning. God’s heart is not touched by tradition in worship, but by passion and commitment (2002:66). Terry A. Young says, “Conviction and understanding are deepened because of worship. Compassion and zeal are products of worship. The worshipping church becomes a working church. It may well be that great churches have become great because they have placed their primary emphasis upon worship” (Young 1978:37).

Worship is important because it is an integral part of what takes place in the service that occurs in most churches on Sunday morning. The researcher regards a worship service as a measuring stick or scale with which the church members, their guests, and visitors judge the church on the basis of what happens in the public worship service. This service should attract the largest number of people in most cases and should be viewed as the church at her best. Much of the week’s preparation time should be focused on this one main event. Consequently, it should serve as a litmus test for the church as a whole. Keith W. Hinton is of the opinion that city Christians will window-shop and sample until they find the church that meets their tastes and expectations (Hinton 1985:142). According to Malphurs (1998:188-189) most people determine whether or not they want to be part of the church based on the worship service-even

before considering the church's programs and events. If worship is not done well, in most minds, this is a reflection on the other programs of the church, and they don't come back for a second look (cf Hinton 1985:142).

6.2.4.2.2 Preaching in worship services

Preaching together with the reading from Scripture by which it is preceded, forms the heart of the Reformed worship. In the Old Testament era, preaching played an important role in worship services: it took the form for the instruction given by the Priests and the addresses delivered in the Name of the Lord by the Prophets. According to K. Deddens, after the exile, the Jews gathered regularly in the synagogue to hear the law which the Prophets read aloud and explained. At that point the reading of Scripture was thought to form a single whole with an explanation of the passage(s) (Deddens 1993:72). Even in the New Testament era, Jesus Christ went through all the cities and villages proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom (Mt 9:35). In the meeting of the early church mentioned in Acts 20, there was first a sermon delivered by the apostle Paul. The same apostle, Paul, said expressly to Timothy: "Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction" (2 Tm 4:2 [NIV]; cf Heb 1:1; 1 Pt 1:25; Eph 4:11-12; Rm 10:17). According to K. Deddens, the same pattern continued throughout the early Christian era: doctrine and instruction and the proclamation of God's Word were held in honor. First Scripture was read, and then it was explained (Deddens 1993:72).

Ministers must put a great of emphasis on the role of preaching in church growth. For instance, Paul Powell says, "I am not overstating the case when I say that it is with preaching that churches grow or it is with preaching that churches grow or decline". "If you want your church to grow, give attention to preaching" (Powell 1982:51). Ministers or church planters must prepare their sermons, in such a way that all church members

should be touched by the Word of God. According to Hunter, there are some preachers who do not take preaching seriously, and it results in fumbling on the pulpit. He indicated this by saying, "Some preach dull sermons" (Hunter 1983:163). Ministers should keep the message simple to ensure that some will remember it. "Don't put before the people something so deep they can't understand it, something so shallow that it doesn't interest them, something so frivolous it wastes their time, or something so unrelated to life's basic needs that it is pointless. Feed the people from God's Word, Give them the meat and the milk, the bitter herbs and the honey" (Young 1978:96). The message should have a point so that there is something which can be remembered (Hadaway 1991:82). People must hear a clear Word from God that is relevant to their lives as they attempt to live from day to day (Malphurs 1998:201). Sermons should be bold, challenging and enthusiastic. A vision for the future must be articulated and members challenged to play their part in bringing this vision to life. Further, the Minister should be able to create a sense of enthusiasm about the vision of the church, so that members will want to join its fulfillment (Hadaway 1991:82). More important is the centrality of the Bible in sermons, being able to generate enthusiasm in worship, the communication of a vision for the future of the church, and maintaining high morale (Hadaway 1991:67). Preaching and teaching must be more than preaching truth for truth's sake. It must touch human need, be purposeful and elicit a response (Hinton 1985:146).

Malphurs (1998:201-205) indicated six principles that should be applied when people preach in worship services. Those principles are as follows:

- (a). Sermons must be interesting not boring.
- (b). Messages should touch the felt needs.
- (c). Sermons should be simple and memorable.



- (d). Messages should not be too long.
- (e). Language must be clear and contemporary.
- (f). Sermons should be creative and positive.

Expository preaching is not a key to growth, but Bible-centered messages seem to be important. Ministers should foster the expectation that their sermons will help members to understand the Bible and to apply biblical truth to their lives (Hadaway 1991:81).

6.2.4.2.3 The atmosphere in worship services

Create an attractive atmosphere. What does the researcher mean by atmosphere? He is referring to the mood, tone, or spirit of the service. In other words, he is referring to the feeling people get when they enter a church service. Regardless of what people call it, atmosphere definitely impacts what happens in the worship service. It can either work for Christians' purpose or against what they are trying to accomplish. According to Warren (1995:270), "If you don't purposely determine the type of atmosphere you want to create in a service, you are leaving it to chance".

There are five words to describe the atmosphere that the Reformed Church Tshiawelo should seek to create each week.

(a). Expectation

One of the frequent comments visitors should make about the Church's services should be that they feel a sense of expectancy among the people. There should be pervasive enthusiasm at the start of each service. People should feel excitement, energy, and a spirit of anticipation about being together. Members should sense that God is with them

and lives are going to be changed. Visitors should often describe the atmosphere of the service as “electric”. What should cause the spirit of expectance? There are a number of factors that can produce the spirit of expectance:

- ✓ Members should pray for the church services all week.
- ✓ Enthusiastic members should bring their unsaved friends to church.
- ✓ A history of life changing services.
- ✓ The sheer size of the crowd.
- ✓ The faith of the team that lead the services.

The opening prayer during the church service should always express the expectations that God will be in the service and that people’s needs are going to be met. Expectancy is just another word of faith. Jesus said to the two blind men, “According to your faith will it be done to you” (Mt 9:29) (NIV) (Warren 1995:270). The votum at the beginning of the service which is taken from Psalm 124:8 is an appeal for the LORD’s help and an expression of the congregation’s determination to look to Him (Deddens 1993:47). “Every part of a church service is an act of worship: praying, scripture reading, singing, confession, silence, being still, listening to a sermon, taking notes, giving an offering, baptism, communion, signing a commitment card, and even greeting other worshippers” (Warren 2002:65).

(b). Celebration

Psalm 100:2 says, “Worship the Lord with gladness; come before Him with joyful songs” (NIV). Because God wants Christians’ worship to be a celebration, they must cultivate an atmosphere of gladness and joy. Too many church services resemble a funeral more than a festival. A major cause of this is often the demeanor of those leading the

worship. Worship is a delight, not a duty. Christians should experience joy in God's presence (Ps 21:6). In Psalm 42:4, David remembered, "... how I used to go with the multitude...to the house of God, with shouts of joy and thanksgiving among the festive throng" (NIV) (Warren 1995:270-271). According to Kent Hunter, "worship should be a celebration." But there are also things it should not be if the church expects to grow. Hunter goes on to say, worship "is not intended to be a dull, drab, funeral atmosphere" (Hunter 1983:154). Peter Wagner adds that there is nothing unauthentic about boring worship but if it is boring, members will not be very enthusiastic about inviting unsaved friends (Wagner 1984b:113). Consequently, rather than attracting people to Christ, the church will be distracting them from Christ. The unchurched visit to "check us out" and don't return (Malphurs 1998:187). Wagner says "When a lot of people come together, hungry to meet God, a special kind of worship experience can occur. That experience is what I call 'celebration'" (Wagner 1984b:111).

(c). Affirmation

Hebrews 10:25 says, "Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching" (NIV). There is so much bad news in the world; people need a place to hear Good News. The church should create her services to be an encouragement not a discouragement to people. Even when the message is confrontational, the preacher must start positively and end positively. He can change a person's behaviour far more quickly through affirmation than through criticism. If the Christians study the ministry of Jesus Christ they will see how skillfully He used affirmation to bring out the best in people (Warren 1995:271).



(d). Incorporation

The church leaders should work hard to create a family atmosphere in their services in spite of their size. The way Christians should greet each other at the beginning and end of each service, the way the people on stage should interact with each other, and the way the church leaders speak should ring to the church members that they belong to that particular church, they are members of a family (1 Pt 3:8). In a world that is becoming increasingly impersonal, people are looking for a place where they can feel they belong (Warren 1995:271).

(e). Restoration

The Ministers should know that life is tough. Each weekend, they should know that they are looking to the faces of people who have been beaten up by the world all week. They arrive in the church service with their spiritual and emotional batteries depleted. The job of the preacher is to reconnect them with spiritual jumper cables to the restorative power of Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls" (Mt 11:28-29) (NIV). One of the purposes of weekly worship is to restore Christians spiritually and emotionally for the new week ahead. Jesus insisted, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath" (Mk 2:27) (NIV). The church is called to offer the refreshing water of life to people who are dying of thirst all around her (Warren 1995:272). A major effect that worship can have on God's church is to bring her people to a fresh commitment of their lives to Christ (Malphurs 1998:191).

6.2.4.3 Outreach oriented

Growing churches are clearly outreach oriented. They make a concerted effort to reach beyond themselves into the surrounding community to let others know they are welcome, wanted, and the church has something positive to offer (Hadaway 1991:44). This is what RCT is doing, and she must continue to be outreach oriented. The new daughter churches of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo should develop themselves to be outreach oriented churches.

6.2.4.4 Social services

The church members should be encouraged and be equipped in such a way that they are able to serve others outside the congregation. This includes direct personal involvement with the poor and needy or in the programs designed to help the needy (Wagner 1984a:26). In South African cities, there are many homeless people, jobless people, poor people, streets kids, etc; the church must see to it that she involves herself in programs for assisting those groups of people within her local community. J. Andrew Kirk is of the opinion that:

The church has been involved in almost every conceivable kind of development project during its expansion across the world in the last two centuries. From the beginning of the modern missionary movement, the pioneers saw as part of their work the betterment of the social conditions of the people. It may be possible with hindsight to laugh at the incongruous notion of mission as building both churches and latrines, but the intuition was right that some scientific discoveries should be used to enhance the material life of people (Kirk 1999:109).

6.2.4.5 Christian nurturing

According to Kent A. Hunter, “The responsibility for Christian nurture is strong when the goal is discipleship. The value of Sunday School is resurrected to its rightful place. The opportunities for Christian day schools are obvious. Christian parenting leads to nothing less than the lofty goal of discipleship. Christians in the body minister to others who are growing (Hunter 1986b:120). For the church to nurture her members she must implement the basic building blocks in her life, some of them are as follows:

6.2.4.5.1 Nurturing through Small groups

One of the greatest blessings of being a Christian is to enjoy Christian fellowship. Churches which do not provide meaningful opportunities for Christian brothers and sisters to fellowship with one another are usually not growing churches. Because interpersonal relationships are such a high priority to most Christians (Wagner 1984a:65). Kent A. Hunter (1986b:122) is of the opinion that:

When a local church gets involved in a good, solid, biblical study of gifts for growth, lay people begin to realize that they have a ministry. They are part of the team—God’s team—with Christ as the head of the body and each part functioning with a different gift. Envy, jealousy, and false humility, (the “I can’t do anything” attitude) are put away with a healthy attitude concerning the diversity of gifts. This leads the local church to a beautiful quality of ministry as described in the New Testament. This effectiveness, in turn, leads to growth as the church reaches out.

(a). House church

House church is formed by generally numbering around 5-12 persons. She can also be called a Home-Based Small Group. Her major purposes include Bible Study, prayer, *koinonia* (fellowship), evangelism, and relief. Fellowship is emphasised in particular in a small group: “Mission flows into fellowship, just as fellowship flows into mission” (Hastings 1996:15).

Since the Early Church, home-based small groups have played an important role in extending Christianity and building the faith of the new believers⁴⁰. Eddie Gibbs described the importance of the home-based small groups in the Early Church as follows:

From her inception the Church took root in homes. In Jerusalem the Christians met together for fellowship in addition to attendance at temple worship. ‘Day after day they met as a group in the temple, and they had their meals together in their homes, eating with glad and humble hearts...’ (Ac 2:46). Acts 5:42 makes clear that Christians used their homes for more than eating. It was there that ‘they continued to teach and preach the Good News about Jesus the Messiah’... Not only were homes used for preaching, they also became the regular meeting place for groups for Christians. Aquila and Priscilla made their home a base for the church in Ephesus (1 Cor 16:19) and Rome (Rm 16:3-5). In Laodicea a group of Christians met in the home of Nympha (Col 4:15), and in Colossae they were given hospitality by Philemon (Phil 2). For

⁴⁰ The Christian home was the most important place for the spreading of the Gospel in the Early Church: “The church in the first three centuries grew without the aid of two of our most prized tools: mass evangelism in church, instead, they used the home” (Watson 1976:147).

the first two hundred years of the Church's life, it was a home-based movement. No special church buildings were constructed for Christian worship until the close of the second century (Gibbs 1981:235).

The major missionary strategy of the Apostle Paul was to establish house churches (small groups) in the cities he visited (Greenway 1989d:19). Therefore, when he arrived in a city, he first contacted the head or key member of a household, as well as the Jewish synagogue. And then he let the whole household, including the father, mother, wife, husband, children, brother, sister, relative, servant, friend, and so on, listen to his message (cf Ac 16:15,31,34). He attempted to convert and baptise the whole household, not just certain members. In this way house churches were naturally begun. The house church was the base for urban evangelization.

Home-based small groups are still the key factor in reaching people in cities. Today's urban people feel depersonalized, lonely, and uprooted. So they need intimate connections and face-to-face communication with their neighbours. A home-based small group can provide intimate friendships and fellowship for urban people. It can produce the "at home" atmosphere of warmth that people long for.

Furthermore, a small group has the flexibility, mobility, and sensitivity which are necessary in reaching urban people groups (Gibbs 1981:240-244). A small group can quickly meet the needs and responses of its members because of its smallness. Each member is free to seek counsel, prayer, and discussion for his or her problems. There is much opportunity for sharing, releasing love, prayer, personal worship, and responding in Christian faith. The members can genuinely be concerned about and take care of one another.



(b). Catechism classes

The first few weeks of a convert's new life in Christ are more important for molding his or her future Christian character (Patterson 1989:8). Catechetical classes should be actively conducted so that the new members can be baptized without delay (Patterson 1989:8). Dietrich Bonhoeffer in his book, "*The Cost of Discipleship*", commented the following about baptism:

Baptism is not an offer made by man to God, but an offer made by Christ to man. It is grounded solely on the will of Jesus Christ, as expressed in His gracious call. Baptism is essentially passive – *being baptized, suffering* the call of Christ. In baptism man becomes the candidate, he becomes a partaker in this Name, and is baptized '*into Jesus Christ*' (εἰς, Rm 6:3; Gl 3:27; Mt 28:19). From that moment he belongs to Jesus Christ. He is wrestled from the dominion of the world, and passes into the ownership of Christ (Bonhoeffer 2001:170).

Baptism therefore betokens a *breach*. Christ invades the realm of Satan, lays hands on his own, and creates for himself his Church. By this act past and present are rent asunder. The old order is passed away, and all things have become new. This breach is not affected_by man's tearing off his own chains through some unquenchable longing for a new life of freedom. The breach has been affected by Christ long since, and in baptism it is affected in our own lives. We are now deprived of our direct relationship with all God-given realities of life. Christ the Mediator has stepped in between us and them. The baptized Christian has ceased to belong to the world and is no longer its slave.



He belongs to Christ alone, and his relationship with the world is mediated through him (Bonhoeffer 2001:170).

(c). Sunday School services

According to Hadaway (1991:56-57), Sunday School is not the only small-group experience for many church members. Other groups include the choir, committees, mission organizations, task forces, training groups, and various forms of home Bible Studies or cell groups. Each of these adds to the number of face-to-face contacts a member has in the church and increases his or her circle of friends. The groups help to create a large number of redundant ties which bind an individual to a church. The more ties exist, the stronger is the bond.

(d). Cell groups

In home cell groups *koinonia* and the development of strong caring relationships are “built in” (Hadaway 1991:57). The need for cell groups seems clear – they provide a function for members which are being neglected by most churches. Because of this useful function, home cell groups do help churches grow (Hadaway 1991:57).

6.2.4.5.2 Nurturing through conferences

According to Bakke (1997:13), mission is no longer about crossing the oceans, jungles and deserts, but about crossing the streets of the world’s cities. From now on, nearly all ministries will be cross cultural amid the urban pluralism caused by the greatest migration in human history from the Southern hemispheres to the North, from East to West and, above all, from rural to urban. Church members should be led to increasing

in their grasp of the teachings of the Bible through conferences. They can integrate this with a theological system that enables them to apply the Bible's teachings to their life situation (Wagner 1984a:24-25). Urban mission conferences and seminars should be held frequently in order to impart more teachings of urban mission to the church members. This will help them to understand mission the way Ray Bakke described it above, as it is no longer about crossing oceans, jungles and desert, but about crossing the streets of the world's cities.

6.2.4.5.3 Nurturing through house visitation

Survey findings suggest that growing churches are more likely to visit new residents in the community, to visit persons who attend their worship services for the first time, to have conducted a religious census in the community, and to have sent out a brochure or other mass mail outs about their church to community residents. These activities are not essential for growth, but they are related to growth and appear to work for many churches (Hadaway 1991:23). House visitation is where the strength of the growing, matured church is.

6.2.4.6 Reproduction

The best example of a church that reproduced herself through planting daughter churches was the church located in the city of Antioch in Syria. The missionary journeys described in the Book of Acts were vital to the spread of Christianity. However, these were largely church-planting ventures that came out of the church at Antioch (Malphurs 1998:380). What is important to observe here is how the early churches such as the Antioch church understood the Great Commission mandate. Jesus Christ said, "Make disciples!" The Antioch church accomplished this through

sending out two missionary church planters who started a number of daughter churches in Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Achaia.

According to McGavran (1982:41), today's supreme task of the church is effective multiplication of churches to the receptive societies of earth. Theodore Williams is of the opinion that, the mission of the local church does not end with mere proclamation of the Gospel. There must be the planting of churches among the people to whom the Gospel is proclaimed. The mission of the local church is evangelization with a view to planting churches in the neighbourhoods and on the mission fields (Williams 1986:10). Dayton and Fraser (1980:63) are of the opinion that missionary proclamation should lead everywhere to the establishment of the Church of Jesus Christ, which exhibits a new, defined reality as salt and light in her social environmentKent A. Hunter indicates that the church must multiplies herself:

Parenthood is part of God's plan for churches. Sometimes the goal of church growth has been represented as super-churches with thousands of members. That's fine because those churches are important. But church growth thinking challenges churches not to just grow larger and larger. It calls for churches to start other churches through planting ministries. Bigger is not necessarily better in church growth. Quality must be maintained. Often, the fastest way God's Kingdom has grown is by the starting of new churches: new, healthy, growing churches. Actually, upon investigation we find that large churches are often planting new churches as part of a comprehensive strategy. The Church Growth Movement, in all the aspects of comprehensive growth, stresses the importance of quality (Hunter 1986b:122).

Each church should send one or two extension workers, as did Antioch (Ac 13:1-3), to rise up daughter churches. Help the Church Elders to define their church's area of responsibility. They should make a map and show all the unreached areas where they should work. Then they should formulate a strategy to reach these areas (Patterson 1989:22).

6.2.4.6.1 Evaluation of the church's progress

Evaluation is the key to excellence. The church should continually examine each part of her service and assess her effectiveness (Warren 1995:275). She must evaluate her progress objectively (Patterson 1989:27). The church leaders must critically evaluate the work they have done through the whole year, and point out what they have achieved, and what they did not achieve. This will help them to develop their working strategies (Mutavhatsindi 2000:49). Effective organizations are in a constant process of self-evaluation, asking themselves, "what are we doing right, what are we doing wrong, and what new priorities need to be added in the light of our stated purposes and the changing conditions under which we operate? (Hadaway 1991:112).

An evaluation procedure should be a natural part of the planning process, for the planning process should always include a review of purposes and goals. To review should mean to evaluate. This means that specific times should be set aside to evaluate performance and effectiveness (Dayton and Fraser 1980:479). Evaluation should be continuous. In order to gain a greater understanding of how to carry out evaluation, it is useful to think of evaluating goals, evaluating means and methods, and evaluating the use of resources. One of the most effective ways that should be used by the church leaders to evaluate the work of the church is to write regular reports to themselves and others to demonstrate how many of their goals and milestones have

been reached. Reporting in itself causes them to stop and evaluate. The researcher will use a diagram to illustrate this process of evaluation.

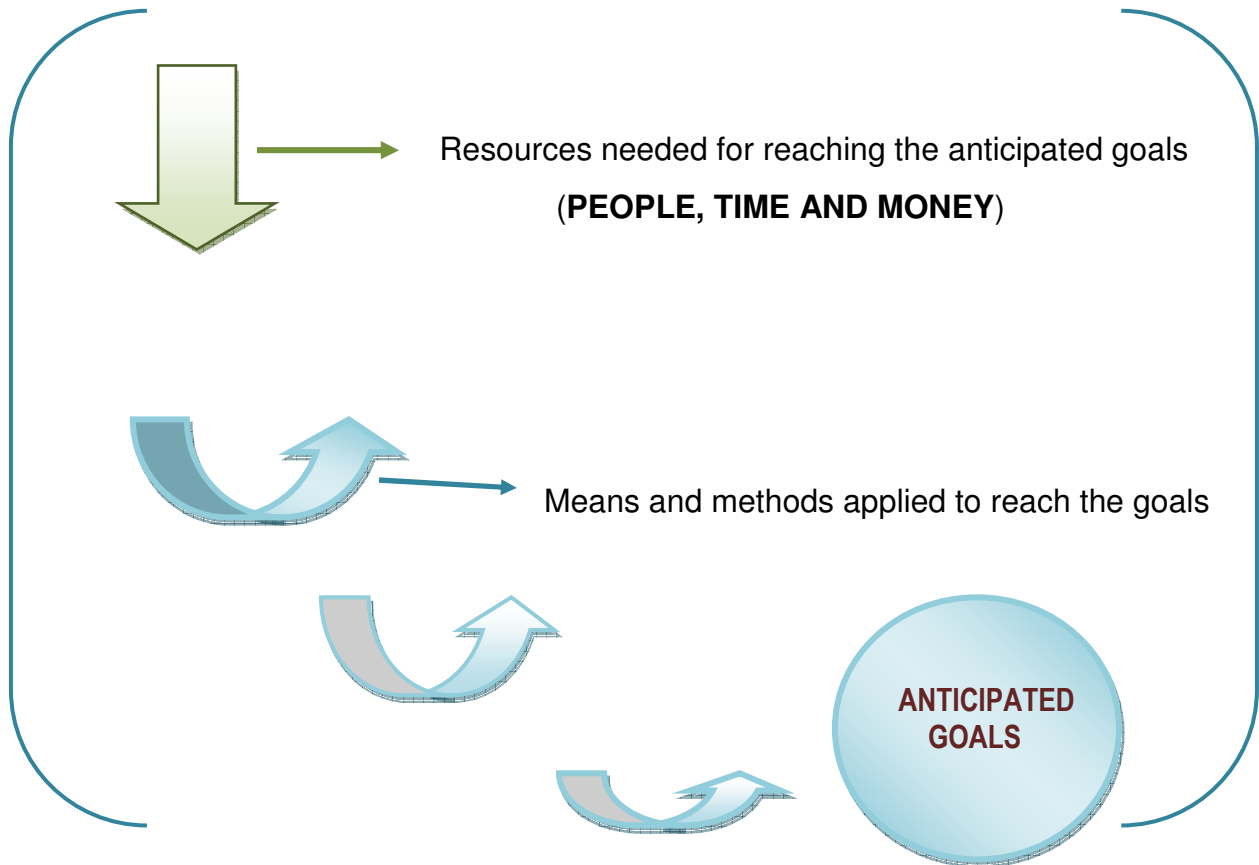


Figure 6.5: Diagram illustrating the process of evaluation

The church leaders should ask themselves the following questions for evaluation:

(a). Evaluating goals: *Did we reach our goals?*

They may have come by a different route than they expected. They may have spent more or fewer resources than they anticipated, but did they reach the goal? Now it could be that they reached a different goal from the one they expected, and it could well

be that they changed their definition of the goal as they moved through the re-planning and evaluation process. If they met the goal they originally set, why did they meet it? If they did not reach their goal, why did they not reach it? Was the goal unrealistic? Is there a possibility that they could still reach it if they gave it more time or more energy? If they did reach the goal, did it have the desired result? The goals should link together. The one in the future depends upon the one that they are attempting to meet now.

(b). Evaluating means and methods: *Did our means and methods work?*

If they did meet the anticipated goals, they have to ask themselves the following vital questions: Did we use the means and methods we said we would? Or did we have to find other means and methods? Did we use the means and methods when we said we would? In other words, did we apply them in a timely manner?

(c). Evaluating their resources: *What did we use?*

Did they use the amount of time they said they would, or more or less? Why?

What did their evaluation tell them about the people themselves? Hopefully, all of the goals were related to someone's accountability. When they come to money as a resource, did they use the amount of money they said they would? Did they use more or less? Why?

The last questions to be asked could be: Was their expenditure of resources good stewardship? If they had to do it again would they believe that this investment of time and people and money was a good use of God's gifts? The above questions are vital questions that could assist them in evaluating their progress towards reaching the goals

being anticipated. If they consider them in their evaluation, they will help them to introspect themselves and encourage them to work faithfully.

6.2.4.6.2 Church growth

The church leaders can not make the church grow; they only let it grow. They should not push their church members to convert people by human devices. Let His church grow spontaneously. A normal, obedient church simply grows as Christians obey their Lord (Patterson 1989:31). In order for a church to grow, members must be engaged in efforts to attract and persuade non-members to visit and join the congregation (Hadaway 1991:15). True quantity growth depends on quality growth (Hunter 1986b:121). According to Wagner (1984a:61), in America, the primary catalytic factor for church growth in a local church is the Minister. Likewise, Paul Powell says, “the most important factor in determining whether a church grows or declines is its leadership” (Powell 1982:29). Church growth does not happen merely as the result of human efforts. Jesus said, “...I will build my church” (Mt 16:18) (NIV). He is the one who is doing it, using humans as His instruments. It is therefore necessary that the people of the church be in close touch with God, and it is the Minister’s responsibility to see that this happens (Wagner 1984a:129). Newer churches tend to grow so rapidly because members are just developing relationship with one another, and all of the social groups in the church are still permeable. Newcomers fit in easily because everyone essentially is a newcomer (Hadaway 1991:46). In the New Testament the concept of *koinonia* (fellowship) is strong. This is the glue that makes Christian community unlike any other social group (Hunter 1986b:121).

Most church growth starts with the Minister (Wagner 1984a:46). Wagner agreed with Dewayne Davenport who says, “If called upon to name the key to church growth, it

would be leadership” (Davenport 1978:30). This is an awesome responsibility, and it is one which many Ministers shy away from. According to Wagner (1984a:46-48), there are three major reasons why some Ministers are not willing to pay this price.

- (a). the *first* is that assuming responsibility for growth involves a substantial risk – the risk of failure.
- (b). the *second* reason is that Ministers were not prepared for such a role in seminary.
- (c). the *third* reason is that Ministers are not sure of God’s call.

According to Kent R. Hunter, one of the central themes in church growth literature is making disciples as the goal of evangelism. Preaching the Good News about Jesus Christ and the power of the cross for forgiveness of sin is necessary. It is the Gospel that the Spirit uses to call people to repentance and faith (Hunter 1986b:119). A person is not evangelized until he or she becomes a responsible member of the body of Christ. Folded into the sheepfold, the new Christian takes on a lifelong life-style of following Jesus Christ, learning, growing, and interacting with fellow members of Christ’s body.

6.2.4.6.3 Witnessing

According to Scherer and Bevans (1992:20), “witness was a distinctive mark of the church in the time of the apostles. In giving her witness today the church continues to be faithful to this apostolic commission”. Witnessing is a skill which is best learned by example. It cannot be fully learned from the classroom, through books, or even through witnessing assignments. Ministers should examine their own skills and commitment in this area, as well as that of the church office bearers. Participation on a witnessing team with persons experienced in evangelistic visitation helps overcome fear, helps establish witnessing as a personal routine, helps evangelism become part of one’s self-



concept, and helps an individual develop a unique approach to sharing his or her experience with Christ with others (Hadaway 1991:35). Members regularly should share their faith in Jesus Christ with unbelievers (Wagner 1984a:26). Both word and deed along with identification with both people in their needs are essential for a faithful witness (Goheen 2000:29). Terry J. Young indicates that one of the things that help some churches to do so much more in Christian service than others do is a deep and sincere commitment to Christ by a good portion of their members. He further indicated that:

Commitment to Christ, to His disciples, to His teachings, to His work - in short, to His Lordship - has always been important in the life of a church which wants to win men with the Gospel and extend its ministry. In times such as this, when popular sentiment is indifferent towards religion (if not somewhat hostile), commitment on the part of those within the church circle becomes all the more important. Individual commitment to Christ is one of the things which stand as a striking witness to the unconverted. It is also the quality which makes it possible for a church to carry on its work (Young 1978:20-21).

6.3 PRINCIPLES OF URBAN CHURCH PLANTING

6.3.1 Malphurs' principles of church growth and church planting

Malphurs (1998:27-28) indicated that there are at least seven biblical principles that are critical to church growth and the planting of biblically based churches. Those principles are as follows:



- (a). The *first* is a Great Commission vision that involves pursuing, evangelizing, and discipling lost people (Mt 28:19-20; The Gospel of Lk).
- (b). The *second* is a strong servant-leadership (Ac; 1 Cor 11:3); a plurality of lay leaders has proved insufficient to lead the church.
- (c). The *third* is a well-equipped, mobilized lay army (1 Cor 12-14; Eph 4).
- (d). The *fourth* is a culturally relevant ministry (1 Chr 12:32; 1 Cor 9).
- (e). The *fifth* is a holistic, authentic worship (Rm 12:1).
- (f). The *sixth* is a biblical, culturally relevant evangelism that focuses on the various biblical styles of evangelism and emphasizes forms other than confrontational evangelism.
- (g). The last is a robust network of small groups (Ac 2:46; 5:42; 20:20).

6.3.2 Wingerd's principles of church planting

Roy A. Wingerd (1995:12-13) gives five principles that form the foundation of the whole concept of church planting and specifically a saturation church planting movement.

6.3.2.1 Incarnating Christ

Filling a community with churches is in reality fleshing out that the life of Christ in His love and mercy to the people of the community. It involves every gift and ministry the Church has to offer, whether feeding, clothing and proclaiming the Good News to the poor, using Bible tracts, or sending missionaries (church members) to unreached groups of people. Local churches reflect the incarnate Lord's own life when the whole Body works together in a plan to multiply. Church planting will bring the incarnated presence of Christ to every small community on earth.

6.3.2.2 Filling the earth

Saturating an area or people group with churches means making sure every person has a church within his or her reach (geographical proximity) and in a language and culture he or she understands (culturally relevant). Church planting is a strategy to fill the earth with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord.

6.3.2.3 Completing the task

Bringing closure to the task of world evangelization is the focal point of strategic missions thinking in Christians' generation. It is certainly possible to see that every person in their generation at least has a local church within his or her reach. This is one concrete, long term way to be certain every person has a valid opportunity to hear and respond to the Gospel. Church planting is therefore a method and standard for measuring the completion of the Great Commission.

6.3.2.4 Evangelizing effectively

While church planting is more than a method, it is also a *method*. This does not mean that other methods of evangelism (such as radio, literature, sports, films, crusades, et cetera) should be discarded or abandoned. In fact, when they are incorporated into church planting the efforts yield greater results. History shows that all methods of evangelism are most effective when designed and carried out in such a way that they result in the multiplying of new churches. Church planting is an effective method of evangelism.

6.3.2.5 Reaching the unreached

According to Kent A. Hunter, quality and quantity growth are inseparable. Quantity without quality is false growth. It is short term; it can not last. Quality without quantity is self-centered and suffers in the stagnancy of arthritic region. Church growth brings a balance that, by the power of the resurrected Christ, brings life to the unevangelized and unchurched around the globe (Hunter 1986b:125). The highest priority for church planting in any nation (and city) is reaching for those who have never heard the Gospel. Church planting is, therefore, a strategy for reaching the unreached.

6.3.3 Carey's principles of church planting

According to G. Carey, there are however, three more principles that are important for a proper understanding of church planting. These principles are biblical and valid principles concerning church planting (Carey 1991:31-32):

6.3.3.1 Churches must have a church planting strategy

Because of the basic nature of the Kingdom of God to extend itself to every tribe and tongue and nation, it is important that every church (all denominations) and all local congregations must have a church planting strategy. The nature of the Great Commission and the Kingdom of God make it a necessity.

6.3.3.2 Every member ministry

One of the strengths of church planting is that it takes evangelism by the whole church working together seriously, and particularly by laypeople. Kent A. Hunter is of the opinion that:

Since making disciples is the goal of evangelism, evangelism is the activity of the whole church. Someone plants; someone waters; God brings the increase. Then others nurture, serve, help, model, and teach. The goal is not a dead-end road. The goal is not church membership. The end result is not a name of the church rolls. The discipleship goal is to build people who are equipped to be part of the process of Kingdom growth. Disciples are reborn to multiply. It is this multiplication factor that God will use to fulfill the Great Commission. It will not happen by addition. Consequently, true quantity growth depends on the quality growth. The two are inseparable. The priesthood of all believers is an aspect of quality growth that church growth people emphasize as essential for the fulfillment of the Great Commission. Everyone is a minister. Everyone has a ministry. Each Christian has a part in the body of Christ (Hunter 1986b:120-121).

6.3.3.3 Ecumenical consultation

No attempt should be made at church planting without considering the ecumenical implications. Any new venture will affect other groups (organisations) and denominations working in the same area. Others must be drawn into the planning, so that even where they may not agree with the vision, they may understand why it is being carried forward.

6.4 CHURCH PLANTING METHODS

6.4.1 Prayer evangelism and church planting

From a church planting perspective, Wagner categorises prayer evangelism as part of what he calls church planting crusades. By this he means the use of crusades to plant churches (Wagner 1990:105). In the context of unreached cities and evangelism, it is evident that this strategy, when it produces fruit in the form of new converts, will result in the planting of new churches. Effective prayer evangelism will result in the planting of new churches.

Church planting is part of the very essence of mission. Conversions must result in the planting of new churches. This is what happened in the Book of Acts. When the Christians were persecuted in Jerusalem, the *Diaspora* started and through the *Diaspora* new churches were planted everywhere. This resulted in the growth of the Church. This is also confirmed by Wagner who says, “The single most effective evangelistic methodology under heaven is planting new churches... It applies monoculturally and cross culturally. It holds true both on new ground and old ground” (Wagner 1990:11).

6.4.2 Church planting in mission theology

Gilbertus Voetius (1588-1676) already saw church planting as a crucial part of mission. He was the first Protestant to develop a comprehensive “theology of mission” (Bosch 1991:256-258). While his views on mission are to an extent outdated, they are, on the other hand, surprisingly modern. He formulated a threefold goal of mission. The immediate aim was *conversio gentilium* (conversion of the Gentiles), which was subordinate to the second and more distant goal, *plantatio ecclesiae* (the planting of the church). The supreme and ultimate aim of mission, however, and the one to which both the first two were subservient, was *gloria et manifestatio gratiae divinae* (the glory and manifestation of divine grace). Even today theologians affirm Voetius in these three principles that he laid down nearly 400 years ago.

6.5 CONCLUSION

From what we have studied in this chapter, it is quiet clear that the church is called by Jesus Christ to engage herself to the salvation of sinners, and the extension of God’s Kingdom through church planting. The local church should be able to engage herself in mission to reproduce herself. It was also clear from this chapter that the Reformed Church Tshiawelo should have some principles in order to plant more churches in metropolitan cities outside of Gauteng Province. It was quite clear that it started with a visionary leader, who sells his vision to his co-workers or church council members together with the Mission and Theological boards. From there the vision should be sold to the small groups. And lastly, the vision should be sold to the whole congregation to own it. Then the process of planning for church planting is started, and then the daughter church should be led to spiritual maturity and reproduce herself.



CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In this thesis the first chapter explained the relevance of the subject, which stems from the fact that urban church planting, is of prime importance to the church and her mission today. During the 20th century cities have mushroomed on six continents, also in Africa. Urbanization and modernization, with their concomitants of materialism and secularism, have become prominent features of our time.

If urbanization is one of the most important social realities in Africa today, it goes without saying that Christian mission must take full account of it. The church has turned her attention to African towns and cities none too soon. Her own historical and theological inclinations have led the church in the past to favour the rural areas, where success has been widely achieved. Yet the whole Christian enterprise in Africa is threatened by urbanization, and a half-hearted approach to the towns will not save it. The church must take urbanization seriously and use it as a good opportunity that God is giving to His church in our time. This implies that the Church must give urban mission a priority that is absolute. Personnel have to be deployed in towns and cities, and proper structures created, if the Gospel is to continue to make an impact in the lives of people in the beginning of the 21st century.

This led the researcher to determine five objectives as a goal for this thesis:



- Understanding the Biblical theology of urban mission.
- Discerning the role of a local church in urban church planting.
- Developing a comprehensive mission strategy for the church in an urban setting.
- Evaluating the work of urban mission of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo.
- Developing the strategies that the Reformed Church Tshiawelo can utilize to plant more churches in metropolitan cities outside Gauteng Province.

7.2 HYPOTHESIS

The hypothesis for the research, as stated in the introduction of the thesis read as follows:

The younger churches on the African continent – especially in Southern Africa – are awaking to their missionary obligation, of moving from the position of receiving churches to sending churches. Especially in the growing cities of Africa the churches need to be informed and empowered to play their part in this regard. The hypothesis of this study is that: with a proper understanding of the Biblical mandate for mission, as well as of the urban context in which the church has to function, a comprehensive strategy for mission in the cities of Africa may be developed. The congregation of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo in Soweto was used as a case study in the research (see p 4).

It is the researcher's contention at the conclusion of the research that the hypothesis proved to be correct.

7.3 MAIN CONCLUSIONS

7.3.1 Biblical theology of the city

The biblical theology of urban mission was discussed in Chapter Two. The focus was on the way both the Old and the New Testaments view urban mission. From the biblical point of view, it was clear that the *mission* of the church always concerns *sending*. The Triune God is involved in the sending. The biblical theology of the city showed both the negative and the positive image of the city. City was negatively viewed as the city of Satan, for example, because she sinned before God (cf Rv 17:1-2; 18:2-3, 9-19), Babylon (Rv 17:1-19:10) was regarded as the city of Satan. The city was also viewed as the symbol of all evil. The violence (Ezk 7:23), murder (Rv 17:5-6) and injustice (Ezk 9:9) were the characteristics of the city. God indicated that He will judge the city because of her wickedness or rebellions against Him (Rv 18:10; 4:17, 19). The positive image of the city regarded the city as the city of God, the place where God ordained and where His Name would dwell (Dt 12:11). For example, Jerusalem was regarded as the 'city of the Great King' (Mt 5:35; cf Rv 21:1-4). From the positive side of the city, the city was also regarded as the symbol of good. Prophet Ezekiel, who viewed the city as evil, also viewed the positive pictures of the city. He reached for a name which would best characterize the restored city, "the Lord is there" (Ezk 48:35). The symbolism of the city of Jerusalem was rich in imagery. It incorporated the garden qualities of the Edenic paradise, though the language of Eden as such was not used (Ps 46:4). God showed His concern to the cities, like Nineveh (Jnh 1:2; 17:3:4), Sodom (Gn 18:26-32), Jerusalem (Jr 5:1), etc. Jesus Christ had a great concern for the repentance of the city dwellers. He preached in cities (Mt 9:35-36), He cried for the city of Jerusalem for her repentance (Lk 13:34-35), He sent His disciples to preach in cities (Mt 10:5, 7, 11, 14, 23). He also promised to send the Holy Spirit to His disciples, so that they can be His

witnesses from the city of Jerusalem, all Judea, Samaria, and to the end of the earth (Ac 1:8). As a result of what Christ promised to His disciples in Acts 1:8, the Gospel was proclaimed or spread from Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, Antioch, and to other parts of the earth (cf Ac 2:1-24:5). Jesus Christ also showed His great concern of the life of the *Seven Churches* resided at the seven cities of Asia Minor (Rv 2:1-3:22). It was clear in this study that Paul's life was mainly centered on preaching, and planting churches mainly in urban areas. This is indicated in Paul's three missionary journeys and also his journey to Rome. Cities in the history of the church were regarded as the places where God is worshipped, places where many people are reached and also as the places of rebellions against God.

7.3.2 Urbanization, a fact of our time

Chapter Three focused mainly on urbanization. Urban growth was expounded (Monsma 1989:108; Linthicum 1991a:17-19; Shorter 1991:1-2) in such a way that its causes and also its problems were clearly illustrated. It was clear in this chapter that cities all over the globe are growing in such a way that the church should be aggressively taking urban mission seriously, because many people in this era are flocking to the cities in great numbers. They are forced to migrate from rural to urban areas because of push and pull factors. The push factors indicated in this chapter are rural population growth; rural disasters like famine, flooding and community unrest; escalating unemployment; rural overcrowding; people need freedom; permanence and security. The other push factors are poor health care; increased birthrates; limited land; etc. The pull factors that are attracting people from rural to urban areas are economic reasons; industrialization; better education; better health care; cities are centers of service and dominance. The other pull factors are entertainment; new opportunities and excitement. Natural growth is the second cause of urban growth indicated in this chapter. The birth rate in urban areas is

growing tremendously because of the following reasons: *First*, young men and women who have migrated to urban areas, settle there, and give birth to children. The *second reason* was that not only the people from rural areas who migrated to the urban areas give birth to urban children, but also the immigrants from other African countries and also from oversea countries who permanently settle in our urban areas, also give birth to urban children. The *third reason* is the teenage pregnancy. Many teenagers are competing with each other by involving themselves in childbirth in order to get child grants which are provided by the government. All these reasons are playing an important role in causing urban growth. The third cause of urban growth indicated in this chapter is immigration. As indicated in the *Statistics South Africa (2005:xiv)*, South Africa has many immigrants from African countries and also from oversea countries. South African cities are full of people from Nigeria, Swaziland, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, India, China, Somalia, Portugal, Pakistan, United Kingdom, Germany, Australia, New Zealand, Namibia, Canada, etc. (*Statistics South Africa 2003*). The causes of immigration indicated in this chapter are as follows: they are refugees, driven off their lands by war and violence, for example, the people from Zimbabwe who migrated and are still migrating in great numbers to South Africa because of the war and violence in Zimbabwe. Others are attracted by the opportunities in the more affluent cities of the world. Others came to this country for business purpose, others for study purpose and others for work purpose (*Statistics South Africa 2006:2*). The problems that immigrants are encountering in this country are xenophobia and unsettlement. There are many immigrants who were killed, burned, and injured in this country especially in Alexandra Township and Sebokeng this year (2008) in May and June. It was quite clear in this chapter that due to the fact of urban growth, there are many urban problems that are encountered in South African urban areas, for example, urban poverty, prostitution, street people, HIV/AIDS, unemployment and crime (such as murder, armed robbery, house breaking, assault, kidnapping etc.).

7.3.3 The calling of the church in the cities

As it has been indicated in Chapter Three that the more urbanization occurs, the more the population flocks to urban areas in great numbers. The more migration and immigration occurs instantly, the more problems occur in urban areas. In Chapter Four the development of a comprehensive definition of mission in an urban setting was discussed where the church should have no alternative but to take her responsibility of witnessing Christ in word and deed to the urban dwellers. It was indicated in this chapter that the church must understand the subject of mission and also what mission entails. Mission is not primarily the activity of man, but God's work, and it should be regarded as *Missio Dei*. It has the Trinitarian base, God the Father sent Christ to the world, God the Father and God the Son sent God the Holy Spirit, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit sent the Church to the world. Although mission is primarily the work of God, but Christ called the church to be His witness (*martyria*) to the world (Ac 1:8) (*missio ecclesia*). The church had to witness Christ in urban areas by proclaiming the Word of God (*kerygma*) to the people, by serving people (*diakonia*), and by entering into fellowship of love with people (*koinonia*). The terms *kerygma*, *koinonia*, *diakonia*, in combination describe the main aspects of the witness (*martyria*) of the Kingdom of God. When the church witness Christ through *kerygma*, *koinonia* and *diakonia*, it is true to her deepest calling of worshipping God (*leitourgia*).

The three ways of witnessing Christ in urban areas were illustrated. The *first* way indicated was through *kerygma*. The content of the proclamation of this ministry is the Good News that God the Creator and Lord of the universe, has personally intervened in human history and has done so supremely through the person and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth who is the Lord of history, Saviour and Liberator (Bosch 1991:412). The entire

message should be Christocentric. Although Christians should preach about judgment, admonishment, and the call of sinners to repentance, above all, the central theme of the church's messages should be the proclamation of redemption (Bavinck 1960:129). The church of Christ should know that the Lordship of our Lord Jesus Christ is for the church, of all people, and for all creation (cf Col 1:15-20). The unbelievers must be brought to the *kerygmatic* confession "Jesus is Lord". The *second* way of witnessing Christ in urban areas indicated was *koinonia*. From the missiological perspectives, *koinonia* was viewed two ways, the nurturing of Christians and ecumenical cooperation. One of the simplest but most complex words describing the church of Christ is the command of Jesus: love. Jesus gave His disciples a new commandment, to love one another as He has loved them, so they have to love one another (Jn 13:34). The non-Christians in urban areas must experience the way Christians love each other as they belong to a new family, the family of God (Eph 2:19). Christians must support each other in times of stress and distress. The love of Christians must also be indicated through their cooperation in mission work. The missionary church must therefore become church-with-others, must truly incarnate the essential *koinonia* of the body of Christ. One denomination needs the hand of the other. Mission in unity and unity in mission are impossible without a self-critical attitude, particularly where Christians meet with others, fellow believers or non-believers, who, by human standards, should be their enemies. Ecumenism is only possible where people accept each other despite differences. The goal of the urban church should be a fellowship exempt from conflict, but one which is characterized by unity in reconciled diversity. The *third* way indicated in this chapter in which an urban church must witness Christ in urban areas is *diakonia*. The church should not witness Christ by only proclaiming the Word of God and loving one another, but Christians must also serve one another. A good example indicated in this *diaconal dimension* is Jesus Christ "The Great Diakonos". He washed the feet of His disciples as a clear demonstration of what Christians should do to each other; they must witness Christ by

becoming servants who serve others. The world as a whole is the open arena for the urban church's diaconal ministry. All Christians in urban areas must exercise this diaconal ministry by taking care for the jobless, the homeless and the hungry. They must battle against the wrongs in urban areas that lead to poverty and malnutrition in a country of wealth and affluence. They must fight for the renewal of broken lives and broken homes. The church must develop a ministry of hospitality to the urban poor, ministry to the street people, etc. The main goal of witnessing Christ in urban areas should be the *glorificatio Dei* "to glorify God", this is the *liturgical dimension*. This dimension deals mainly with the public service that the church renders to God especially through worship. The church can render her services directly to God or indirectly to God by serving fellow human beings within and outside her areas. In conclusion, it was clear in this chapter that in developing a comprehensive definition of mission in an urban setting, all five rubrics or dimensions of mission which are: *martyria*, *kerygma*, *koinonia*, *diakonia* and *leitourgia*, are of great importance. The Christians should not employ one and leave the others, or they should not employ the other four and leave one, all dimensions are of great importance in defining the mission of the church in an urban setting.

7.3.4 The contribution of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo

Chapter Five focused on the mission work of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo in an urban setting. It was made clear in this chapter that when one speaks about the urban mission of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo he or she is obliged to speak about the cooperation of the churches that constituted Synod Soutpansberg in the mission work of this church. This cooperation was based on the mutual partnership between the Synod Soutpansberg and the Reformed Church Tshiawelo. That partnership was based on urban mission and also on training of ministers at Heidelberg Theological Seminary. The Reformed Church Tshiawelo was a local church without fellowship centers for a long

time. But when Professor T.C. Rabali came to this congregation after the agreement between one of the churches that constitute Synod Soutpansberg (the Reformed Church Mutale) and the Reformed Church Tshiawelo, things changed radically. The conference led by Professor T.C. Rabali held at Tshipise in 1998 which was attended by almost all Church Councils' members of the churches that constituted Synod Soutpansberg together with Church Council members of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo, was the main basis of the changes that brought the Reformed Church Tshiawelo to her present juncture. That conference inspired both the Church Council members of all churches that constituted Synod Soutpansberg together with those of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo to see the necessity of urban mission. The inspiration from that conference contributed a lot to the meeting of the Synod Soutpansberg held at Iyani Bible and Training Institute in December 1998. The Synod took a decision of encouraging all churches that constitute this Synod to associate their church members who migrated to the Gauteng Province with the Reformed Church Tshiawelo. The Synod also gave its mission deputies the mandate of looking for places in Gauteng Province where they can plant churches, and they were instructed to cooperate with the Reformed Church Tshiawelo. The cooperation between the Synod Soutpansberg and the Reformed Church Tshiawelo was made realistic, and is still realistic. Church members from the churches that constitute Synod Soutpansberg were sent to support the Reformed Church Tshiawelo during mission campaigns, and also during mission seminars and mission conferences held at this congregation. Through the hard work, dedication, and motivation of Professor T.C. Rabali, the church now had 16 fellowship centers, and on the 16 August 2008 in her 40th Anniversaries, 5 new churches were instituted. This indicates the marvelous work that is being done at this congregation. It was clear in this chapter that the Reformed Church Tshiawelo under the leadership of Professor T.C. Rabali managed to bring the church to her present juncture because the Church Council mainly focused on Sunday preaching, house visitation, small groups' services, etc.

Christians were equipped for urban mission through mission conferences, mission seminars, and also by leadership training. The church always evaluates herself by having different anniversaries. The anniversaries played a vital role of encouraging Christians to focus more on the vision of the church and also to thank God for everything He has done for them. In evaluation of this church through the “Seven I’s Programme developed at the University of Pretoria, it was quiet clear that Christians are *inspired* to get involved in the mission work of the church. Church members are being *informed* of everything planned in the church or everything that is happening in the church. The Word of God is well *interpreted* in this church that is why she is growing tremendously. Church members are *involved* in all church activities and also in mission work being done by the church. For the church members to be involved in mission work, they are constantly being *instructed* through mission seminars and conferences so that they must be responsible for urban mission in urban areas. When coming to *investment*, the Reformed Church Tshiwelo in her yearly budget, has some % budgeted for mission work. This implies that they know that for the mission work to be well done, money is needed. The issue of *intercession* is also regarded as great importance to this congregation. It was made clear in this chapter that the Reformed Church Tshiwelo is a praying congregation. Church members are taught and encouraged to pray. Small groups were formed for men, women, Sunday School, youth and also cell groups. This was done to encourage them to motivate each other even in prayer. It was indicated that this church in her mission work is encountering some challenges. Some of the challenges indicated in this thesis are: lack of enough finance, lack of more church buildings, strong opposition from some churches in the family of the Reformed Churches in South Africa (GKSA), etc. Although the RCT is encountering those challenges; this church is unstoppable in her urban church planting programmes. This church is planning to plant more than 28 daughter churches within the period of ten years to come (2018).

7.3.5 Strategies needed for the church in an urban setting

Chapter Six focused on the strategies in which the Reformed Church Tshiawelo can utilise to plant churches in metropolitan cities outside Gauteng Province, e.g Bloemfontein, Cape Town, Durban, Port Elizabeth, East London, Kimberley, etc. The strategies were summarized in four phases which are: visionary phase, planning phase, preparation phase for church planting and establishment phase of the daughter churches. It was quite clear that the leaders are the people who must have a vision, and they must share their vision with their co-workers, and sell it to the small groups and lastly to the entire congregation. The leadership training should be done as soon as possible. The church leaders must make sure that prayer is their first priority in the process of planning to plant churches in urban areas. After planning has been done, the targeted areas must be visited to study their setups and also conditions in those areas. After that, nucleus members must be formed, once the nucleus is formed, the church must be stabled. Principles of urban church planting are also discussed, and the methods of church planting are the last issue discussed in this chapter.

7.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.4.1 Recommendations to the Reformed Church Tshiawelo

7.4.1.1 Church members

(a). The congregation of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo needs to be reminded constantly that the most important instruments of mission are the members of the church themselves. Every Christian needs to be encouraged to take his/her responsibility to be a faithful witness of Christ seriously.

(b). Church members need to be trained and empowered for their mission in the community. Proper courses need to be provided and opportunities for lay Christians to serve and to witness where they live and work, need to be created.

7.4.1.2 Mission committee

The Church Council - through its mission committee - must ensure that a strategic plan for the congregation's missionary enterprise is put in place. Long term and short term goals for mission need to be developed, sustainable plans to execute the mission need to be provided, and mentoring programmes need to be installed. A budget, sufficient to cover the congregation's outreach programmes, must be provided.

7.4.2 Recommendations to the Heidelberg Theological Seminary (HTS)

(a). The HTS must share the church's responsibility to call Christians into the ministry of the church, to be trained as ministers *and* as missionaries. The recruitment should be done *inter alia* through conferences and workshops in presbyteries and local congregations.

(b). The subject of Missiology must take its proper place among the other theological disciplines in the curriculum at the HTS, to ensure that the students understand their missionary calling, and to enthuse and equip them for their task to help develop the churches that they intend to serve, to become truly missionary churches. The acquisition of mission skills - evangelization, church planting, addressing the needs of the community, inter-faith dialogue, et cetera - must be included in the courses.

According to Donald A. McGavran:

Every theological seminary must decide whether the ideal denomination, most pleasing to God, would be one that cares only for existing Christians or one that, in true New Testament fashion, both cares for existing Christians and multiplies churches in unreached portions of humanity. If the answer is that the church most pleasing to God is one that in every possible way seeks to disciple *panta ta ethne* as well as care for existing Christians, then the seminary curriculum must prepare Ministers to do both tasks (McGavran 1988:8).

(c). The HTS must also help develop mission courses for lay members that may be taught in local congregations. The whole church must benefit from expertise acquired at the seminary.

(d). The HTS must build strong ties with other theological institutions and seminaries, in South Africa, Africa, as well as overseas, in order to learn from their experience, also in terms of the teaching and practice of missions. Exchange programmes that will benefit both lectures and students need to be developed.

7.5 AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In coming to the end of this study, the researcher is aware that there are still a number of issues with regard to the subject of urban mission that beg further research. Among them are:

- (a). The crucial relationship between the so-called ‘mother churches’ and ‘daughter churches’, the sending churches and the newly planted churches in urban settings.
- (b). The development of curriculum for urban church leaders. The churches in urban areas very often reveal the character and style of their leadership. What can be done to empower the leaders in the church?
- (c). The role of women in urban church planting is another area that needs to be considered. This should be clear from the biblical point of view accepting that women in New Testament times as well as in history played an important role in the mission of the church.
- (d). Another area that should also be taken into consideration is that of mission and unity, the ecumenical perspective of our calling. No church operates in a vacuum space. They need one another in their quest to be instruments of God’s mission in the world.

7.6 CONCLUSION

From this research it becomes clear that urban churches in South Africa must wake up to the urgency of urban church planting. The Reformed Church Tshiawelo is doing well in her mission work even though she is often working under difficult conditions, sometimes having to cope with the opposition of those who do not share the Church’s vision and mission; she is progressing through God’s providence and grace. It was also indicated in this thesis that through her cooperation with the churches that constitute Synod Soutpansberg, the Reformed Church Tshiawelo is committed to be a faithful witness of God’s love for the cities and urban sprawls of South Africa.

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8.6 BIBLE VERSIONS

THE KING JAMES VERSION (KJV), 1769. Cambridge: Cambridge

THE NEW CENTURY VERSION (NCV), 1991. Dallas, Texas: Word Publishing

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION (NIV), 1984. Grand Rapids: Zondervan
Publishing House

THE NEW REVISED STANDARD VERSION (NRSV), 1989. Nashville: Thomas Nelson
Publishers



APPENDIX A.

**QUESTIONNAIRES DESIGNED FOR MEMBERS OF THE REFORMED CHURCH
TSHIAWELO**

INTRODUCTION:

I, Rev Mutavhatsindi MA, a student at the University of Pretoria, doing research studies in **Church Planting in the South African Urban Context with special reference to the role of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo**. My research requires a questionnaire that should be completed in order to collect the required data. Feel free to complete the following questionnaire.

Rules for completing the this questionnaire:

- (a). No name is required in this questionnaire.
- (b). Follow the instructions indicated in each and every question.
- (c). Complete this questionnaire as soon as possible.

Division of the questionnaire

This questionnaire is divided into four sections, **Section A, B, C and D**. Complete all these sections.

SECTION A

<i>Just check an appropriate answer by placing an X on it</i>	<i>(1)</i>	<i>(2)</i>
1. Are you from rural or urban area?	<i>Rural area</i>	<i>Urban area</i>
2. Does Reformed Church Tshiawelo cooperate with other churches from Limpopo Province in her urban mission?	Yes	No
3. Does Reformed Church Tshiawelo make a budget for urban mission?	Yes	No
4. Is the number of people who are migrating from rural to urban areas growing?	Yes	No
5. Do you believe that God has many people in urban areas who should repent from their sins?	Yes	No



SECTION B

<i>Choose the appropriate answer for the following questions by placing an X to the correct answer</i>	<i>Bad (1)</i>	<i>Poor (2)</i>	<i>Good (3)</i>	<i>Excellent (4)</i>
6. How do Christians involve themselves in mission?				
7. People view life in urban areas in different ways. How do you view the quality of life in urban areas?				

SECTION C

<i>For each of the following sentences, please indicate how true this is to your situation</i>	<i>Not really (1)</i>	<i>Some (2)</i>	<i>Much (3)</i>	<i>Very much (4)</i>
8. Are you aware that Christ commissioned you to proclaim His Good Tidings to the people in urban areas?				
9. Some people argue that there are many poor people, homeless, prostitutes in South African Cities. How do you measure the reality of this argument?				

SECTION D

In this section, you are allowed to have more than one answer, it will depend on the way you view the questions from your own perspective.

10. How do you develop your spiritual life?

- _____ Through Sunday services
- _____ Through Wednesday services
- _____ I don't really do anything
- _____ I read my Bible everyday.
- _____ Through group services (e.g. *youth service, women service, men service, mission service*)

11. What are the most pressing needs of people in the urban area where you're staying?

- _____ Spiritual need (*The Word of God*)
- _____ Food
- _____ Accommodation
- _____ Education
- _____ Employment



12. As a Christian, what kind of responsibility do you have for the unbelievers in urban areas?

- I have no responsibility to the unbelievers.
- I am not aware of any responsibility.
- I understand that God wants them to repent from their sins through our witnessing.
- I am responsible to preach the Word of God to the unbelievers in urban settings.

13. Arrange the following according to their order of importance.

- Preaching of the Gospel (Word of God) to all people.
- To provide worship services
- To reach out to all the necessary needs of the needy people.
- To equip and to teach Christians to be witnesses of Christ to all people.

14. If one wants to know you better, what areas do you think will help one to know you better? In order to answer this question, place an X on the areas where you fit in.

14.1 Age	<input type="checkbox"/> below 20 years <input type="checkbox"/> 21 – 35 years <input type="checkbox"/> 36 – 50 years <input type="checkbox"/> 51 – 65 years <input type="checkbox"/> more than 65 years
14.2 Educational level	<input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Primary level <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary level <input type="checkbox"/> Tertiary level
14.3 Your position in church	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Committee <input type="checkbox"/> Member <input type="checkbox"/> Church council member <input type="checkbox"/> Mission Committee <input type="checkbox"/> Other
14.4 Occupation	<input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Self employer <input type="checkbox"/> Private sector <input type="checkbox"/> Government
14.5 Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female



APPENDIX B

REFORMED CHURCH TSHIAWELO

**QUESTIONNAIRES DESIGNED FOR TWO GROUPS:
MISSION COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND CHURCH COUNCIL MEMBERS**

INTRODUCTION:

I, Rev Mutavhatsindi MA, a student at the University of Pretoria, doing research studies in **Church Planting in the South African Urban Context with special reference to the role of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo**. My research requires a questionnaire that should be completed in order to collect the required data. Feel free to complete the following questionnaire.

Rules for completing the this questionnaire:

- (a). No name is required in this questionnaire.
- (b). Follow the instructions indicated in each and every question.
- (c). Complete this questionnaire as soon as possible.

Division of the questionnaire

This questionnaire is divided into four sections, **Section A, B, C and D**. Complete all these sections.

SECTION A

<i>Just check an appropriate answer by placing an X on it</i>	(1)	(2)
1. Are you from rural or urban area?	Rural area	Urban area
2. Does Reformed Church Tshiawelo cooperate with other churches from Limpopo Province in her urban mission?	Yes	No
3. Does Reformed Church Tshiawelo make a budget for urban mission?	Yes	No



4. Is the number of people who are migrating from rural to urban areas growing?	Yes	No
5. Do you believe that God has many people in urban areas who should repent from their sins?	Yes	No

SECTION B

<i>Choose the appropriate answer for the following questions by placing an X to the correct answer</i>	<i>Bad (1)</i>	<i>Poor (2)</i>	<i>Good (3)</i>	<i>Excellent (4)</i>
6. How do Christians involve themselves in mission?				
7. People view life in urban areas in different ways. How do you view the quality of life in urban areas?				

SECTION C

<i>For each of the following sentences, please indicate how true this is to your situation</i>	<i>Not really (1)</i>	<i>Some (2)</i>	<i>Much (3)</i>	<i>Very much (4)</i>
8. Are you aware that Christ commissioned you to proclaim His Good Tiding to the people in urban areas?				
9. Some people argue that there are many poor people, homeless, prostitutes in South African Cities. How do you measure the reality of this argument?				

SECTION D

I am humbly requesting you to give a detail explanation of all questions in this section. Be free to explain according to (your knowledge) what you know.

8. Explain the strategies being used by Reformed Church Tshiawelo to plant new church wards in new areas. Give the names of those new established church wards.

9. What did Reformed Church Tshiawelo use or do to re-build the church to the extent that by 1999 she was in a position to become instrumental in establishing new fellowship centers (zwitasana) which are now being developed to become local churches in August 2008?

10. How are the leaders of Reformed Church Tshiawelo equipped for urban mission?



11. How many urban mission conferences or seminars were conducted by Reformed Church Tshiawelo? Name the *venues, dates, and objectives* of those conferences or seminars.

12. Reformed Church Tshiawelo usually has anniversaries as a thanksgiving to God who helped her to achieve some specific goals. Explain all the anniversaries held by Reformed Church Tshiawelo (*indicate the dates, venues, and purposes or objectives of those anniversaries*).

13. There are many people who are moving to the metropolitan cities which are outside Gauteng Province, for example, Durban, Cape Town, Bloemfontein, Port Elizabeth, and etc. They are moving to those metropolitan cities because of various reasons, for example, some for study purpose at the tertiary institutions, some for working purpose, and etc. What are the plans of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo of planting churches in those metropolitan cities which are outside Gauteng Province?

14. What are the hindrances or stumbling blocks you are encountering in your urban mission?

15. If one wants to know you better, what areas do you think will help one to know you better? In order to answer this question, place an X to the areas where you fit in.

15.1 Age	<input type="checkbox"/> below 20 years <input type="checkbox"/> 21 – 35 years <input type="checkbox"/> 36 – 50 years <input type="checkbox"/> 51 – 65 years <input type="checkbox"/> more than 65 years
15.2 Educational level	<input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Primary level <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary level <input type="checkbox"/> Tertiary level
15.3 Your position in church	<input type="checkbox"/> Church Committee <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Committee <input type="checkbox"/> Church council member <input type="checkbox"/> Mission Committee <input type="checkbox"/> Other
15.4 Occupation	<input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Self employer <input type="checkbox"/> Private sector <input type="checkbox"/> Government
15.5 Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female

APPENDIX C

Pictures of the victims of violence and attacks against foreigners in South Africa.

C.1 Taken from *Pretoria News*, 13 May 2008: 1

Displaced foreigners struggle to make ends meet

MOGOMOTSI MAGOME

Foreigners who lost their homes and belongings during xenophobic attacks in Mamelodi and Atteridgeville earlier this year are still struggling to get back on their feet.

Some have moved from a shelter at the Stanza Bopape community hall in Mamelodi fearing for their safety.

They are now living in the veld in front of the Home Affairs offices in Marabastad, relying on the Catholic Cathedral for food and clothing.

Rwandan John Taouss said they had run out of people to approach for help as the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and Tshwane Metro Council had let them down.

"We are just relying on the church, because that is the only place where we don't get chased

away," he said.

His sentiments were echoed by a member of the Zimbabwean Refugees' Association, who wanted to remain anonymous for fear of victimisation.

"It is hard being a foreigner in South Africa because little is being said by the government and residents will continue victimising foreigners."

He said they also encountered problems at public hospitals because they were expected to pay even after losing all their possessions during the attacks.

Foreigners housed at the old Malas warehouse are also uncertain of what the future holds for them when they leave their temporary shelter.

The Jesuit Refugee Services had promised to give each foreigner

R1 000 and to donate R1 800 to families, on condition that they leave Malas and secure their own accommodation.

However, the proposal has been criticised as "buying" the problem away.

Human rights activist Jeffrey Basubi said the people were likely to end up on the streets after exhausting the money.

Meanwhile, the ANC went on a xenophobia awareness campaign in Mooiplaas and Olievenhoutbosch at the weekend, urging locals to shun the practice.

Abdul Dawood, a member of the Gauteng Provincial Legislature, said they were motivated by members of the respective communities who had expressed their willingness to stop violence against foreigners in their townships.



□ Irene and Neza Nsenga, children of a foreign trader whose shack and shop were torched, with Father Victor Phalane. PICTURE: ETIENNE CREUX



APPENDIX C

C.2 Taken from *Pretoria News*, 13 May 2008:1

Hundreds on the run as xenophobic attacks flare up again

STAFF REPORTERS and SAPA

Hundreds of foreigners have fled Alexandra or sought refuge at the local police station as xenophobic violence flared for a second day.

As night fell yesterday, police were forced to protect about 100 foreigners from a mob that opened fire on officers.

Two people were killed and about 60 injured in the two days of xenophobic violence.

The latest clashes began at 6pm when a mob marched down London Road in the Johannesburg township.

They flung boulders into the road and shot at police.

Police retaliated with rubber bullets. Some had live ammunition for protection.

Several people were detained.

By 7.30pm fires were blazing in the street and police fired from inside their armoured vehicles. Along London Road, foreigners huddled in large groups for protection.

Throughout the evening, people poured out of Alex, carrying bundles of their belongings.

Mozambican Carlota Makulube had spent the previous night hiding under her bed – her South African husband ready to talk to the gang if they raided their shack.

By 6pm yesterday she and her

three children were ready to flee. They had no idea where they would spend the night.

A middle-aged woman said she had lived in her house for 13 years. "I was born in South Africa – I just lived in Zimbabwe for some years."

As people fled, residents chanted "Good riddance. *Hambani makwerekwere* (Go away, foreigners)."

Police spokesperson Inspector Moses Maphakele said they were taking the foreigners to Bramley and Alex police stations.

"We are arranging for transport to take them back to their countries. First we need to check their IDs, then take it from there," he said.

About 400 foreigners were taken to the two stations on Sunday.

"The residents of Alexandra say they don't want any more illegal immigrants.

"They say the foreigners rob them on the streets when they go to work and when they return from work."

Constable Neria Malefetse said one of the men killed was a South African.

"We are not sure why he was targeted," she said.

Twelve people have been arrested and face charges of murder, attempted murder, public violence and theft.

Maphakele said about 500 policemen were monitoring the situation.

The violent attacks started



□ A Zimbabwean woman after being beaten up in a tavern at the Zulu Hostel in Alexandra. PICTURE: ANTOINE DE RAS

after a meeting of about 200 Alex residents who decided to give foreigners an ultimatum: get out or be driven out.

A man, who did not want to be identified, said: "We told them to move out of their shacks before the end of the day. They refused."

Armed with iron bars, stones, sjamboks, knobkerries and guns, the residents then hunted down foreigners.

"I am not apologetic at all. These foreigners are making us feel unwelcome in our country," a man said.

See PAGE 3

APPENDIX C

C.3 A Story taken from *Pretoria News*, 13 May 2008:3

Questions after night of violence in Alex leaves two dead and 50 injured

BY GILL GIFFORD

While xenophobic attacks have been blamed on Home Affairs' lack of control of borders, theft of jobs and opportunities by foreigners and racism against people who are darker than South Africans are also factors.

But little was known about why there had been an upsurge of attacks in recent months, the SA Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) said yesterday.

No detailed studies had been done on xenophobia, commission chief executive Tseliso Thipanyane said.

The SAHRC, the National Consortium on Refugee Affairs and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, launched the Roll Back Xenophobia Campaign in 1998 to address rising levels of xenophobia.

But this awareness project had dwindled to one in which human rights commissioners would monitor the Lindela Repatriation Centre where illegal immigrants were held before being deported.

"It is clear that this problem is getting worse. We need to call an

urgent meeting to look at the problem and find meaningful ways to sort it out. It's a peculiar problem in our country where the attacks happen in poor communities and informal settlements directed at African people, particularly those darker than ourselves," said Thipanyane.

"Clearly, this is a brand of xenophobia that's being caught up with poverty and unemployment and played out on soft targets who are seen as foreigners who arrive from nowhere and start surviving by working hard and taking low-paying jobs," he said.

"And also, the role of government has not been active as it has failed to prevent these people entering the country through porous borders. There is corruption within Home Affairs and the police."

Thipanyane said the "attacks by blacks on blacks" were a phenomenon warranting an examination of the psychological impact on South African people who appeared to display some kind of self-hatred by targeting black foreigners "rather than whites or the Chinese".

Researcher Angelica Pino, of the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, who is currently examining xenophobia and how it

APPENDIX C4

C.4 Taken from *Pretoria News*, 13 May 2008:3

impacts on women specifically, maintains that the issue is pervasive and impacting heaviest on African women. "We see that xenophobia against women has a less public face, but it is something you see a lot in the public service," Pino said yesterday following the violent attacks in Alexandra in which two people died. Pino said xenophobia was generally an extreme fear reaction to "the unknown".

"It all talks to the same problem: a fear of the unknown as an inward-looking South African society reacts to the influx of foreigners who they see to be stealing jobs from locals. It's a fear of difference," she said.

Pino has been working on the issue and conducted in-depth interviews with a woman who escaped the genocide in Rwanda in 1998 and settled in South Africa.

"At that time people were sympathetic to her plight.

"But this has changed and she is now experiencing people being aggressive towards her - even when she was giving birth in hospital," said Pino.

Pino said projects like the Roll Back Xenophobia campaign and the racism conference had done some work terms of highlighting the issue, but they seemed to have since "gone underground".

"Perhaps because there has been an influx of illegal immigrants, but there is now no openness to integrating people. Yes, we know there are foreigners involved in crime, but this doesn't serve to explain what is going on." She said the experience of white foreigners was more positive than that of Africans.

"We have a case of people distrusting their own government and Home Affairs," Pino said, explaining that there appeared to be a general assumption that identity documents carried by white people were legitimate while there was "huge mistrust of documents carried by the black African migrant".



□ A group of men apparently involved in the xenophobic attacks on the rampage in Alexandra.

PICTURE: ANTOINE DE RAS



APPENDIX C

C.5 Taken from *Pretoria News*, 13 May 2008:3



□ Malawian national Willes Katundu was beaten up during the xenophobic attacks in Alexandra.

PICTURE: STEVE LAWRENCE



□ Yvonne Ndlovu was a victim of an attack near the Zulu Hostel in Alexandra. Two people were killed and several were injured in the attack.

APPENDIX D

A picture and story of the South African prostitutes

D.1 Taken from *Sowetan*, 10 February 2008:4 D.2 Taken from *Sun*, 19 February 2008:3



TRICKED: Boitumelo Mogapi, 21, Boitumelo Masina, 23, and Mmabatho Lephollsetsa, 24, say a North West department of health workshop was to teach them how to "please potential clients". PHOTO:LUCKY NXUMALO

Half naked prostitutes work from toilets!

A GROUP of prostitutes were removed from public toilets yesterday after a security guard complained when he found five aggressive prostitutes prancing around in bikinis and G-strings.

Michael Mabotsa, who works for a private security company in Hoedspruit, Limpopo, was waiting for a bus just after 5pm when he got the call from nature.

When he entered the toilets, he found blankets, sponges and towels on the floor and then he saw the half-naked women!

When he tried to use the urinal, the women tried to seduce him, making all sorts of sexual offers.

"One of the women, who was also smoking, ask me if I wanted it wrapped or not," he said.

"Wrapped" is street slang for using condoms.

He said the women offered him two minutes of sex for R50.

Eventually, a hawker came to his rescue.

It turns out that it is common knowledge that prostitutes operate from the public toilets, servicing truck drivers, soldiers and the occasional tourist.

Constable David Makwela, said: "Prostitution is illegal and if they come back, they will be arrested," he warned. – AENS



APPENDIX E

News about crime in South Africa

E.1 Taken from *Sunday Sun*, 10 February 2008:37

Controversial abortion bill gets nod

Parliament on Thursday approved legal changes to make abortions easier to obtain, despite criticism from opponents who said the law was already too lax.

The changes will provide for 24-hour abortion facilities, do away with pre-approval procedures and permit all nurses – instead of just midwives – to terminate pregnancies.

“The amendment bill promotes quality health-care,” the African National Congress’s Joyce Masilo told parliament’s upper house, which unanimously passed the bill. It will now be referred to President Thabo

Mbeki to sign into law.

Critics said the law already made abortions too easy. Women as young as 12 can get an abortion during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy and in some cases up to 20 weeks.

Religious activists and political parties opposed the proposed changes, saying the bill should make counselling mandatory given that women as young as 12 could have abortions without their parents’ knowledge.

But the ruling party’s big parliamentary majority ensured approval for the changes. – *Health24/ReutersHealth*

APPENDIX E

E.2 Taken from *Sowetan*, 1 July 2008:4

50 people murdered every day in SA

Sipho Masombuka

An average 30 children are murdered in South Africa every week, according to the national crime statistics released in Pretoria yesterday.

While in the 2006/07 financial year, 1152 children were murdered, this year's figure has shot up to 1410. Attempts on the lives of children increased to 1488 compared to 1309 in the last financial year.

But, serious assault on children decreased from 20445 in the last financial year to 19687.

SAPS analyst Chris de Kock said this trend of child murders was a "very serious and worrying issue". He said most children killed were those between the ages of 16 and 18.

"According to docket analysis, most children killed are those with tendencies of gang behaviour. A small number of children below the age of 16 are killed," said De Kock.

Another area of great concern is the significant rise in house and business robberies, and truck and car hijacking.

House robberies increased by 13,5 percent, business robberies increased by 47,4 percent, car hijacking increased by 4,4 percent while truck hijacking increased by 39,6 percent from the 2007/08 financial year.

Safety and Security Minister Charles Nqakula said the statistics were a serious cause for concern.

"Some of the car and truck hijackings are part of organised crime. The cars are needed for a quick getaway from crime

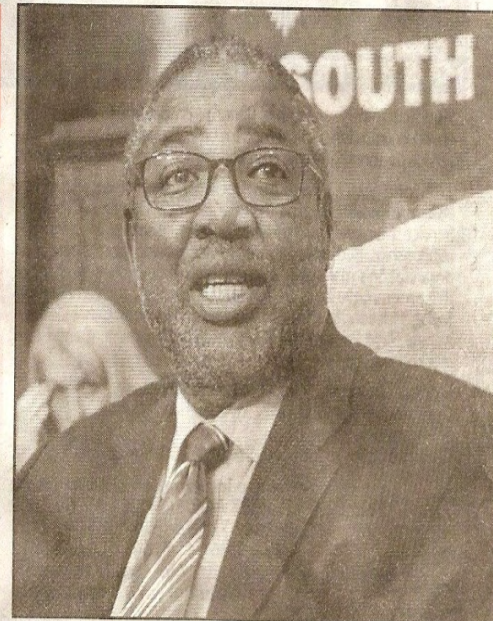
scenes and as battering rams against cash vans in cash-in-transit heists. The trucks carry valuables that organised gangs want," said Nqakula.

Nqakula said these crimes, especially house robberies, were of serious concern because lives were lost in these incidents.

"They are the crimes that we mostly pay attention to," said Nqakula.

Though murder has decreased by 4,7 percent, 18487 people were murdered during the period under review (2007/08), which amounts to almost 50 murders a day.

Rape decreased by 8,8 percent, robbery with aggravating circumstances by 7,4 percent, assault with intent to cause grievous bodily harm by 4,6 percent and indecent assault by 2,1 percent.



CONCERNED: Safety and Security Minister Charles Nqakula is worried about crime in the country.



APPENDIX E

E.3 Taken from *Daily Sun*, 1 July 2008:5

50 murders every day!

By **BASA MUSHI AND SAPA**

MORE than 50 people are murdered in South Africa every day!

A total of 18 467 people have been murdered since April last year.

The most horrible fact is that murder of children has increased by nearly a quarter.

This is the bloody story told by the latest crime statistics released in Tshwane by Safety and Security Minister Charles Nqakula yesterday.

The number of children murdered has increased by 22,4% and that of adults has decreased by 8,1%.

But as for attempted murder on children aged between 0 to 18, it has increased by 13,7% and among adults there is a de-

crease of 11,5%.

Nqakula said the government is concerned that, while the figures are going down, the levels of crime continue to be unacceptably high.

He said the crime surveys show that social crime is a big problem in the country.

"The abuse of children and women remains our big concern," said Nqakula.

Rape has gone down by 8,8% from 82,9% to 75,6%.

Crimes like robbery, attempted murder, assault and indecent assault decreased by 6,4%. And car hijacking has increased by 4,4%.

Deputy national commissioner Andre Pruis added that 1 274 062 suspects were arrested for various crimes.

APPENDIX F

Pictures and vital news during 40th Anniversary of the Reformed Church Tshiawelo

Taken from *Sowetan*, 18 August 2008:9

339

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA



800S 8t tAuguA yebnoM WATEWOG 8
 Monday August 18 2008 SOWETAN 9

Church News

Reformed Church is now 40 years old





CELEBRATION: Reverend Thiofhitshithu Rabali and his interpreter Adam Mutshinga at the Reformed Church in Tshiawelo's 40th anniversary.

MOMENT OF THANKS: Reformed Church in Tshiawelo congregants pray to thank God for having brought the church thus far.

PHOTOS: PENWELL DLAMINI

Penwell Dlamini

The Reformed Church in Tshiawelo yesterday celebrated its 40th anniversary with a special service at the Dlamini Multi Purpose Hall in Soweto.

About 400 congregants from all the branches in Gauteng showed up to celebrate a milestone of four decades of church growth.

The Reformed Church was formed by missionaries in 1968 in Tshiawelo from the main structure Reformed Church in South Africa.

Today the church has branches in Pretoria, Central Johannesburg, Midrand and Protea Glen.

Hymns of celebration dominated the proceedings as congregants praised God.

Speaker of the day Reverend Thiofhitshithu Rabali likened the Tshiawelo branch to a seed that was planted and is now bearing fruit.

"Most of the things God does always start small or in seed form but grow and make a change in the history of mankind," he said.

Today the Reformed Church has more than 1 000 members in Gauteng.

"Our success can be attributed to our vision to preach the gospel with an outside focus – being relevant to the needs of the community," said Reverend Liphadzi Tshililo.

He said one of the church's strategies was to reach out to young people through programmes such as the Reformed Youth Fellowship.

Rabali illustrated his point by referring to Jesus starting his ministry with just a few disciples but finally affecting the whole world.

"The six branches should also become seeds that through faith, prayer and Bible teaching can grow and affect the whole world," Rabali said.

This is a student movement already active at Wits University, Vaal University of Technology and Medunsa – the Medical University of Southern Africa.



EPILOGUE

After this, the Lord chose ***South African Christians** and sent them out in pairs ahead of him into every town **of South Africa** and place where he planned to go **in cities of South Africa.**

He said to them, "There are a great many people to harvest, but there are only a few workers. So pray to God, who owns the harvest, that he will send more workers to help gather his harvest.

Go now, but listen! I am sending you out like sheep among wolves.

Don't carry a purse, a bag, or sandals, and don't waste time talking with people on the road.

Before you go into a house, say, 'Peace be with this house.'

If peaceful people live there, your blessing of peace will stay with them, but if not, then your blessing will come back to you.

Stay in the peaceful house, eating and drinking what the people there give you.

A worker should be given his pay.

Don't move from house to house.

If you go into a town and the people welcome you, eat what they give you. Heal the sick who live there, and tell them, 'The kingdom of God is near you.'

But if you go into a town **and city of South Africa**, and the people don't welcome you, then go into the streets and say,

'Even the dirt from your town that sticks to our feet we wipe off against you.

But remember that the kingdom of God is near.'

I tell you, on the Judgment Day it will be better for the people of Sodom than for the people of that town.

Luke 10:1-12 (NCV)