

Chapter Five

The Baptist Association of South Africa and the South African Baptist Alliance

After a successful General Council meeting in Durban, the Local Arrangements Committee (LAC) expressed the desire to meet to explore unity among Baptists in South Africa. From 1999 to 2003 the LAC held several meetings to discuss this possibility. This chapter will examine the minutes of the meetings of the LAC and the resultant formation and launch of the South African Baptist Alliance. Before this watershed moment, it is important to trace the events, bilateral meetings and consultations that took place between and among the various organizations. The key research question in this chapter is, How BASA responded to the discussions in the unity talks?

5. 1 The Springfield Consultation

This consultation took place as a result of conversations between Reverends Desmond Hoffmeister and Rodney Ragwan in 1997. Ragwan wrote that in 1997 Hoffmeister in his foresight saw the bigger picture as far as Baptist co-operation and unity were concerned and wanted to meet with the leadership of BASA. It was the first time that the BASA leadership was to meet a Black leader from the BCSA. Hoffmeister also extended the invitation to the BMSA. In April 1997 the three Baptist organizations: BCSA, BASA and BMSA, met in Springfield, Durban to discuss co-operation. The three organizations resolved to engage one another in working towards co-operation and unity. One specific event where this co-operation started was planning for the General Council of the BWA in July 1998 (Ragwan 2003:62).

5.2 The Colesberg Consultation

This historic consultation took place between the BUSA and BCSA at Colesberg on 14 and 15 May 1998. Dr. Ruben Richards facilitated it at the invitation of the two General Secretaries of the BCSA and the BUSA. Dr. Richards served as the executive secretary of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) (CBM 1998:9-12). Dr. Richards outlined the government's TRC process with specific emphasis on its purpose, which, he stated, was to deal with the past and the abuses of human rights, as well as to develop a mechanism to provide procedures to restore the damages done in the past. He went on to state that contrition, confession and forgiveness were necessary for healing to take place. He drew the attention of the delegates at Colesberg to the need for Baptists to acknowledge that crimes had been committed in the name of Christianity and that it would be necessary for Baptists not only to have a shared memory of the past but to be accountable as well. Against this background both the organizations were given opportunities to share both their hurts and concerns (CBM 1998:9-12).

According to the minutes (CBM 1998:9-12), representatives from each group shared their views about the hurts and concerns. They ranged from name calling to confiscation of property. Details of this follow later in this study. The Colesberg meeting was very important in getting the two organizations to deal with the past so that unification could take centre stage in their future talks.

5.3 The Bulwer Road Consultation

The first meeting of a multi-racial Baptist forum was held on 19 February 1999 at the Bulwer Road Baptist Church in Durban. Present at this meeting were the following: The BCSA was represented by the Rev. D. Hoffmeister, Rev. M.J. Sibiyi, Rev. L. Jacob, Rev. S. Dlamini, Rev. P. Sibiyi, Rev. Anzima, Rev. A Dlamini, Rev. S.A. Khanyile and Rev. D.J. Mashiga. Rev. T. Rae, Rev. B.E. Mcambi, Rev. A. Sibiyi and Rev. G.M. Ngamlana represented the BUSA. The BMSA's delegates were Mr. D. Philip, Rev. L. Benjamin and Rev. J. Moses. BASA was represented by Mr. N.M. Israel, Mrs. R. Israel, Mr. A. Poliah, Pastor R. Nathaniel, Mrs. F. Nathaniel, and Rev. R. Ragwan. At this stage the ABK was not part of this forum, they joined this forum later (Minutes of Baptist Unity in South Africa 1999:12).

This forum allowed each of the organizations to share its vision for Baptists in South Africa. All of the delegates were positive and committed themselves to reconciliation and unity. A proposal (1999:12) to elect a committee to work toward continued reconciliation and co-operation among all Baptists in South Africa and to bring the others into the ongoing national process of reconciliation was adopted unanimously.

The committee was comprised of:

BUSA – Rev. Terry Rae

BCSA – Rev. Desmond Hoffmeister

BASA – Rev. Rodney Ragwan

BMSA – Mr. Daniel Philip

Rev.s. Dan Cole of the American Baptist Churches, USA and Dwight Reagan of the

Southern Baptist Convention, USA were elected facilitators. The function of the above committee was to develop a resolution for a way forward and to establish the next meeting time for the process of dialogue to commence. The very first meeting of this forum was a positive sign that Baptists were at last willing to talk to each other, and a commitment to reconciliation was evident.

It became apparent that the BUSA, BCSA, BMSA and BMSA were willing to begin a new chapter in Baptist relations in South Africa. Terry Rae, the General Secretary of the BUSA, expressed (1999:19) the need for efforts towards building a stronger Baptist family in the Kwa Zulu region. Hoffmeister, the General Secretary of the BCSA, also expressed the need to work together and stated (1999:13) that Baptists must develop a joint vision using “us and us” rather than “we and them” (1999:13). He urged the members to embrace a bottom up approach to reconciliation. The BMSA’s Daniel Philip committed his organization to structural unity amongst Baptists (1999:14). BASA as well as BMSA also expressed its regret for working only with the Indian community in Kwa Zulu Natal (1999:12). This was a shift in thinking by BASA from wanting to remain an ethnic organization to embracing other racial groups (Vijay Nathaniel 1992:2).

The second meeting (BRBM:1999: 16) of this forum was held on 9 April 1999 at Bulwer Road Baptist Church and the facilitator, Rev. Dan Cole, a missionary of the American Baptist Churches, USA, convened it. At this second meeting a “Memorandum of Understanding” was formulated. In this “Memorandum of Understanding” a name was given to the forum, The South African Baptist Alliance (SABA), and its purpose, objectives, and governing principles were discussed and

finalized. The purpose as recorded in the memorandum stated:

The purpose is to strengthen the Baptist witness and cooperate in ministry with each body remaining autonomous. The business of the Baptist bodies of the Alliance shall be facilitated by a coordinating executive comprising between two and four representatives from each group (Memorandum of Understanding Document 1999).

In response to the purpose contained in the “Memorandum of Understanding,” the following statements were made by each organization (Bulwer Road Minutes 1999:16). BUSA stated that this process should bring about perfect unity such as discussed in 1 Corinthians 1:10. BCSA stated that it was open to reconciliation and to this process and that a resolution was taken at its Easter Conference in 1999, which affirmed the need for reconciliation, fellowship and unity. BMSA stated that there must be an unconditional commitment as challenged in Ephesians 4:1-5. BASA stated that the walls that separated Baptists need to be broken down. There was a need for delegates to consider the love of Christ in order to become one as Christ and the Father are one as stated in Ephesians 2:14.

The tempo towards reconciliation increased as expressed by the statements of the four organizations. The two Indian organizations, BMSA and BASA, as well as the BUSA, prefaced their call for unity by referencing scripture (BRBM 1999:16). Each of these references contains the theme of unity, and this process appeared to have been grounded in the Christian call for unity.

After a time of prayer there was a discussion concerning barriers in the relationship amongst the four Baptist organizations. Listed below are those barriers:

- Lack of communication between Baptist groups;
- Tone of communication;

- Constitution that is inflexible and without representation;
- Power struggle for dominance;
- Ignorance of each other's history, hopes and character;
- Access to the international Baptist family (BRBM 1999:17).

For the first time these organizations were able to openly express how these barriers impeded their desire to cooperate as Baptists. In summarizing the listed barriers as expressed by these organizations, it was evident that there has been a lack of communication amongst Baptists. It was also found that the tone of the communication lacked respect for others. As far as the issue of constitution was concerned, this applied to the BUSA, as the other organizations felt that the BUSA's constitution was inflexible and without representation, and furthermore it was changed later to either cause the other organizations to join the BUSA on its terms or risk being left out of its structures. Prior to the changing of the BUSA constitution, BASA, BMSA and the ABK were affiliated as an organization to the BUSA where they had limited representation on its executive council only (BRBM 1999:17).

Baptists were to a large extent ignorant of one another's history, hopes and character. Delegates from the non-BUSA organizations expressed concern that the BUSA did not recognize the rich history and valuable contributions BASA, BMSA and the BCSA had made to the Christian witness in South Africa (BRBM 1999:17).

Another barrier that affected the relationship amongst Baptists in South Africa was racism (BRBM 1999:17). It would be naïve to think that, given the socio-political conditions in the country and the racial composition of the five Baptist organizations, that there would be no racism.

The facilitator engaged each of the organizations to discuss the hopes of how these barriers might be overcome and to provide a way forward. Delegates discussed that with regard to the lack of communication, they were hopeful that there would be free communication with open language between leaders and members of the five organizations characterized by love and respect for each other and their respective organizations. It was hoped that a constitution, especially of BUSA, would be open to all voices. The issue of racism received attention as well, and it was resolved that each organization work towards eradicating this barrier both within individuals as well as in the structures of the five organizations (BRBM 1999:17).

It was further decided (1999:17) that to overcome the problem of ignorance, unity and reconciliation meetings would be held and pulpit exchange and fellowship among congregations of the various organizations would be encouraged. These efforts, according to the delegates (1999:17), would provide opportunities for the members to appreciate the richness of their diversity. It was decided (1999:18) that there was a need for a mechanism to be put into place to move the four organizations closer to the goal of unity. This mechanism would include:

- Confession, in which participants accept their responsibilities and own what they have done;
- Restitution and fulfilment of obligations;
- Recognition of particular conflicts that require intervention.

The BCSA on the 9 April 1999 went on to propose the establishment of a cooperative body of Baptists in South Africa. According to the BCSA this will encourage co-operation and open communication and create a forum to deal with

conflicts and issues unresolved from the past. The BCSA added that this body could be expanded to include other Baptist bodies and to look at wider issues such as social inequalities, leadership and community development in the country.

The BUSA made the following statement. Being the Baptist organization that was viewed with suspicion over the years by most of the other Baptist organizations, this statement was a very significant one:

We acknowledge that in the past, we as the BUSA, have acted wrongfully and sinfully towards Baptist bodies in South Africa who were historically represented at a leadership level in our denomination. We confess as sinful our exclusionary mindset, our constitutional inflexibility, our lack of proper communication, as well as a deep-seated ignorance. We also confess that there have been times when co-operation did take place and we did not give proper acknowledgement or show adequate respect to smaller bodies. We have demonstrated a pattern of not noting the co-operation, growth and development of smaller Baptist bodies. We acknowledge that this has caused deep hurt and division in the past for which we are deeply sorry and we trust you will grant us forgiveness. In order to prevent this from happening again and to move forward together we propose that delegations from the four Baptist bodies meet every six months for the purpose of communication, co-operation and unity. The goal is to engage each other so that we can ultimately become one Baptist body in South Africa (BRBM 1999:3).

This statement reflected a mindset that appears to have changed from the old way of thinking where non-Baptist Union members were treated in a different light. The exclusionary mindset by the BUSA polarized Baptists in South Africa and this statement offered a strong commitment to co-operation and unity. The statement does not, however, state that it was sorry for its complacency with the status quo in the country which affected Baptists. It will be seen if the words of Villa-Vicencio (1988:1) in regards to the protests of most English speaking churches, "Their protest was neither harsh nor rigorous" is true.

The BMSA, a predominantly Indian organization, made the following statement:

The Mission confesses to many wrong doings for the way we treated each other because of the laws of our country. Our present ideals are to see restored relationships and to have some form of combined fellowship. Ultimately the Baptist Mission is committed to one Baptist body. In order for this to come about we suggest the formation of a facilitating committee, with each body having equal representation. We express the need to have one voice. Baptist Mission will take every initiative to Baptist unity. We will not commit ourselves to any process but Baptist unity. We need to have a neutral facilitator. We need to look at other denominations that have had a unification process, for help. We must adhere to the principles of honesty and transparency. Today is the beginning of a great day in our lives (BRBM 1999:4).

The strong call for unity from the BMSA was a result of its own consultation that took place in Deep River, Kwa-Zulu Natal from the 5-7 February 1993. At this Deep River Consultation sixty delegates from the churches of the BMSA mapped out a vision for the future. The three days at Deep River were spent formulating a mission statement, outlining objectives, making confession, recognizing the challenges for the future relationships among their churches and other Baptist denominations and developing strategies and a commitment to action. One of its objectives, as stated in its covenant, was to “promote unity and brotherly love among churches of the mission and association within the mission.” It also committed itself to unification of the Baptist denomination and noted the fragmentation of the polarized state of the church in South Africa (Deep River Consultation Document 1993: 2).

The BMSA does not specify what wrongs it committed. Given the fact that this is an ethnically-Indian organization, it would be helpful for the sake of the nature of this confessions, reference is made to these wrong doings.

The statement made by BASA, a largely ethnic organization, was summarized in the minutes as acknowledging the need to work together and to go beyond their hurt. They said that in their ignorance they had hurt others. They regretted all their past actions which caused those hurts. They also said that they submitted to the cleansing of the precious blood of Jesus and they wished to move with a new spirit of fellowship (BRBM 1999:4). BASA also did not specify their past actions which caused hurt to other Baptists.

Each of the organizations' statements embodied confession and regret of past actions. However, these confessions lacked specificity. Despite this, there was optimism that this process would proceed to the next level. That next level, as recorded (BRBM 1999:12-14) in the 9 April 1999 minutes of Baptist Unity in South Africa, was the discussion of the model for a Baptist forum in South Africa. A name, South African Baptist Alliance (SABA), was suggested and was received positively. This SABA would comprise the four groups, which would engage each other regularly and work towards unity. It was also suggested that issues such as racism, tribalism, suspicion and resources be dealt with by this forum. Delegates shared some of the challenges of a "top down" approach, which required a person of passion to drive the process.

A groundbreaking resolution was put together by a special resolution committee of this forum, which reads:

"We, the delegates of the Baptist Convention of South Africa, the Baptist Association of South Africa, the Baptist Mission of South Africa and the Baptist Union of Southern Africa, on this 9th day April of 1999, in order to explore reconciliation, forgiveness and unity among our constituent bodies experienced the guidance and conviction of the Holy Spirit as we expressed our past, our hurts,

our divisions and our sins. A time of introspection led us to identify barriers to unite. We have acknowledged the move of God in our midst, which led us to express our hopes for the future and our common desire for a single united Baptist body in South Africa. We have resolved to take this report back to our executives for discussion and for them to appoint delegates to continue deliberation on the 2nd July 1999 (BRBM 1999:5).

The resolution was received and approved unanimously. It was then determined that each body would take the results of this meeting to their executives and appoint four persons to meet on 2nd July 1999 at the Bulwer Road Baptist Church to continue the process as stated in the last statement of the resolution. Delegates participated in a “Communion Service” with prayer offered for the process.

5.4 The Kempton Park Consultation

The third meeting was held on 31 March 2000 held at the ABK Seminary in Kempton Park, Johannesburg. The minutes (KPC 2000: 9) recorded the participation of the Afrikaanse Baptiste Kerk at the Baptist Forum. At the outset the General Secretary, Dr. Carl Lehmkuhl, in greeting the group, stated that the ABK was willing and prepared to work together with the four groups (KPC 2000:9).

The resolution that was accepted by the executive committee of SABA had to be discussed by the respective executive committees of the five Baptist organizations and was to be reported on at the next meeting. The responses of the following five organizations after consulting with their respective executives committees were as follows:

ABK accepted the proposal and was willing and prepared to work together with the

Alliance. BCSA suggested that due to the prevailing problems and misunderstanding in both the BCSA and the BUSA constituencies, energies and efforts should be focused on relationship building and reconciliation, first at the grass-roots level and then on other levels as well; and that co-operation be sought among the five Baptist bodies in South Africa in such areas as theological education, ministers and staff pension fund and mission so as to enhance a common Baptist witness in South Africa.

BUSA reported that its executive committee felt that the resolution was too broad. They felt that there was some work to do specifically with regards to what the forum was going to consider with regard to theological education. It was further reported that there would be no vote on the resolution until it was concrete and specific in this area. BMSA stated it was interested in the process but would prefer to see some time frame as well as an evaluation process put in place. BASA reported that its executive committee was generally in favour of the process but was waiting for specifics.

The facilitator, Rev. Dan Cole, was recorded to have said at this meeting that the group had to take ownership of this process and recommended that each of the Baptist organizations select one person to a committee of conveners. These five would become conveners for future meetings of the Alliance. Cole suggested that these conveners should rotate in the beginning and in this way delegates would learn to appreciate the leadership style of each group. The conveners selected by the five organizations were P. Msiza (BCSA), T. Rae (BUSA), C. Lehmkuhl (ABK), D. Philip or B. Naidoo (BMSA) and R. Ragwan (BASA). The conveners were given a

suggested agenda for future meetings with the objective of cooperating as Baptists in South Africa. The following items in 5.5.1 below were discussed and attempts were made to implement them:

5.5 The Arena Park Consultation

The fourth meeting was held on 18 August 2000 held at Arena Park Baptist Church in Chatsworth, Durban. This meeting (SABA Minutes 2000:1-5) began with a proposal of a statement by the BU.

5.5.1 Definitive statement

Rev. Terry Rae of the BUSA proposed a mission statement which read:

The purpose of the South African Baptist Alliance is to strengthen the Baptist witness in South Africa by vesting a forum where the participating bodies may forge a closer fellowship, discuss matters of common concern, speak with a united voice and develop a co-operative ministry (BRBM 2000:1).

The statement by the BUSA seemed a little watered down from its statement at the first consultation in Durban, which stated (BRBM 1999: 12) that there was a need for a strong Baptist witness in Kwa Zulu Natal. Then in the second consultation it referenced 1 Corinthians 1:10. The BUSA challenged the members to dare to risk for God (BRBM 1999:16). The statement proposed by Terry Rae of the BUSA at the third consultation (KPC 2000:9) however did not contain the strong call for unity. Instead he proposed that Baptists should work together. Although this statement did not refer to unity, it was, nevertheless, accepted by members of SABA.

5.5.2 Pray for each other

This has been a strong feature of the SABA. At each executive meeting, special prayer time has been given to each organisation to share and report about their activities after which prayer time was allocated to pray for one another and for the activities of each of the five organizations. These are too numerous to record, but are recorded in all the minutes of the SABA meetings.

5.5.3 Expand publications

This has not been a successful function of SABA despite calls from delegates in their respective organizations' newsletters and brochures to include the progress, activities and the discussions being held by the five Baptist organizations. It was reported, however, at a meeting held at the Durban North Baptist Church on the 15 June 2001 that the BUSA would advertise the official launch of SABA in its national brochure, *Baptist Today*. Terry Rae was recorded as saying that he would request the editor of *Baptist Today* to put together a brochure of the event, which could also be circulated to all Baptists in South Africa (SABA Minutes 2001:2-4).

5.5.4 Constitution

SABA delegates stated that this forum would not have a constitution. Each organization, according to the minutes of the meeting of 18 August 2000 which was held at the Arena Park Baptist Church, Chatsworth, stated that the Alliance would follow a simple structure of fellowship with each organization remaining autonomous

and that a coordinating executive council be formed to facilitate fellowship and co-operation. It was also recorded that this executive committee would comprise between two and four representatives from each group (SABA Minutes 2002:2).

5.5.5 Co-operation in ministry

The following ministry projects were listed as possible ways the five organizations could co-operate: theological education, missions, church planting, disaster relief and community projects such as HIV/AIDS. As far as the above were concerned, only two areas enjoyed the co-operation of the five organizations. One was theological education. The All Africa Baptist Fellowship (AABF), which is a regional organisation of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA), held a Theological Educators Conference in Johannesburg at the Honey Dew Conference Centre on 24-27 June 2003. SABA elected a committee to arrange this conference on behalf of AABF. Delegates from three of the five Baptist organizations attended and participated at the conference (SABA Minutes: 2003:2).

The other significant co-operative ministry that all five Baptist organisations participated in was the X-treme team ministry. The X-treme ministry concept is a youth programme of the American Baptist Churches (ABC), USA that allows individuals to experience Christian ministry in different cultural and geographical locations around the world. Representatives from the five bodies travelled to the United States of America and participated in this ministry from 30 June to 9 August 2003 (SABA Minutes 2003:2).

Thus far there has not been any co-operation in church planting and community projects such as HIV/AIDS by the five Baptist organizations. Despite this, the five organizations committed themselves to pursuing ways of co-operating, including:

5.5. 6 Sharing principles on leadership

The minutes recorded the concerns of the BUSA concerning the tensions between congregational and leadership models of church leadership. According to the BUSA there was too much organizational leadership as compared to spiritual leadership. The other four Baptist organizations identified with this observation made by the BUSA and requested that these trends be examined against international trends. This examination, however, did not take place by the SABA (SABA Minutes 2000:3).

5.5.7 Pastors' roll

No effort was undertaken to compile a roll of pastors within the five organizations.

5.5.8 Constitution

An explanation was given under item one of the suggested agenda for future meetings. The decision was not to have a constitution. At the very beginning of the unity talks, each Baptist group committed themselves to unity. However, these groups were not ready to commit themselves to a constitution. There were a lot at stake such as assets, personnel, and resources.

5.5.9 A need for Christian schools

This item appeared only once on the agenda and discussions took place, but no real progress was made in this area.

5.5.10 Public relations

In the short history of SABA the following were elected as facilitators. Rev. Terry Rae of the BUSA was elected the first facilitator of SABA in 2001(SABA minutes 2001:1). The following year in 2002 Rodney Ragwan was elected as SABA's facilitator (SABA Minutes 2002:3). The main persons responsible for creating awareness of SABA and its objectives were supposed to be the general secretaries of the five organizations.

5.5.11 Address the government with one common Baptist voice on moral issues

In the past BUSA addressed the government on certain issues, one of which was of a political nature, that is, the government's proposal to deprive Africans of their limited parliamentary representation. The BUSA condemned this proposal (De Gruchy 1979:54). Although the present government meets with religious leaders from time to time, SABA does not have an official voice at this religious forum nor has it attempted to get such a voice.

5.5.12 Form a theological education committee

At the SABA meeting held at Arena Park Baptist Church in Chatsworth, Durban, the minutes recorded that a discussion was held to unify the theological colleges of the ABK, BCSA and the BUSA. It was decided to hold a meeting of all three colleges. Those present viewed this in a very positive light and hoped that this would result in the merging of seminary programmes and sharing of resources and personnel. It was hoped that this new institution would be a truly African Seminary where the different languages and cultural backgrounds would be considered. This concept was to be tabled at the respective meetings of the five Baptist organizations. Although BASA and BMSA did not have established theological institutions, their representation and input were requested as well (SABA Minutes 2000:2).

There have been several meetings of this theological education committee in the last two and a half years regarding the forming of a single Baptist theological college in South Africa. The model that was being pursued was a Federal Baptist college. Some of the issues that were of concern to the main Baptist organizations were assets, resources, administration, salaries, legal implications and theology. The minutes of 31 October 2003 recorded (SABA minutes 2003:2) that the concept of a federal Baptist college in South Africa was desirable but not practical.

The main reason given by the BUSA was that its theological institution is accredited with the education department of the state while the ABK and the BCSA colleges were not. Furthermore, according to its General Secretary, the state will not consider the concept of three colleges on one campus. The other reasons cited by the BUSA

were administration, which for the BUSA would be, in the words of the new General Secretary, Angelo Scheepers, “a nightmare,” and salaries for the different college faculties will differ.

The concluding remarks as recorded in the minutes were that the BUSA felt that the “time is not right” for such a concept. The other SABA delegates expressed disappointment at the failure of this proposed concept of a federal Baptist college in South Africa. It was hoped that this united effort by SABA to form a federal college would be a significant development in the unification of the five Baptist organizations (SABA minutes 2003:2). Failure by SABA to have a truly united institution where there would be three colleges sharing one campus demonstrated lack of will by the BUSA to go through with this concept.

A key research question in this chapter is, How did BASA respond to the discussions at the SABA? The process that led to the unity talks was preceded by a meeting between Hoffmesiter (BCSA) and Ragwan (BASA). Hoffmeister (Ragwan 2003:62) requested that the BCSA, BASA and BMSA meet to talk about working together. The result was that Springfield Consultation laid the foundation for future talks with all five Baptist organizations in which BASA was a participant. When the unity talks in which the Baptist organizations, BUSA, BCSA, BMSA and BASA (ABK joined later) commenced, BASA was well represented and participated actively in the discussions and activities (Baptist Unity Talks in South Africa Minutes 1999:12).

At the Bulwer Road Baptist Consultation (BRB 1999: 16) BASA recognized barriers between the Baptists in South Africa and called for the walls that separated Baptists

to be broken. This was the first time at a national forum BASA had made such a call. Given its ethnic orientation, it committed itself to a united Baptist body in South Africa. It agreed (BRBM: 1999:5) to a resolution that expressed a desire for a single united Baptist body in South Africa. BASA was fulfilling in part Nathaniel's vision of unity. He called for more of unity among the two Indian Baptist organizations (Nathaniel 1979).

Members of BASA presented the above resolution to its executive committee meeting for approval. However, BASA members at the next consultation reported that the its executive committee was in favour of the process but requested more specific information about the unity talks (KPC 2000:12).

5.6. Data Interpretation and Recommendation

In this chapter minutes of meetings that were held among the five Baptist organizations were discussed. The desires of the five Baptist organizations to work towards unification were noted. The minutes of these meetings reflected the thinking and intentions of the key leaders of the five Baptist organizations. Their intentions and hopes as expressed at these meetings will be critically examined in the light of the stated objective of the five Baptist organizations, i.e. unification and co-operation. They will be interpreted and thereafter the researcher's recommendation will follow. This process started with Baptists expressing a need to engage one another in dialogue.

5.5.1 Baptists in Dialogue

As mentioned earlier in this research the BWA's presence in South Africa in July of 1998 had a very positive influence on Baptists in South Africa. This resulted in the formation of the South African Baptist Alliance. The meeting of the four Baptist organizations at Bulwer Road Baptist Church on 19 February 1999 must be considered as a major breakthrough given the fragmented and polarized state of the Baptist denomination in South Africa. What is also significant is that the four groups extended an invitation to the ABK, which is an Afrikaner group, thus making the opportunity to join the process of unification an inclusive one. Furthermore this was the first time in the history of BASA where it participated on a national forum which included the four main Baptist organizations to discuss unity.

The minutes of the Bulwer Road meeting recorded a proposal (1999:6): *"Each body would take the results of this meeting to their executive councils and appoint 4 persons to meet...to continue this process."* The four persons from each organization were tasked to facilitate reconciliation and co-operation among all Baptists in Kwa Zulu Natal and to bring other Baptist organizations into the ongoing national process of reconciliation and unification. This can be regarded as a breakthrough given the non-co-operation of the five organizations in the past. However, Baptists had to come to terms with the past in order to proceed into the future. The BASA made a statement for these hurts to be dealt with (BRBM 1999:16).

5.6.2 Dealing with the past

The delegates agreed that before a merger could take place, a “Colesberg” type meeting was necessary. The delegates (BCBM 1999:3) agreed to this proposal: “ ... *the next meeting should include all Baptists by invitation to deal with past hurts.*” The proposal to create a forum to deal with past hurts was a step in the right direction as one considers the scriptural basis for such an activity of confession and forgiveness.

The dawning of a new dispensation in 1994 of a democratic country gave hope to Black people, and the conditions in the country in some way prompted Baptists to engage each other with the hope of uniting a fragmented Baptist denomination. The BCSA that represented the Black Baptists in South Africa had suffered greatly under apartheid, and it was important for them to share with other Baptists the hurts experienced by them as well as the obstacles of the past so that these could be dealt with and hopefully never repeated. BASA and BMSA also felt that such a forum was needed. The starting point in this process for the BCSA was important and necessary. For in pursuing unification, past hurts must be brought out into the open and dealt with. There needed to be confession and repentance for true healing to take place. This seemed to be a natural path to take given the fact that the five organizations hold strongly to biblical confession and repentance as far as salvation is concerned. The evidence of a biblical basis for such an activity was another reason for Baptists to embrace such a forum where Baptists confess and repent of the wrongs. In a process such as this there would be a number of challenges to consider.

Firstly, there has been a lack of communication among Baptist organizations. Occasionally areas of concern were communicated by BASA and BCSA to the BUSA. However, responses to these concerns were not acknowledged by BUSA. The tone of the communications, especially between BUSA and BCSA, were not good.

A second obstacle was the constitution of BUSA, which was inflexible. When the BUSA changed its constitution from a union of associations to a union of churches, this left the other organizations outside of the greater Baptist family, alienating the leaders who represented their respective organizations at the BUSA executive meetings.

Another barrier was the BUSA's treatment of the history of the BASA, BMSA and the BCSA. Very little of these histories appear in their publications and newsletters. The contributions of men and women in the history of these organizations are often ignored or not acknowledged. The BUSA specifically admitted in its statement that there had been times when co-operation did take place but that they did not give proper acknowledgement or show adequate respect by noting the co-operation, growth and development of smaller Baptist organizations. At the first meeting of the four Baptist organizations held on 19 February 1999, there was recognition that the past history of apartheid played a part in perpetuating five separate Baptist organizations; the five organizations participated in a time of confession and repentance similar to South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Baptist Unity in South Africa minutes 1999:1).

The “Memorandum of Understanding” specifically defined SABA as a fellowship of bodies and asserted that each organisation would remain autonomous. It reflected a lack of commitment of each organisation except the BMSA to a new united Baptist organisation in South Africa. This should not be misunderstood as reluctance by the other organizations to the idea of co-operation and working together in ministry. It simply means that there were many issues at stake in the event of creating a new united Baptist organisation in South Africa, such as assets, resources, theological differences, tradition and culture. It seemed that these were too costly a sacrifice to make. At the SABA meetings there were mostly young leaders from the five Baptist organizations. Not all of them were part of resolutions that were made previously by BUSA in the apartheid days that had brought about hurt. Despite this each organisation confessed its wrongs and apologized for their past actions. Each delegate participated in a Holy Communion service, which followed at the end.

A very important element of restitution at this forum was absent. Given the enormous damage that apartheid had caused, in which two organizations, BUSA and ABK, benefited namely in the areas of economics and education, no commitment was made as far as restitution was concerned. Whilst the creation of such a forum was a noble one, an important biblical principle of restitution was not considered. Embracing such a principle would be huge and costly but engaging in such a process, however small, would have been helpful symbolically. The willingness of each of the Baptist organizations that is reflected in their statements at the first meeting in 1999 was an indication that leaders were open to the idea of eventual unification. The leaders who sat around the SABA table were mostly important and influential officers in their respective organizations. When the principles and

objectives of SABA were reported at their respective constituencies they were received positively. However, most of these constituencies called for more specific details with regards to the unification process. One such example of this was recorded in the SABA minutes of the meeting held on 31 March 2000 in Kempton Park, Johannesburg, where the BUSA responded to the area of theological education. One has to bear in mind that Baptists also have variations in their theologies. The BUSA and ABK hold to a conservative evangelical theology with strong emphasis on evangelism and missions whilst BCSA tend to be strong on contextual theology with a concern for both spiritual and social needs. BASA and BMSA tend to be positioned in the middle with a tendency at times to lean more towards conservatism.

The failure of SABA to pursue a federal Baptist college, according to the SABA minutes of 31 October 2003, was a result of difficulties in areas of staffing, salaries, legal implications in regards to assets, property and administration. No mention was made of the curriculum. One is tempted to think that the issue of theology could have been a major stumbling block in this process. The statements in the SABA meetings reflected the differences as far as the theological positions of the two main organizations namely the BUSA and the BCSA are concerned. One is considered to be somewhat liberal and the other conservative in its theology. Many conservative evangelicals are not comfortable with liberation theology, which attempts to unite theology and socio-political concerns (Elwell 1984: 635).

On the other hand, Blacks from the BCSA as well as the two ethnically based organizations, BASA and BMSA, would argue that the conservative evangelicals

from the BUSA and ABK with their strong emphasis on evangelism and church planting tend to be less concerned with the social issues facing the population of South Africa. There needed to be an understanding that God is concerned with the whole person. A holistic understanding and application of the gospel was needed rather than a narrow understanding and application of the gospel.

Another flaw in the unification process as set out in SABA was that the principles and objectives were not reaching the people on the ground. Rev. Hoffmeister was recorded as saying that the challenging task would be to as cautioning against a top down approach where only leadership of the Baptist organizations were serious about unity but their memberships were not. He also suggested that in order for this to be a bottom up approach there needed to be reconciliation drivers in each of the Baptist organizations (Baptist Unity Talks minutes 1999: 13).

5.6.3 Achievements

Whilst there are many challenges facing SABA and the unification process, many positive aspects have been realized. They are as follows:

5.5.4 Multi-racial forum

For the first time in the history of Baptists in South Africa, the different race groups engaged one another in matters concerning unification. The regular meetings of SABA gave the different racial groups the opportunity to socialize and share personal concerns as well as agree to disagree on issues. This would not have been

possible with each Baptist organization working independently of the others. The simple activities of having tea, meals and travelling together by the different groups has helped positively as far as communication and acceptance are concerned.

5.6.5 An educational experience

Many of the misconceptions and suspicions that the five organizations had of each other were brought out in the open and cleared. The sharing of ideas and experiences contributed to a better understanding of one another. This included sharing of innovative programmes, community-based initiatives and international conference participation experiences.

The honesty of the BUSA as recorded in a statement on 9 April 1999 should be acknowledged. The BUSA statement confessed that in the past it has acted wrongfully and sinfully towards Baptist organizations in South Africa. Their statement went as far as admitting their sinful and exclusionary mindset, their constitutional inflexibility, and lack of proper communication as well as deep-seated ignorance (Bulwer Road Minutes 1999:18-19).

5.7 Evaluation

In evaluating this process, it must be stated that the desired results were not achieved. Despite the good intentions of SABA and its resolutions the practical manifestations have not really been fully realized. Whilst the new dispensation in the country gave impetus to the five Baptist organizations to work towards unification, this is not a good enough reason for reconciliation. Martin Lloyd Jones (1972:279), in

his commentary, *God's Way of Reconciliation*, states that sometimes because of certain circumstances people get together are driven together, perhaps, by a common need or by a common danger, and they are to be seen talking to one another and cooperating and working together. One is tempted to consider Lloyd Jones's assertion that sometimes people are driven together by a common danger. Perhaps the insecurity of being under a Black administration as well as the fear of being criticized by the international Baptist community for not taking advantage of the conducive political conditions in South Africa in pursuing unity are factors which have brought Baptists together.

In the case of SABA, political changes in the country as well as the presence of the BWA in 1998 caused Baptists to begin a process of unification. Once again, should circumstances or biblical motivation determine unification? The researcher thinks the latter, as Baptists are known to be the "people of the book" where the authority of the Bible is taken very seriously.

The statement of the BUSA about smaller Baptist organizations was a major shift. It has been recorded earlier in this research that the BUSA had changed its constitution hoping that individual churches of the BMSA, ABK, BASA and BCSA would affiliate directly with the BUSA. This was regarded by the other Baptist organizations with suspicion as they felt that the BUSA had little or no regard for the smaller Baptist organizations. On the other hand one may come to the defence of the BUSA and argue that it was promoting the possibility of one single Baptist organization in South Africa. However, a truly united Baptist organization would have to be negotiated by all the Baptist organizations with a new constitution and a new

name.

There was some degree of openness by BASA to the goals of SABA, which were to foster closer cooperation among the five Baptist organizations with the hope that in the future there would be a united Baptist organization. However, BASA was not fully supportive of this as it seemed that it wanted to maintain its ethnic identity. An examination of the relationship between the BUSA and BASA it reveals elements of racism. BUSA at Bulwer Road apologized for its wrongful actions and attitudes towards other Baptist organizations (Bulwer Road Minutes 1999:18-19).

5.8 The Way Forward

In recommending a way forward for a united Baptist organization in South Africa, the researcher proposes that Baptists must firstly be intentional about unification. Baptists in South Africa must reflect a strong intention to unite with time frames put in place. If there is a time frame it will help those who are driving the vision to work within that time frame. Secondly, there must be transparency and openness. Negotiators should at all times be transparent and open in matters affecting their understanding of the process as well as the views of their constituencies. There may be difficulties later on if major decisions are being taken and delegates become technical and thus not cooperative. Thirdly Baptists must place God's agenda above everything else. This may seem a highly spiritual recommendation and indeed it is. The researcher, who is a minister by vocation and deeply committed to the Christian faith, makes this recommendation passionately. As a participant in this process since 1999, the researcher contends that the placing of tradition, history and the personal

interpretation by individuals over the agenda of God poses a serious challenge to the unification of Baptists in South Africa. Fourthly, there must be consensus. Baptists have always applied the principle of consensus in decision-making. The application of this principle leaves much to be desired. During church business meetings the participation and input of youth, women and other departments of the church are not always taken into account. Full discussions should and must take place on all levels, i.e. youth meetings, women's meetings and other departmental meetings of the church.

This chapter discussed the formation of the South African Baptist Alliance and examined and interpreted the minutes of the meetings of the various consultations. It has helped in understanding the process that the five Baptist organizations pursued towards unification. In this process the past experiences of mainly Black Baptists, the challenges and achievements, were mentioned. These were also evaluated and a way forward was suggested. Additionally, it provided a context for Baptist relations in South Africa of which BASA was an active participant. In chapter 6 the researcher will critically examine the strategies the Baptist Association of South Africa generated and their contributions to the spiritual, cultural, social and political developments in Kwa Zulu Natal.

Chapter Six

Ministry strategies of the Baptist Association of South Africa

This chapter will attempt to answer the key research question, what strategy did the BASA leaders generate and how they contributed to the spiritual, cultural, social and political development of Kwa Zulu Natal? It will do this by discussing the role and socio-political context of some of the important leaders such as John Rangiah (1903), his son Theophilus Rangiah (1921), David Newton Nathaniel (1951) and other significant laypersons and clergy leaders up to 2006 in the Baptist Association of South Africa. It will make particular reference to the ministry strategy these leaders employed in the Indian Baptist church in South Africa. This chapter will also analyse the ministry strategies the leaders of the Indian Baptist Church generated and used, and how they contributed to spiritual, social, cultural and political development in Kwa Zulu Natal.

In order to understand the contributions of the Indian Baptist leaders, it is important to locate the work of the Indian Baptist leaders within the socio-political context in South Africa. This is particularly important as this research stated earlier that South African Baptist historiography does not examine the social and cultural, and political issues that influenced the Baptist Association of South Africa.

The new country that Rangiah entered was under the control of the British which influenced it to a large extent. Colonialism was at its height and the missionary endeavour of the churches soon became part and parcel of the imperialistic dream (Villa-Vicencio 1988: 2-3). Later the Dutch, who were later called Afrikaners,

controlled South Africa through their apartheid policies in 1948 played a major role in shaping the religious, political and cultural landscape of South Africa. The Afrikaners came to identify themselves with the chosen people of the Old Testament whom God led to the Promised Land (Regehr 1979:113). Both Black and White relations were with minor exceptions shaped by this brand of Christianity. Consequently the social order in South Africa reflected a system where members of the Dutch Reformed Church understood Christianity as an exclusive and inherited religion which “shored up their group boundaries, nurtured their sense of superiority” (Elphick and Davenport 1997:2). On the other hand, for Baptists, The Baptist Union of South Africa, which was a predominantly English-speaking White-dominated organization, reflected a similar outlook towards Black, Indians and Coloured Baptists. Additionally, the public expression of Christianity for Baptists was with the Baptist Union. Here, too, Black and White Baptist relations were influenced by this monopoly of Christianity. The Baptist Union of South Africa established separate theological institutions to cater to the various racial Baptist groups; only the Baptist Union could approve the granting of marriage licenses to non-Baptist Union ministers; and the Baptist Union maintained a very restrictive theological framework that impacted how Blacks, Coloureds and Indians understood their faith in the socio-political context of South Africa (BWA 1990: 30).

Much has been written about the Black-White relations amongst Baptists prior to the arrival of Rangiah in South Africa. Not much has been written about the entry of Indian Baptists into this socio-political context. Surendra Bhana (1991: 5-224) in her book *Essays on Indentured Indians in Natal*, provides a number of scholarly essays in the study of Indian indentured labour, the role of labour migration in economic

development and the history of Natal. These essays provide general data on Indians in South Africa. She refers to John Rangiah and the Telugu Baptists who arrived in Natal at the beginning of the nineteenth century but with very little discussion on the mission and its contribution to Christianity in South Africa (1991:222). Mabel Palmer (1957:49-75) focuses more on the challenges Indians faced as a people in South Africa. She examines the various laws governing the Indians in Natal and the influence of M.K. Gandhi in South Africa as well as Indian education and culture.

Rangiah's arrival in Natal and his work among the Baptist Indians with his particular strategy deserves discussion. As indicated earlier it is not fully exposed in both the general and denominational histories of South Africa. In the aforementioned socio-political context, the strategy employed by John Rangiah, his son Theophilus, David Newton Nathaniel and other leaders who impacted the spiritual, social, cultural and political development in South Africa will be discussed and evaluated.

The four categories of influence - spiritual, cultural, social and political - in the colonized and later apartheid South Africa, had particular expressions in Natal where the genesis of the ministry of the Baptist Association of South Africa was located.

6. Context

6.1 Spiritual

Indian Baptist faith in South Africa, from its inception, was a constant and creative negotiation of an oriental Hindu worldview and a Christian message communicated mostly through White Baptists and an African context experiencing its own

negotiations with European Christianity. John Rangiah, the founder of the Indian Baptist church in Natal, as well as the Indian indentured labourers were converts from Hinduism to Christianity by mainly Americans in India. They were influenced by them but lived in a country where cultural and spiritual roots were deeply imbedded in their consciousness. It is with both these western and oriental views of Christianity that they arrived in a largely European and African context.

In the late 17 century and early 18 century, South Africa was home to Anglicans, Congregationalists, Baptists (Baptist Union of South Africa), Presbyterians and Methodists as well as missionaries from Germany, France, Switzerland, and Scandinavia (Pillay 1997:3). Indian Baptists arrived later in the 18th century and early 19th century. In South Africa and in particular Natal, Baptist Indians found themselves in close proximity to European and African spiritualities.

6.1.1 European Spirituality

In the 16th century the settlers who arrived in South Africa were mainly from the Reformed Church. The history of Christianity in South Africa as recorded by Elphick and Davenport (1997:2) began during this period when Whites first settled at the Cape of Good Hope. They further assert that during this period the Dutch Reformed Church, with minor exceptions, monopolized the public expression of Christianity.

The vast majority of the White colonists understood their salvation as a promise made by God to their ancestors and that Christianity was exclusively a religion for

them. This understanding of Christianity gave them a sense of superiority, which laid the basis for a White dominated racial order (1997:2).

In 1895 and 1806 another historical period emerged in South Africa. During this period the British occupied the Cape of Good Hope where South Africa was exposed to an “explosive proliferation of Protestant movements” (1997:3). Newly imported Churches such as the Anglican, Congregational, Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist and later the Roman Catholic, Pentecostal, and Lutherans were established in South Africa. The Roman Catholic Church was the first Christian mission to commence work among the indentured Indians, followed by the Methodists and Anglicans. The Lutherans and the Baptists were smaller than the Roman Catholics, Methodist and Anglican missions (Henning 1993:154). Broadly, the spirituality of the indentured Indians was shaped by their European identity, which was nourished in a European intellectual context (Oosthuizen 192). They believed as well that they were superior to the native population and had to civilize them.

6.1.2 African spirituality

African Christianity according to Elphick and Davenport (1997:2) began during the arrival of White colonists in 1652. Although African Christianity traces its roots to the arrival of Whites, Africans later left the mainline churches’ mission organisation and developed their own brand of indigenous Christianity. These churches became known as African Initiated Churches (AIC). Bosch (1987:9) is of the opinion that the AICs may be seen as the fifth major Christian church type, after Eastern Orthodox churches, the Roman Catholic Church, the Protestant Reformation churches and the

Pentecostal churches. This group of churches also became known as the African Independent Churches because of their self reliance marked by their refusal of foreign financial assistance and leadership. Taylor (1928:89) refers to the son of the founder of the African Presbyterian Church, Mzimba, who commented on the AIC's movement towards an African church by stating that Ethiopianism aimed "to plant a self-supporting, self governing and self-propagating African church which would produce a truly African type of Christianity suited for the genius and needs of the race, and not a black copy of any European church."

Within the AIC, there are, however, many types of African churches. One such type is the Ethiopian type church, very similar to the European Protestant church from which it emerged. There are others like the Zion Christian Church (ZCC) which is the largest of the AIC churches (Oosthuizen and Hexman, 1991: 191). In the Ethiopian type Church, infant baptism, reading of liturgies and the singing of translated European hymns characterize the worship services. Ethiopian type Churches are less enthusiastic and emotional in their services than the "prophet healing" African churches (Dyrness and Karkkainen, 2008: 7). Other AICs, such as the prophet healing churches or spiritual churches, emphasise the power of the Spirit as healing and prophecy characterize their services. They are historically connected to the Pentecostal movement, but have, over the years, moved in their own direction away from Western forms of Pentecostalism (Dyrness and Karkkainen 2008: 7).

The belief in sangomas, the divine healers of the Zulu people, is also an important facet of Zulu spirituality. It is believed that these sangomas possess supernatural power and can communicate with ancestors on behalf of the people (Zulu Culture

2009). On the other hand, according to Moodley (2008:93) the amaNazaretha Church (also known as the Shembe Church), now denounces practices such as witchcraft and consultations with Sangomas. However, they still show allegiance to their ancestors. Moodley (2008:93) also makes it clear through his interviews of the members of this church that the community lives in a symbiotic relationship with their ancestors and that the separation between the living and the living-dead is only physical. This means that the living-dead comprise one community and the living consult with the ancestors in all matters that concern them.

6.1.3 Culture

The two dominant cultures in South Africa during the early 19 century were those of the Africans and Europeans. Indian Baptist missions took place mainly within this European and Zulu cultural context. Natal also has a large English population.

Zulus are known for their rich culture and tradition. Kingship groupings, family solidarity, respect for elders, parental authority over children, are important patterns found in Zulu culture and tradition (Vilakazi, Mthethwa and Mpanza 1986: 28-30). Each year the Zulus hold ceremonies which revive their culture and traditions. These ceremonies, among others, include commemorating the legendary life of King Shaka. Shaka was known for his important role in uniting disparate Zulu clans into a cohesive nation (Isizulu, 2000). One of the most distinguishing features of the Zulus is their beadwork and is said to be symbolic. It communicates reprimands, warnings, love and encouragement.

With the exception of employer and employee relationship, there was very little meaningful exposure to other cultures. The indentured labourers lived on the Hulett estate and were thus exposed to the culture of the Hulett. The Hulett also mingled with the indentured labourers as they attended the opening of the first Indian Baptist school in Kearsney. Due to this exposure, the Indians adopted a somewhat English way of dressing, although not totally abandoning their traditional dress. Rangiah rode on horseback to the various mission stations. It seems that Indians' contact with the British in India made it easier for them to adopt the English culture.

6.1.4 Social

During the early years of the Indian Baptists ministry, Indians, Coloureds, Blacks and Whites lived separately. They had their own churches, schools, institutions and racially designated residential areas. Hence there was very little meaningful socializing among the different racial groups. However, the White missionaries such as Judith Morck, Julius Forcus, Rev. and Mrs T.D. Pass, and ministers from the Baptist Union worked among the Indian Baptists. The Baptist Union missionary department, the South African Baptist Missionary Society, appointed Rev. T.D. Pass as its first full-time minister to work in partnership with the Indian Baptist Churches. Pass conducted evangelistic campaigns and trained pastors.

In 2003, the five Baptist organizations formed the South African Baptist Alliance. Since then, the various racial groups gradually began interacting in a limited way with one another. However, the psychological barriers still exist because of the decades of racial separation especially on the social level. This was so because of

the long period of exposure to an ideology of separateness (apartheid) that was forced upon the South African population. Although the social and cultural forces in South Africa since the late 18 century did affect the Indian Baptists, the greater force was a political system which impacted every sphere of life for Indian Baptists. In this regard, the general political framework affecting Indians will be discussed, followed by a more specific context.

6.1.5 Political

As discussed earlier in this research, the racial stratification of South African society was an attempt by the government to keep South Africa a White country. The apartheid structure placed Whites at the top of the socio-political ladder with the most privileges, followed by Coloureds, Indians, and then Blacks at the lowest rung of the ladder (Moodley 2008:2). Whites had the privilege of choosing their own government. Coloureds and Indians were offered limited representation in government. In 1980 P.W. Botha, then the State President, established an advisory body called the President's Council where members from Coloured, Indian, White and Chinese populations were represented. The right wing members of his National Party objected to this move to share power and they left the party to start their own party, called the Conservative Party, with the aim of advancing racial policies by fighting for the return of apartheid to its original form. For the right wing politicians that was a Whites-rule country with all the other racial groups subservient to the White race.

In 1984, P.W. Botha introduced the Tricameral Parliament where Indians and Coloureds were given limited voices in Parliament. A very small percentage of Indians and Coloureds participated in the Tricameral elections. However, the system was put in place and operated between the years 1984 to 1994 (Tricameral Parliament: 2009).

Through the 1913 Land Act Blacks were also systematically dispossessed of their land and given certain rural areas to live in. Before the Union these were rural areas ruled by local chiefs. They were called 'Native Locations,' and Black South Africans were confined to these poor quality areas. Later, under apartheid, these areas were called homelands. Homelands were a creation of the apartheid, government, which designated a homeland for every major language in South Africa. There were 10 such homelands led by chiefs but controlled by the White government (Homelands, 2009). Natal, the home of the Indian Baptist church, was not a homeland but a quasi-independent Bantustan under the control of its leader, Mangosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi (Mangosuthu Buthelezi, 2009).

Much has been written about the historical, political, cultural and social contexts of South Africa. From a Baptist perspective, Hudson-Reed has written mainly about the Whites and their history of Christianity (Hudson-Reed). Others such as Batts and Chris Parnell, both from the Baptist Union of South Africa, have given sufficient historical information about White Baptist History. Hudson-Reed and most Christian historians on the other hand make only general reference to the history of Black, Coloured and Indian Baptists and their relationship with the dominant White Baptist narrative. Indian Christian history received exposure mainly from Gerald Pillay and

G.C. Oosthuizen, who wrote mainly about Pentecostal and general Indian Christian history. Although Pillay makes reference to Indian Baptists, he does not provide an analysis of their contribution to Christianity in South Africa and their impact on the social, cultural and political development. It is important to examine the specific political context in which Indian Baptists found themselves and how they generated ministry strategies which impacted the four categories described earlier in the South African context given their long history in South Africa. In order to understand the background of the arrival of Indians to Natal as well as the ministry of the BASA, the specific political context is necessary.

6.2 Specific Context

The indentured Baptist labourers settled largely in the province of Natal. In this province, they were subjected to harsh laws. The following describes the specific context in which these labourers found themselves.

6.2.1 Anti-Indian sentiments

The general attitude of intolerance of Whites towards the indentured Indians is documented in the writings of Mabel Palmer, C.G. Henning and Surendra Bhana. When the need for labour was raised in the Natal Colonial government, it was argued that local African labour could be used to meet this need. Ferguson-Davie (n.d.:10) refers to a press release in the Natal Mercury, 27th May 1859 where the Legislative Council discussed the question of labour for the sugar estates. The governor at that time, in a speech, considered the introduction of indentured Indians

from the sub-continent to Natal to meet the demand for labour. The response of the Legislative Council to the governor's speech (Ferguson-Davie n.d.: 10):

Any Bill introduced to facilitate the introduction of coolies shall receive our warmest support. We must, however, express our disappointment at the absence of any allusion in your Excellency's speech to the want of Native labour, which is pressing so injuriously on the efforts of our agriculturists

The term coolie as found in the governor's speech was used by the colonialists for Indians. The following definition of this term is helpful: A coolie according to the compact Oxford Dictionary (2009) is a Hindi word meaning day labourer and more specifically an unskilled native labourer in India, China, and some other Asian countries. It can also mean a person from the Indian subcontinent or of Indian descent. In the South African context, the word coolie is currently viewed as a racial slur on Indians.

Despite the strong case put forward by many in the Natal Colonial Government to settle for local African labour, the decision to allow Indians into South Africa to meet the labour crisis won the day. In 1859 there were three laws passed which dealt with the Indian labour immigration. Law 13 of 1859 dealt with the introduction of immigrants from territories east of the Cape of Good Hope; Law 14 of 1859 dealt with the introduction of labourers from India and Law 15 of 1859 dealt with enabling persons to introduce, at their own expense, immigrants from India (Ferguson-Davie n.d.: 11). This paved the way for the arrival of indentured labourers to South Africa. The first group of indentured Indians arrived in South Africa in 1860.

From the very outset in Natal, Whites saw Indians as 'the other', and as an alien group of people. Sixty five years later, the comments by politicians such as D.F.

Malan, the Minister of the Interior in 1925 reflected a negative attitude towards the Indians in South Africa. He remarked, “The Indian, as a race in this country, is an alien element in the population” (Dhupelia-Mesthrie 2000:13). Violet Wetherell is quoted by Dhupelia-Mesthrie as stating:

The Indian has always been a separate element in South African life...The Indian has remained apart, racially, linguistically, religiously. He has kept his blood pure and intermarried neither with Native nor European; though he speaks English, he has adhered to his own religions...His ancient beliefs are wide gulf between the Indian and the European. A Mohammedanism [sic] permit of polygamy which is abhorrent to western standards...Hinduism involves the worship of the cow, a conception which is alien to the European (Dhupelia-Mesthrie 2000:15).

Malan’s statement is partly correct in his assertion that Indians have always been a separate element in South Africa. However, the reality was also that the attitudes of Whites towards them were not welcoming and the many laws of the Natal government made it difficult for Indians to interact with Whites. It would have been difficult for the Indians under such conditions to become a full part of the South African community.

Anti-Indian attitudes as well as anti-Indian legislation increased. Members of the Natal Colonial Government objected to the continuation of indentured labour system. One of the most prominent politicians in the Natal Colony, Mr. Harry Escombe, became one of the strongest opponents of Indian immigration to the Natal Colony. In Escombe’s (Henning 1993:94) earlier speech in 1884 he remarked on the contribution Indians had made on an area of land that the indentured labourers worked on: “They have turned a sandy delta into a useful, profitable, productive piece of land and have become a useful and exemplary section of the community.” Escombe (Henning 1993:94) later changed his position on the immigration issue and

said, “This country (Natal) was meant for Europeans and was never intended to be an Asiatic Colony”. But when Escombe became the prime minister of Natal he changed his position again on this matter. He stated, “With regards to the time-expired Indians, I do not think it ought to be compulsory for any man to go to any part of the world, save for a crime for which he can be transported” (Ferguson-Davie nd: 23).

On the matter of extending the contract for indentured Indians, Mr. Robert Topham of Pietermaritzburg objected to the extension of the indentured labour system, stating:

If the importation of Indians cannot be suppressed, labourers would be a great point gained. This was intended from the first, but on account of the laxity of those through whom the coolie labour was passing...this intention was allowed to slide (Ferguson-Davie nd:22).

Topham was of the opinion that local Africans should have been employed from the start. Others such as Mr. F. A. Hathorn, chairman of the Pietermaritzburg Chamber of Commerce in Natal, supported the views of Topham, which reflected anti-Indian sentiments. Hathorn said, “I would make the return of the Indian compulsory after ten years” (Ferguson-Davie nd:23). There were also others who provided evidence to the Wragg Commission. In 1885 the Wragg Commission was appointed by the colonial government to deal with some of the grievances of the indentured labourers. There were some Whites who wanted to represent the Indians in a negative light to the Commission. Some of their evidence included:

That they were insanitary
That they sold liquor to Natives and were themselves given to drink
That they were dishonest
That they undercut European shopkeepers
(Ferguson-Davie nd: 24).

The Wragg Commission could not find any evidence that Indians sold more liquor to the Africans than any other people, and those who had special knowledge of the Indians could not agree with the accusation that Indians were dishonest.

6.2.2 Support for the indentured labour system

There were, however, those in the Natal Colonial Government who supported legislation that encouraged the indentured labour system and argued against the return of the labourers to India after their contracts expired. Mr. Henry Binns, chairman of the Indian Immigration Trust Board (afterwards Prime Minister of Natal); Mr. C.T. Saner, chairman of the Victoria Planters' Association; Hon. M. H. Gallway, Attorney-General (member of the Coolie Commission of 1872) and Mr. J. R. Saunders, one of the Commissioners who had been a member of the Legislative Council when the Indian immigrants first arrived were important officials in the Natal Colonial Government who represented a positive voice for the Indentured Indians.

Despite the rigorous debates in the Natal Colonial Government about the Indentured Labour System, Indians were offered the option after 5 years to be free from their contractual agreement with their employers or they could sign another 5 year agreement. Thereafter they could become citizens of the colony. Although there were a number of indentured Indians who returned to India after their 5 year contract expired, the majority of the Indians who were Baptists on Sir James Liege Hulett's tea estate remained as employees of the Huletts. Rangiah wrote that at the end of their contract, the majority "re-indentured" themselves while a few returned to India (Rangiah 1905:5). Although there were many incidents of ill-treatment by the colonial employers throughout Natal, which resulted in the return of thousands of indentured

Indians to India, there were also those who decided to remain in South Africa. However those who remained in South Africa were subjected to laws that impeded their movement and growth.

6.3 Social divisions among Indians

Among the immigrant Indians in South Africa were social divisions. The vast majority were indentured labourers. A second group, the business class, did not have any social relations with the indentured labourers. These merchants resisted the generalized impartial attitudes of Whites towards them. They went to the extent of calling themselves “Arabs” and wore flowing robes. A third group was comprised of merchants’ and Parsi clerks. They called themselves “Persians.” These latter two groups wanted to be distinguished from the indentured labourers (Tidrick 2006:27).

6.4 Mohandas K. Gandhi and the struggles of the Indians

Mohandas K. Gandhi came to South Africa in 1893 as a barrister to help with a civil suit in Pretoria. His clients were a group of Indian merchants facing discriminatory legislation.

After settling the law case that he was originally invited to take up, Gandhi arrived from the Transvaal to Durban to prepare to leave for India. However, he was persuaded to stay longer as the Bill, which sought to deprive Indians of their right to elect members of the Assembly, was under threat (Tidrick 2006:27).

Gandhi faced discrimination when he was travelling by train from Durban to Pretoria and was manhandled off the train by a policeman (Tidrick 2006:28). When he boarded another train with the assistance of Indian friends, he was relegated to an inferior seat and was violently assaulted by the conductor because of his refusal to change seats again. Some White passengers intervened and saved him from further violent attacks (Polak, Brailsford & Lawrence 1949: 25).

His experience in South Africa did not deter him from championing the cause of Indians in South Africa. When the Colonial government began tightening its grip on Indians, Gandhi, together with the organization Natal Indian Congress, engaged in protests. Their resistance was termed “satyagraha,” which meant “the force which is born of Truth and Love or non-violence” (Dhupelia-Mesthrie 2000: 21).

Polak, Brailsford & Lawrence (1949) recorded that among the volunteers who were enrolled to oppose this Bill were Natal-born Indians who were mostly Christians. Previously these Christians were excluded from public activity “because of their lowly origin.” It seemed that the indentured Indians not only suffered discrimination under the Natal Colonial government, but were also treated as separate from their fellow Indians who were merchants and clerks because of their economic and educational status. While this was the case on a national level, indentured labourers in the Baptist Association of South Africa had a different experience at Kearsney with their landlord Sir James Hulett.

6.5 Sir James Hulett's treatment of his Baptist indentured labourers

Sir James Liege Hulett, Rangiah's landlord, was one of those in the Natal Colony who favoured the Indentured labour system. He took good care of these lowly educated and poor Indians. This was in stark contrast to the treatment Indians received from their fellow Indians in the surrounding estates. Their fellow Indians in Durban lived in accommodation that was very unsatisfactory. In 1864 the municipality erected "barracks" for their Indian labourers, described by Henning (1993: 5) as primitive and a "permanent blemish on Western values."

There is no record of ill treatment by the Huletts of the Indians on his estate. Rangiah, who had his base in Kearsney, the estate of Sir James Liege Hulett, described Sir James Liege Hulett as a "liberal minded and benevolent gentleman." It is also recorded that Sir James Liege Hulett kept between 12-15 Indian children in his house where he and his wife took care of them (NIBA News 1953: 14). On the other hand Dhupelia-Mesthrie (2000:9) reports that women labourers on the tea estate received half the wages men were given and that during the picking season, women worked for about 11 to 13 hours a day. Nevertheless the indentured labourers on Sir James Hulett's estate found a home in Natal and went on to contribute to the economic, spiritual, cultural and social development of the Natal North Coast region of South Africa. From a political perspective, the fate and survival of these Indians were in the hands of the Colonial government. The general attitude of the colonial government and the business sector was not very welcoming towards the Indians. Sir James Liege Hulett, it seemed, was more accommodating towards them.

6.6 Strategies of leaders

Having provided broad and specific contexts into which the Indians arrived into, the researcher will now discuss and analyse the ministry strategies of John Rangiah, Theophilus Rangiah, David Newton Nathaniel and other significant leaders of the BASA. He will also examine the contributions these strategies had on the spiritual, cultural, social and political development of Kwa Zulu Natal.

6.6.1 John Rangiah (1903-1915)

The NIBA News (1953:2-15) provides a comprehensive record of Rangiah's ministry among the indentured Indians in Natal. It portrays a man with a deep commitment to advancing the spiritual development of the indentured labourers beginning from the time he accepted the offer to go to Natal as a missionary in January 1903 until his death in 1915. In India, he made thorough preparation for the trip by ship to Natal. He took many speaking engagements at various churches in Ramapatnam, Ongole, Bapatla, Venukonda, Narsaraopet, Cumbum and Kutnool. His home church, Lone Star Baptist Church in Nellore, was particularly happy that one of its own members was being sent as a foreign missionary to South Africa (NIBA News 1953: 9). Before his departure to South Africa, Rangiah wrote to Mr. W. Spencer Walton, the superintendent of the South African General Mission, informing him of his intention to serve as a missionary in Natal (1953:8). In 1903, when Rangiah, his wife, Kanakamma, and two children arrived in Durban on the ship *Safari*, he was overwhelmed by the task. Not knowing about their future in a foreign country, Rangiah expressed what he felt and thought prior to disembarking the *Safari*:

Where shall I go? Who will receive us in this vast and strange Land? Did Mr. Walton receive my letter? Even so will he receive me gladly? O Thou my Master of the Gospel, who is worthy of this great work? I cannot bear the weight of this great call. The The Telugu Baptist Churches in India, which have sent me to propagate the Gospel, have they enough strength to carry on this great work? Thou O Lord, Thou alone, Thy Spirit alone, can bring salvation to many souls here and glory to thy name. Sanctify me, O Lord and in Thy graciousness use Thy servant for Thy sake (NIBA News: 1953 11).

His comments reflect a man who was deeply religious and who viewed his call to South Africa with such seriousness. He reminds himself that the Spirit of God would enable him in his vocational call to minister to his fellow Telugu Indians.

6.6.1.1 Establishing homogenous churches

Dayadharum (1999:150) refers to Donald McGavran's homogenous unit theory, introduced much later than Rangiah's time, which advocated homogenous church planting. A homogeneous unit often means a group which shares a common language, culture or other characteristic which makes it unique from other groups (McGavran 1980:5). The major characteristic of indentured Baptists was that that they spoke mainly Telugu. Given the already stratified South African society, was this theory helpful? And how did it affect race relations? From 1903 to 1915, Rangiah established 8 homogenous churches. Below are the statistics of these churches:

Statistics (NIBA News 1953: 19-27).

Church	Date Established	Pastor	Membership
Kearsney	12/27/1903	J. Rangiah	64

Verulam	05/22/1904	K. Daniel	32
Darnall	06/12/1904	A. Reuben	30
Durban	10/30/1904	Yellamanda	15
Stanger	12/25/1904		12
Tinley Manor	05/10/1908	K. David	12
Dundee	06/05/1908	T.C. Tyler	21
Amatikuli	01/11/1909	P. Reddy	12

The above churches were established in areas where there were mainly Indians living. The pastors who were appointed were Indians who spoke the Telugu language. Although this represents a significant growth in the number of churches established by Rangiah within a period of 12 years, the homogenous unit principle employed by him did very little to encourage race relations between the races, especially among the indigenous African people. What this principle did was to help the spiritual development of a particular linguistic, ethnic group and denomination, the Telugu Indian Baptist. Was this a case of applying a sociological observation as a starting point for developing a church planting strategy by Rangiah? It does seem that this was the case. The question is where is the voice of Scripture in this? There are some who challenge the homogenous unit theory, arguing that it replaces biblical theology with principles derived from sociology and advocates techniques which come close to subverting the most fundamental principles of the gospel (Dayadharum 1999:150). Greg Goss (Principles of Missions: 2006) argues:

The problem with this approach is that homogeneous evangelism creates an homogeneous church, and many would see such a church as a distortion of the gospel where there is no such thing as Jew or Greek, rich or poor, slave or free. Homogeneity increases inclusion, but it also increases exclusion. While people are more likely to become Christians without dealing with cultural differences, they

are more likely to grow spiritually as they deal with and learn from these differences.

Currently the Baptist Association has a membership of largely ethnic Indians who are content to be with their own kind with regards to worship. Although in 2001, Baptists in South Africa formed the South African Baptist Alliance where the five Baptist organizations decided to cooperate, they still (with the exception of a few churches) have maintained their racial, ethnic and linguistic identities. Some in the Baptist Association of South Africa were most reluctant to the idea of forming one united Baptist organization in South Africa. The evangelism used by Rangiah and the churches he established has not only produced a homogenous unit church in South Africa but has created a particular understanding of the gospel which is very similar to the Baptist Union's earlier approach to homogenous unit church planting.

Dayadharum (1999:153) maintains that McGavran's homogenous unit principle as applied by John Rangiah and his son Theophilus contributed to the growth and development of the Indian Baptist Church in South Africa, though it does appear that such a principle promotes a kind of spiritual "apartheid" in the churches. Dayadharum argues that McGavaran, who was a missionary in India, was very aware of the caste system in Indian culture and that he arrived at the conclusion that this was the most effective principle for church planting in India.

Although quantitatively the church grew significantly in India using the homogenous unit principle under the caste system and the same was the case of the Indian Baptist church in South Africa under the Rangiahs, this principle had two weaknesses. Firstly it had no biblical basis and secondly it did not prepare the

church for the social, cultural and political changes that would eventually take place in South Africa. The two Indian Baptist organizations, BASA and BMSA in South Africa, are still largely ethnically Indian. Any suggestion to embrace other cultures and races are accommodated but not with great enthusiasm.

6.6.1.2 Language

At the beginning of the nineteenth century in South Africa there were many African languages as well as English and Afrikaans. The main languages spoken in Natal during this period were English, Afrikaans and Zulu. When the Indians arrived at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth century to Natal, the following eastern languages were mainly spoken: Hindi, Arabic, Gujarati, Hindi, Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu. Seventy one percent of the Indians who embarked from Madras spoke Tamil, 25 spoke Telugu (Bhana 1991: 192). The indentured Baptist Indians, who were mainly from the south of India spoke Telugu with a few speaking Tamil. The Indian Baptists at Kearsney experienced a language barrier when their landlord Sir J. L. Huletts attempted to provide White English-speaking Wesleyan ministers who only spoke English to minister to the Telugus (NIBA News 1953: 8).

Dayadharum (1999: 55) wrote that Rangiah used the Telugu language that was spoken by the indentured Indians to enhance his work in South Africa. Dayadharum, on the issue of language, argued again using Donald McGavran's theory that churches tend to develop more rapidly when people speak the same language and come from the same culture. Dayadharum (1999:56) further describes the Telugu language using the words of Bishop Azariah, a Tamilian educator: "The Telugu

language, which is liquid and melodious, has sometimes been called the Italian of the East and their culture is rich in poetry, music and fine literature.” Rangiah not only spoke and preached in Telugu, but he wrote lyrics in the Telugu language. The early development of the Indian Baptist Church in South Africa in its application of the McGravan’s theory of Church growth as argued by Dayadharum, proved to be true.

6.6.1.3 Festivals

Rangiah held religious meetings in the various parts of Natal. He called these meetings Festivals. He believed that “the Telugu mind in general is simple and inclined to cheerfulness and the hard working labourers especially need joyous diversion. So our Christian Festivals help us greatly in refreshing both mind and spirit” (NIBA News 1953: 15). These festivals were held at Christmas, New Year’s Day, and at Easter. Another festival, called Gospel Festival was held annually in October.

6.6.1.4 Education

Rangiah established the first Indian Baptist school in Kearsney on 10th October 1904 to address the growing illiteracy among the children of indentured labourers (NIBA News 1953:16). While education among many Christians is viewed separately from religion, Rangiah felt it important to provide education and this he did within a Christian framework. Rangiah, in the same year that the school at Kearsney was established, initiated Bible Classes for the purpose of spiritual upliftment of the

indentured labourers. The curriculum included the study of biblical characters such as Joseph, Samson and Ruth. He later established evening classes as well (NIBA News 1953: 18).

6.6.1.5 Cottage Meetings

In addition to the regular services that were held at the various churches established by Rangiah, he introduced services on weekdays and called them cottage meetings. These services were held in the homes of the members and were conducted on a rotational basis.

6.6.1.6 Evangelistic Services

Prior to Rangiah's arrival to Kearnsey, he, together with a White minister called Rev. Tomlinson, conducted prayer and evangelistic services in the various suburbs of Durban. Rangiah also sought and received permission from the Protector of Indian Immigrants, Mr. J. Polkinghorn, to conduct evangelistic meetings with Indian immigrants in the ships and at the immigration depot.

6.7 Theophilus Rangiah (1921-1947)

Theophilus Rangiah received his early education at the first school his father John Rangiah established, but then due to lack of opportunities for further education for Indians in Natal during that period, he was sent to India to further his education. While studying for a law degree in India, his father died, and an invitation was

extended to Theophilus Rangiah to serve as a missionary to the indentured Indians in Natal. He initially was reluctant to accept this invitation but later changed his mind. In preparation for this assignment, on 1 October 1921, Theophilus was ordained to the ministry at the Nellore Telugu Baptist Church in India. On 5 March 1921, Theophilus Rangiah and his wife, Sugunamma Narsiah, arrived in Natal, Durban, on the ship *Umtata*. He was called to serve as a superintendent missionary of the Telugu Baptist Church in Natal.

Theophilus Rangiah's ministry among the indentured labourers was challenging, as these labourers "were poor, majority illiterate (did not even know how to read Telugu), and unrefined in many ways" (NIBA News 1953: 36). Through the influence of his mother, Theophilus adapted to the educational level of his congregants and began his ministry in Natal. As an itinerant, Theophilus travelled on horseback to the various regions in Natal.

6.7.1 Organization

Theophilus emphasised the importance of organization. He assisted in re-organizing several churches in the BASA. Timothy (1978:6) records that Theophilus re-organized 4 churches: Hillary, Kearsney, Umhlali and the Durban work. His work among the churches was also well planned. Since many of the churches that his father established were located on estates owned by Whites, Theophilus "approached the European masters and managers of these various estates" and encouraged them to get involved in the spiritual welfare of their Christian labourers (NIBA News 1953:37). Three preachers, B. Philip, M. Zachariah and Joshua were

assigned to preach, conduct cottage meetings, prayer meetings and other religious services among the labourers, thus minimizing the workload for Theophilus. He supervised the work of these pastors as well as other lay leaders who were serving in the churches established by his father. Other duties included officiating wedding ceremonies, funeral services and Thanksgiving services.

The strategy that Theophilus employed was to identify capable men, nurture and train them, and then appoint them as pastors of the churches. Although no women were appointed to lead these churches, Theophilus's mother, Kankanama played a leading role in the mission work, which included visiting the various churches and providing spiritual support for the leaders. Theophilus also visited the churches his father had established and continued building on his father's foundation. He also established a relationship with the White Baptist Union, and during his tenure the Natal Indian Baptist Association became an affiliate member of the Baptist Union of South Africa (NIBA News 1953).

6.7.2 Church Planting

Theophilus Rangiah established three churches: Glendale Baptist Church (1922), Umhlali Baptist Church (1923), and the Baptist Church in North Street, Durban (1940) (NIBA News 1953: 38-42). Two of the churches, Glendale Baptist and the church in North Street, Durban established by Theophilus had a combined membership of 360. The Umhlali Baptist church is described as being a small church (NIBA News 1953: 41). Theophilus also applied the homogenous unit principle in the establishment of the above churches. Dayadharum (1999: 94) in an interview

with Theophilus' son-in-law, N.M. Israel, quotes Israel as describing Theophilus as follows:

He was bold and always composed. Not even physical danger unmanned him. Haphazard work, ill-prepared messages, shabby dress, unpunctuality, ambiguity, and slovenly expression were not tolerated by him. He was meticulous to the smallest detail. His dress, bearing and speech were always dignified. He was a gifted organizer. He regarded the executive as the highest authority in the Association. Rarely did he enter the debate in the executive. He was at home with the rich and the poor alike.

Israel's description of Theophilus Rangiah as an organizer is evident in Rangiah's approach to ministry. He is also described by his son Mimosthram (NIBA News 1953: 37) and Timothy (1989: 4-5), as a very organized person.

6.7.3 Education

Theophilus Rangiah made two trips back to India. The first was in 1907 at the age of ten. His parents sent him to India to receive further education (NIBA News 1953: 35), and then in 1927 he returned to India to complete his degree. He changed his major from law and completed a Bachelor of Arts degree with the inclusion of theology courses (NIBA News 1953: 43).

Theophilus served as the manager of the Kearsney Indian School that was established by his father. His brother T. R. Rangiah served as the principal of this school. The school in Kearsney was divided into three classes. The first class was assigned for young children, the second class for older children and the third was for the youth. Because of lack of space, classes were held under the trees (Dayadharum 1999: 101).

6.7.4 Conflict Resolution

The conflict in the Indian Baptist Church which resulted in a schism in 1914 was not resolved. Theophilus Rangiah devoted much of his time attempting to resolve the conflict between the Natal Indian Baptist Association and the Indian Baptist Mission, but was unsuccessful. Dayadharum (1999: 103) records the comment of T.D. Pass, a missionary of the Baptist Union who worked with the two organizations: “Explaining the rift is difficult, since only NIBA has offered any explanation and not with any detail to permit any evaluation and judgement.” To date, the two organizations have continued to operate separately.

6.8 David Newton Nathaniel

Nathaniel 's strategy among the Indian Baptists included the following:

6.8.1 Pastoral Care

Like his predecessor, Nathaniel visited all the churches that were established by the Rangiahs. He provided pastoral care for the many who were discouraged by the death of Theophilus Rangiah. Many of the indentured labourers had backslidden, and through the pastoral visits of Nathaniel, many of them returned to the church. The NIBA News (1953:50) describes Nathaniel as follows: “His quiet talks, winsome nature, touching sermons and above all his humility has brought many backsliders to the fold.” Nathaniel continued to carry out the many other pastoral responsibilities which were carried out by the Rangiahs such as conducting prayer, thanksgiving

services and cottage meetings. He also conducted weddings, baptized members, and held Bible studies.

6.8.2 Theological education

A very significant strategy that Nathaniel employed was that he provided theological education for the Indian Baptists. He arrived in Natal having completed a Bachelor of Divinity degree, and later he completed the Master of Divinity degree at the University of Durban-Westville. It is recorded (NIBA News 1953:50) that from 18 – 20 July 1952, he held Bible classes which included a series of three lectures on the book of Ruth. On 30 – 31 August 1952, Nathaniel gave two lectures in St. Aiden's Hall in Durban as well as at the Baptist Church in North Street Durban. His lecture included a study on “Christ and Karl Marx” and “Christ Amidst Chaos.” Four months later, on December 15th – 17th another lecture was presented which focused on the book of Esther. At the Kearsney Baptist church his lectures on the gospel of Matthew drew audiences from the White clergy and intellectual community. Reverends Glyn Tudor, P.J. Reubenheimer, R. D. Adendorff, D.J. Reubenheimer, M. Cook and Dr. P.E. Lander attended the lecture (1953:48).

Nathaniel wrote a significant book *For The Preacher in the Making*. This book was written with the poor and the not so educated Indian Christians in mind. For Nathaniel believed that it was important to provide these Christians with resources for preaching. He provides helpful suggestions and sermon outlines, samples of sermons, as well as information on how to use stories in a sermon (Nathaniel 1960: 1-66).

6.8.3 Newsletter

Nathaniel started a newsletter called *The NIBA News*, which had a devotional article as well as reports of the churches and departments of the association. It also included a financial report of the Sunday School Department of the association. The devotional articles on Christmas, Easter and New Year's were written by Nathaniel and were inspiring and always grounded in scripture, which reflected his sound theological training.

6.8.4 Revival

From 1951 to 1953, Nathaniel's work among the Indian Baptists produced in them a renewed interest in the church. During this period, 112 people embraced the Christian faith, and 8 churches recorded increase in membership, renewal and consecration of lives, and a renewed interest in Bible classes. At Kearsney, new hymns were composed by Nathaniel and were used in worship services. In the Glendale church it was recorded that there were 260 adults and 100 children. During this period there were also 31 who were baptized. The elders at this church also had a renewed sense of excitement. They visited various homes, especially in the Trans-Umvothi district of Natal. The membership at the Darnall Baptist Church was 144 adults and 49 children. The church at Tinley Manor recorded a membership of 100 adults with 15 children; at Umhlali 75 adults, 15 children, Durban 265 adults, 70 children; and at Dannhauser 29 adults, 30 children (NIBA News 1953: 48-50).

During Nathaniel's work among the Baptist Association of South Africa, this organization grew significantly. Timothy (1978: 8) refers to the Baptist Union of South Africa's T.D. Pass's statement about the growth of BASA under Nathaniel's leadership. Pass stated, "Under his inspired leadership, linked with unflagging labour and assisted by consecrated laymen, and later by the influx of several fully trained ministers the Association has shown unprecedented growth." Also during Nathaniel's work among the BASA, the following joined the organization: Reverends R Ellaya, R. Jayakaram, Manuel Jacob, Reuben Steven, H. Pretorius, D. Jeevarathnam, C. Joseph, D. James and T. Rhandram. During this period as well, Rev. Dixon James was a regular speaker on a Christian radio program called "Checkpoint." The clergy mentioned above all assisted in the growth and expansion of the work in BASA. Between 1953 and 1975, the membership in BASA increased by 400 percent, from 610 to 1700 baptized members (Timothy 1978: 9).

During the time of John Rangiah, Theophilus Rangiah and David Newton Nathaniel served, there was a severe assault on the rights of people of colour. Earlier the study discussed the discriminatory laws of the Colonial Government, and then in 1948 harsher laws were introduced which affected Indians. These included the Group Areas Act of 1950, a year after David Nathaniel arrived from India. There is no record of any of the Indian-born missionaries questioning or challenging these unjust laws.

6.9 Mimosthram Rangiah

Mimosthram is the grandson of John Rangiah. He served the Baptist Association of South Africa for almost 50 years, most significantly as its president for about 20 years. As a former school teacher and school principal, Rangiah was a member of the Tongaat Baptist Church and later became its pastor. He was responsible for the building of a beautiful church building for the Tongaat Baptist Church. In 1953 Rangiah was tasked with writing the history of the Natal Indian Baptist Association for its Golden Jubilee brochure. Much of the information in this research is derived from this brochure.

6.9.1 Music

One of the significant contributions that Rangiah made to the Indian Baptist Church was vernacular music. Like his father, Theophilus Rangiah, Mimosthram composed and arranged the music of several Telugu songs. At the annual Easter eisteddfod, all the BASA churches met for the Easter service and later in the day the churches would present songs in a singing competition, Rangiah's choir and musical band almost always placed first. In 1978 Rangiah and his choir presented vernacular songs on the Indian radio station called Radio Lotus.

6.10 Noah Moses Israel

Noah Moses Israel is the great son-in-law of John Rangiah. He married Rajithamma Rangiah. Israel, an ex-school teacher, is an important lay person in the history of the

Indian Baptist Church in South Africa. He served the BASA in various capacities for almost 50 years. The Baptist Association of South Africa was led by Israel from 2003-2005. Under his presidency, the BASA celebrated its centenary. Israel took some theological courses at the Durban Bible College. He was among the first batch of students who attended evening classes at this College. In 1994, when South Africa had its first democratic elections, Israel initiated talks between BASA and BMSA with the hope of achieving closer cooperation between the two Indian Baptist organizations. Israel played the role of John Rangiah in a radio play entitled *Behold the Indian Baptist*. This play was aired on East Coast Radio and Radio Highveld. This radio play was also aired on radio stations in India and Pakistan (Israel 2009:1).

In 2004, at the Baptist World Alliance's Heritage Commission in Seoul, South Korea, Israel presented the paper "John Rangiah and a Century of Indian Baptist Work in Africa." Israel also served on the BWA's Heritage Commission (Israel 2009:2).

6. 10.1 **Preservation of Indian Baptist History**

Noah Israel is considered by many as the historian of the Indian Baptist church. Israel has written numerous articles on the history of the Baptist Association of South Africa, many of which appear in micro narratives and church brochures. In 2003, he addressed the Heritage Commission of the Baptist World Alliance on the history of the Indian Baptists in South Africa. In addition to his contribution to the preservation of Indian Baptist history, Israel has represented the Baptist Association of South Africa on numerous occasions at the Baptist Union executive meetings. He has championed the Indian Baptist heritage as well as its historical significance both at

the Baptist Union executive meetings and among the Indian Baptist churches. He has served the BASA in various capacities including as vice-president, president, General Secretary, and as the editor of various BASA brochures.

6.11 Anthony Poliah

Anthony Poliah served as president of the BASA from 1996 to 2000. Prior to his role as president, he served as a leader of Jehovah Nilayam Baptist Church in Glendale, was principal of the BASA Bible College, served as associate pastor of Stanger Manor Baptist Church in Stanger, and held various other positions in the BASA.

He represented the BASA at the SABA meetings in 1998 and in the same year, he was the program director of the Baptist World Alliance rally in Durban. He also inducted the first woman, Evelyn Maistry, into the ministry of the BASA. Poliah's administrative and organizational skills contributed to the ministry of the BASA. As a chairperson at the BASA executive committee meetings he minimised the length of these meetings by 50%, coordinated the BASA Bible College program, and organized seminars and the BASA Bible College graduation. He also promoted closer co-operation with the BMSA (Israel 2008:1-4).

6.12 Rodney Ragwan

Rodney Ragwan was born in 1965 in Stanger, Natal. He is the great grandson of David Rajanna, an Indian indentured labourer. Ragwan was trained as a minister and served Marriannahill Baptist Church (now called Parousia Baptist Church) for fourteen and a half years. He served the BASA in various capacities. In 2001

Ragwan served as president of BASA, and during his tenure sought membership with international organizations.

6.12.1 Networking with international Baptist Organizations

In 2001 Ragwan travelled to Washington in the USA to engage in discussions with the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) about membership. At the General Council of the BWA, held in Spain in 2001, BASA was formally accepted into membership by the BWA. An application for membership was also made on behalf of BASA by Ragwan to the All Africa Baptist Fellowship, a regional body of the BWA. In 2001, membership to BASA by this body was granted. He was elected to serve on various committees of the BWA such as the General Council, 21st Century Thank Tank Committee and the Development Committee (Ragwan 2003: 50-53).

6.12.2 Re-establishing connection with the American Baptist Church, USA

As mentioned earlier in this research, the American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society (ABHMS), which was a mission agency of the American Baptist Churches, USA, in the 1800s sent missionaries to the Telugus in India. Through the work of this mission organization in India, the Telugu Baptists formed their own mission organization called the Telugu Baptist Home Missionary Society (TBHMS) and sent John Rangiah as a missionary to the Indentured Indian Baptists in Natal South Africa. In 1914 when there was schism in the Indian Baptist church in South Africa, John Rangiah resigned from the TBHMS. Since then, not much is known about the

historical links between the Baptist Mission in South Africa and the Baptist missions in India which were under the auspices of the TBHMS. Except for Dayadharum's research, BASA has had very little knowledge of this historical connection as well as of the American Baptist Home Missionary Society. In 2001, at the World Missions Conference of International Ministries, the mission wing of American Baptist Churches, USA, Ragwan met American missionaries who had knowledge of Indian born David New Nathaniel. Relationship with the American Baptist Churches' mission agency, called International Ministries (formerly known as American Baptist Missionary Society) was established (Ragwan 2003: 52).

6.12.3 Establishing relations with international Baptist organizations

During this period Ragwan facilitated two visits of BASA leaders to the USA. The first visit was a visit to North Carolina where BASA pastors had the opportunity to preach and participate in a Pastors' Conference (Ragwan 2003: 51). The BASA cabinet that included Noah Moses Israel, Rajie Israel, Richard Nathaniel, Marge Nathaniel, Harold T. Paul, and Richard Amos undertook the second visit. This visit included the signing of a partnership agreement between the BASA and International Ministries, the mission agency of the American Baptist Churches, USA. During this visit BASA and the BMSA met in Los Angeles where Dr. Samuel Chetti, executive minister of the Los Angeles Baptist Association sponsored a meeting of BASA and BMSA. Rev. Desmond Hoffmeister, the former General Secretary of the Baptist Convention of South Africa, facilitated the discussion. The purpose of the discussion was to facilitate unity between the two organizations, which split in 1914 (Ragwan 2003:66).

As part of Ragwan's strategy as president of the organization, he advocated the theological training of leaders in the BASA. He secured resources for theological education for the BASA leaders. In 2001, 4 leaders were enrolled at Universities in South Africa (Ragwan 2003: 49).

6. 13 Analysis of the ministry strategy of BASA

The ministries of the leaders of the BASA were discussed within the broader as well as the specific contexts such as spiritual, cultural and socio-political contexts which existed at that time in South Africa. Within the broader political context, Indians suffered ill-treatment under severe unjust laws and within the specific context, Indian Baptists experienced a less severe treatment. The chapter discussed the strategies of the BASA's leaders and their impact on the spiritual, cultural, social and political development in South Africa within the two contexts. The researcher will next attempt to answer the questions: Did these strategies contribute to the spiritual, cultural and socio-political life in South Africa? and How did these strategies contribute to the above factors and in what ways might they have contributed or related to the spiritual, cultural, social, and political development of the province of Kwa Zulu Natal?

6. 13. 1 Did the ministry strategies impact South Africa?

The key factors that will assist in responding to this question are ethnocentricity and theological orientation. The study will thereafter offer suggestions for consideration.

6.13.1.1 Ethnocentricity

Ethnocentricity (Ethnocentricity 2009) is defined as (1) “the belief in the inherent superiority of one’s own ethnic group or culture” (2) “a tendency to view alien groups or cultures from the perspective of one’s own”. It does not seem that the leaders in any way believed in the superiority of their ethnicity. Rather it seems that they viewed the other groups such as the Blacks, Coloureds and Whites from an Indian perspective and within the socio-political status of South Africa at that time.

John Rangiah, Theophilus Rangiah and David Newton Nathaniel as well as each of the other significant leaders who followed used a strategy that seemed to have led to an ethnocentric organization. Over the years, with the exception of a few churches and leaders who ministered to Blacks, BASA as of 2006 continued to exist as a church for Indians. However, there are indications that it is currently moving towards being more inclusive of other races, especially Blacks. It has been more open to other sub-cultures or other language groups that speak Tamil, Hindi and Gujarati (Dayadharum 1999:128).

From the inception of the Indian Baptist church in South Africa in 1903 and more specifically of the BASA under John Rangiah, Indian leaders were identified, trained and appointed to Indian Churches. It does seem that during Rangiah’s work in Natal, the Babatha Rebellion in the early 20th century put a sense of fear in the Indian indentured Baptists. The NIBA News (1953:17) states that during the rebellion, Mrs. Rangiah and her children had to spend the night in the bush because of their fear of the Zulus. Furthermore, there is no evidence in the records of BASA of Rangiah or

the two missionaries that followed him making any contact with Black pastors or leaders. The Bambata Rebellion (1906) probably caused Rangiah and his successors some fear, and therefore they concentrated their efforts on providing spiritual care only for Indians. The BASA history does not show any record of Rangiah or the two missionaries who followed him serving the spiritual needs of Blacks.

According to Timothy (1978: 9) seven of the eight pastors during Nathaniel's ministry serving the BASA churches were Indians, the other was a so called Coloured. The second reason for the ethnocentric strategy could have been the language barrier. Although the three Indian-born missionaries spoke English, the indentured labourers spoke mainly Telugu, so including Zulus in Indian Churches would have been challenging for both Indians and Blacks. However, over the years, many Indian Baptists learnt to speak the Zulu language though no attempts as of 2006 were made by BASA to open its mission to the Zulus in Natal. However, individual churches within the BASA have become more inclusive in their membership.

With regard to Rangiah's method of church planting within the Indian indentured labourer community, it yielded results, as reported in the NIBA News (1953: 19-27). John Rangiah established eight churches. Here too, it was an ethnocentric approach, one that can be compared to McGavaran's homogenous principle, which encourages church planting among a people who share a common language, culture or other characteristic which makes it individually unique from other groups (Dayadharum 1999:50). Rangiah's use of the Telugu language, music, drama, festivals and cottage meetings as well as an emphasis on Bible study contributed to

the growth of the churches which shared all the elements in McGavaran's church planting principles.

The strategy employed by almost all BASA leaders contributed to Christianity in South Africa. During John Rangiah's work, the membership according to NIBA News (1953:19-27) stood at 208, but it plateaued after the death of John Rangiah. The arrival of his son, Theophilus Rangiah, saw the Baptist Association of South Africa increase from 208 to 610 members. The greatest growth came during David Newton Nathaniel's ministry. From 1953 to 1975, BASA's membership grew from 610 to 1700. This figure included only baptised members, excluding children, which numbered 1000 (Timothy 1978: 8).

Before the arrival of Rangiah the Indian Baptist Church was under the leadership of laymen. Mr. D. Benjamin, one of the earliest pioneers of the Indian Baptist work, Messrs K. David, Z. Robert and D. Yohan as well as many others over the last 100 years played important roles in the BASA. While they provided leadership for many churches in BASA, BASA grew the most under the leadership of Rev. David Newton Nathaniel, a theologically trained clergyperson. Timothy states (1978:8) that when Theophilus Rangiah died, BASA was without a clergy and it was during this transitional period that the BASA was experiencing the loss of its members. The laymen assumed the leadership of the organization but this did not prevent members from leaving for other denominations. Timothy (1989: 4) refers to Oosthuizen's statement about this "When Baptist membership was at its lowest in 1946, Pentecostalism was making one of its most spectacular increases." It took Rev. Nathaniel, a theologically trained clergyperson, to consolidate the work of BASA and

build it to where it had a 400% increase in its membership since Theophilus Rangiah's leadership (Timothy 1978:8).

Another area that saw the BASA contributing to South Africa was in culture. The medium of communicating the gospel by its leaders such as the Rangiahs and Nathaniel in the vernacular language and the use of drama and festivals has increased awareness among the South African population of this culture. On a national level, in 1972, the grandson of John Rangiah, Mimosthram Rangiah, was invited to broadcast a special Easter program on national Radio and then again a Christmas program in 1975 and 1977. These broadcasts included songs in Telugu, accompanied by Rangiah's band. In 1976 Rev. Dixon James, a BASA clergyperson was a regular preacher on Transworld Radio (Timothy 1978:11). In 1992, Ragwan another BASA clergy presented 3 devotional sermons on a National television program called "Epilogue."

Noah Moses Israel and Mimosthram Rangiah were involved in the writing of BASA history, which appears in the NIBA News, Diamond and Golden Jubilee brochures. They provide recordings of the events and contributions of the leaders to the BASA work and these are good for posterity. However, they are written from the perspective of the dominant members and thus have the propensity to affirm the ethnocentric nature of the work of the BASA. Additionally, these histories lack historical and theological analysis.

Maintaining the ethnocentricity of the organization adversely affected it, as leaders engaged in dialogue among themselves. No new voices from outside of BASA were

being heard, and this prevented exposure to new perspectives on critical issues facing BASA in the South African context. Perspectives from younger leaders were cautiously received. Ragwan, upon being elected president in 2001, sought membership of the Baptist World Alliance, All Africa Baptist Fellowship, and American Baptist Churches, USA and its Mission agency. He also established a relationship with the Los Angeles Baptist Association and the Cabarrus Baptist Association. The linking of BASA to all these international organizations assisted in broadening the world view of the BASA. Leaders are now attending meetings and conferences overseas; the fruits of these partnerships that were established are being experienced. Although the BASA is being exposed to the international community, it has still not moved significantly beyond its ethnocentricity.

BASA contributed significantly to the spiritual and cultural (as well as economic) development of Christianity among Indians and that is where it appears to stop. Unfortunately the three Indian-born missionaries did not respond to the socio-political issues in South Africa. The ethnocentric approach to mission work in South Africa was shaped by a particular theology which the Indian-born missionaries carried with them from India. The South African born Indian leaders were very much influenced largely by the conservative evangelical theology advanced by the Baptist Union of South Africa.

6.13.1. 2 Theological orientation

From the beginning of the Baptist movement in the 17th century, the articles of faith that guided the American Baptist Churches were: (1) the living Christ is the final

judge of a person's belief and actions, (2) the Bible is a dynamic, not a static document that needs to be interpreted for every age, (3) the separation of church and state is good both for the church and the state, and it promotes the common good of all citizens, (4) non-conformity to majority opinion is part of the Baptist heritage, and to submit Baptist theology to majority vote is to betray the heritage of people called Baptists, and (5) the local church is free to make its own decisions under the Lordship of Christ, theological diversity among Baptists is a strength (The Coalition for Baptist Principles: 2004).

John Rangiah's theology was guided to a large extent by the above articles of faith and in particular by article 3, which states that the separation of church and state is good both for the church and the state, and it promotes the common good of all citizens. Given the agenda of the South African government to keep South Africa White, BASA and its leaders have perhaps understood this article of faith to mean that the church should not challenge the state on laws that discriminated against them. If this was true, neither BASA nor its leaders, made any significant protest against the state for its discriminatory laws against Indians, Blacks and Coloureds. On the other hand, it was probably challenging for the three Indian-born missionaries to protest against the injustices as they themselves lived in a country where caste defined their identities. Even on this issue of caste they were silent. Here it seemed that Indian Baptists focused on survival, and therefore never raised this issue in any of its brochures or newsletters.

It is difficult to understand why John Rangiah did not protest in any of his writings or sermons against racism. After all American Baptist missionaries in India who were

socially conscious theologically trained him. In 1845 the American Baptist Missionary Society, the society that sent missionaries to India and was responsible for the theological training of Rangiah, differed with conservative Baptists on the issue of missionaries as slaveholders (Leonard 2003: 200). A speculation would be his respect for his White landlord who he described as “a benevolent liberal minded person” and the other is a fear of the Zulus (Timothy1989:2). According to the NIBA News (1953:17) the Bambata Zulu uprising caused great alarm and confusion. The indentured labourers were stricken with fear and they took shelter in the tea factory during the night in fear for their lives. Rangiah and his family spent many nights hiding in the bushes at Gospel Hill at Kearsney. His position therefore was neutral. However, his neutrality on the issue of race could be interpreted as the support of the status quo.

It seemed however that Rangiah was not keen to address the problem of racism because at his base in Kearsney, the indentured labourers on Sir James Hullet’s estate were treated with more favour while their fellow Indians in other parts of Natal were discriminated against and were ill-treated by their employers. Was it the case of his employer treating Rangiah well with the expectation that Rangiah will be loyal and subordinate? Taylor (1987: xxi) states that subordination can provide control over the silenced subjects. Given the fact that Sir James Hulett was Rangiah’s landlord who gave him a house to live in, as well as providing employment to the indentured Baptists on his tea estate, Sir Hulett did have power and control over Rangiah. This may have played a role in silencing Rangiah on the race issue.

As mentioned earlier in the study, Rangiah was a conservative Baptist and as such reflected a conservative theology, which did not address the socio-political issues of his time. The leaders that followed as well were largely trained in institutions that did not take seriously those issues. However in the early 1990s, a few of the younger clergy in BASA began engaging in theological reflection with regards to the socio-political issues. The researcher, a clergy in BASA, attended a conference hosted by the Baptist World Alliance, called Baptists Against Racism, in Atlanta, Georgia, USA from January 8-11, 1999 (Lotz 199:186). Baptist academics from around the world in all of their papers presented papers on the subject of race with strong criticism against racially orientated theologies. Rangiah attended the historic Edinburgh 1910 Missionary Conference (Stanley 2009:100). Exposure to this ecumenical gathering must have been an enlightening experience for him as he would have met the leaders from different racial, ethnic and denominational backgrounds who would have challenged his theology with regards to social issues.

Despite the exposure of Rangiah and Ragwan to these significant conferences, the progressive thinking of some of the younger clergy of BASA in later years, and the movement by BASA towards denominational unity as discussed in chapter 4 of this study, BASA has not officially made statements condemning racism as advocated by the system of apartheid in South Africa. This is mainly because of its leaders' theological orientation.

Ragwan's emphasis on the training of the leaders assisted them to acquire knowledge and learn new skills such as dealing with pastoral challenges regarding HIV/AIDS, preaching, women in ministry and research. However, no significant

progress was made in opening the organization to meeting the contextual realities in South Africa such as fostering race relations and intentionally seeking to include other racial groups into its membership.

On the spiritual and cultural (and economic) fronts the strategies employed by the leaders of BASA have contributed positively to the development of South Africa. However, the strategies employed by the leaders of the BASA have not significantly changed the organization's ethnic orientation. In 2006, BASA did not have a single Black church in its membership. This is a result of the theological orientation of its leaders who were trained in very restrictive theological frameworks which did not encourage theological reflection on socio-political issues. So, the response to the question, Did the strategy impact South Africa? Yes, it did but mainly in the spiritual and cultural spheres. The chapter answered the key research question, what strategy did the BASA leaders generate and how did they impact the spiritual, cultural, social and political development of South Africa? It discussed the roles of John Rangiah (1903), his son Theophilus Rangiah (1921), David Newton Nathaniel (1951) and other significant laypersons and clergy leading up to 2006 in the Baptist Association of South Africa. It also located their ministry within the socio-political context. Particular reference was made to the ministry strategies these leaders employed in the Baptist Association of South Africa. An important element that is nonexistent in the recording of this history by the dominant members of BASA is the analysis of the ministry strategies that the leaders of the Indian Baptist Church generated and used, and how they impacted mainly the spiritual, social, and cultural development in South Africa with no significant contribution to the political improvement of the country.

6.14 Suggestions

The significant changes that have occurred in South Africa require the church to adapt to a new democratic South Africa. It will require the BASA to review its strategies in order to become a relevant faith organization in South Africa. The following are suggestions to be considered so that BASA move towards that ideal:

6.14.1 Training of laity

John Rangiah's strategy of training laity was a significant hallmark of his ministry among the Baptist indentured labourers. Attempts were made later by the BASA Bible College to train its laity and it did achieve a small measure of success during Anthony Poliah's term of office (Israel, 2008).

6.14.2 Position on race

Since 1903 when the Indian Baptist Church was established and since 1914, when the BASA began its ministry, with the exception of the Baptist Mission of South Africa (The Baptist Deep River Consultation, 1993) Indian Baptists have not made a public statement on race. The late Martin Luther King, Jr. a Baptist minister in the USA took a public stand against racism in his country and today his legacy is an inspiration to many in the USA and around the world.

6.14.3 Public statements on moral issues

Generally Baptists in South Africa have not made public statements on moral issues that affected the lives of millions of South Africans. The Baptist principle or article of faith of the Separation of the Church and State it seems may have prevented them from making statements when political decisions are made that affect Baptists. This Baptist principle does not however prevent Baptists from challenging policies that affect them. Currently, programs on television which have adult content are shown. Young children, if not monitored by adults, are exposed to such content. BASA can register its complaint by using the appropriate channels. Ron Sider (2008:21) a leading evangelical in the USA, states that it is a simple fact that political decisions have a huge impact – for good or bad on the lives of literally billions of people. Bill Leonard (2003:9) states that with regard to religious liberty and Christian citizenship, Baptists were among the first to call for radical religious liberty in the modern state. Baptists in the BASA should allow their faith to impact the public domain as well as the state.

6.14.4 Pastor/theologian

Generally, pastors consider themselves functioning in that role only. Nyenhuis contends by referring to Timothy Brown (ed. 2007: 39) that the pastor is also a theologian as ‘they think deeply and complexly about God.’ Nathaniel recognized this in his approach to ministry. He engaged the biblical text and presented complex issues to his audiences (NIBA News 1953:48-53). The BASA pastors must embrace

the legacy of Nathaniel since during his tenure as missionary, BASA grew significantly.

6.14.5 Theological reflection

The function of the pastor as a theologian will help in the area of theological reflection. Pyle and Seals (1995:110) explain this important issue: “Theological reflection occurs when the events of life are examined through the eyes of faith, in order to integrate experience and faith.” The changing political and social landscape in South Africa requires that the pastor engages in theological reflection on issues of inter-race relationship, globalization, community development and social ministries. Neil Sims quotes Geoff Thompson (2009:15) on the importance of theological reflection by stating, “As such it is indispensable for the church’s mission of worship, witness and service, not least in witnessing to the truth of faith before those who do not yet, or no longer believe.”

6.14.6 Pastor/administrator

Most of the churches in the BASA do not have the luxury of church offices and the services of office secretaries. Given this unfortunate situation, the pastor should be knowledgeable in office administration. This should not just be answering phone calls and sending e-mails, important though they are. The pastor must set ministry goals that are appropriate for his/her context and apply administrative skills to implement them. Theophilus Rangiah reflected this important element in his pastorate, i.e., the use of organization skills (NIBA News 1953:37).

6.14.7 Developmental Ministry

For many years the debate was about whether the church should be involved in meeting the physical needs and spiritual needs of the church. The American Baptist missionaries such as Samuel Day, Lyman Jewett, and others engaged in a missionary enterprise in India which included the building of the Telugu community. They established schools and hospitals for the poor in India where they practiced social ministries (Downie 1893:4-46). Although in 1904 John Rangiah (NIBA News 1953: 16) established a school in Kearsney, in later years the BASA did not pursue the ministry of community development. One important ministry that calls for action is ministry to people living with HIV/AIDS. According to a 2007 report (Central Intelligence Agency: 2009) 18.10% of people in South Africa between the ages 15-49 are living with HIV/AIDS. BASA should develop a denominational ministry plan to minister to these people.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

The research has attempted to resolve the main research problem i.e. the under representation of the history of the Baptist Association Africa in South African Baptist history.

In Chapter one the researcher laid the foundation for the research. It provided a brief description of the problem. It found that within scholarly works, Indian Baptist history and particularly that of BASA was under represented. It also found that the history of BASA as written by church leaders had certain limitations. This history was written by the dominant members of BASA and thus showed evidence of biases and lacked objectivity and critical analysis. It also found that the important roles of women were not covered in this history.

It attempted to solve the research problem by responding to the key research questions (1) Why is South African Indian Baptist History important? (2) Why is the history of the Baptist Association of South Africa important to South African Church History? (3) What was the significance of the work of the three Indian-born missionaries to the BASA and what role did women play in this organization? (4) How did the Baptist Association of South Africa respond to unity amongst Baptists in post-apartheid South Africa? (5) What was the contribution of the Baptist Association of South Africa to the formation of the South African Baptist Alliance? and (5) What strategy did the Baptist Association of South Africa generate and how did they impact the spiritual, social, cultural and political development in South Africa?

The research stated that the hypothesis was that the action and theology of the dominant Baptist church in South Africa were influenced by colonialism and apartheid that led to the distortion and marginalization of the history of people of colour. The researcher showed how this phenomenon influenced the development of the Baptist Association of South Africa. The research questions were answered clearly in chapters two to six.

In chapter two the study provided a context for the narrative of the BASA. Within the few existing scholarly works on this subject there is no reference to the significance of the four continents to Baptist missions. This study has shown how the genesis of the missionary spirit in America was set in motion so that it impacted Europe, Asia and Africa, which saw the establishment of the first Telugu Baptist church in South Africa. A very important factor in this historic study was the fact that the research showed how the BASA was the initiative of the indentured Baptist labourers, which resulted in the arrival of John Rangiah in South Africa in 1903.

The researcher undertook to provide scholarly research on a narrative free from the biases of colonial historiography and attempted to interpret this narrative using post-colonial hermeneutics. It stressed the point that the interpreter must be objective and not be seen as one who presents a “glorified account” of the ministry and contribution of leaders as was evident by historians of the dominant Baptist Union of South Africa as well as by leaders of the Baptist Association of South Africa. In the academic writings of Dayadharum, Paul and Nathaniel, it was pointed out that although they provided helpful historical data, they failed to locate the ministry of Indian Baptist work within the socio-political context. When they did, very little critical

analysis was undertaken. Two of the writers, Nathaniel and Dayadharum wrote from theological and missiological perspectives while Paul wrote from a sociological perspective.

Chapter two also provided an overview of the Baptist Mission narrative which included four countries, Europe, United States of America, India and South Africa. Its findings revealed how the American Baptist Churches, USA played a significant role in the Indian Baptist work in India and how this resulted in an indigenous missionary being sent by Indians in India to Indians in South Africa.

The study also discussed the concerns of Jacob S. Dharmaraj that European mission in developing countries expressed European collective ideas and the colonizers' administrative and political practices, rather than something which expressed only a pure, visionary reflection of the natural spontaneous movement of the Wesleyan Revival in the eighteenth century. He (1953:51-57) cited various examples of how culture and colonial mission influenced India during William Carey's work as a missionary in that country. One such example is the indigo industry, which Dharmaraj asserted was unfair to the Indians working in that factory. The researcher, however, stated the significance of Careys' contribution to world missions.

From Europe, the study focused on America. North America produced Adoniram Judson and his contribution to missions in Burma and India was discussed. On 19 January 1813, Adoniram Judson wrote (1994:32) from India that, "Should there be formed a Baptist Society for the support of missions in these parts, I should be ready to consider myself their missionary."

The Southern Baptist Convention and the American Baptist Churches, USA were discussed. Of the two organizations, the American Baptist Churches, USA played a significant role in the mission to India where converts established their own mission agency called the Telugu Baptist Home Missionary Society. The work of American Adoniram Judson's work in Asia, which prompted Baptist missions to that continent, was discussed and the study described his challenge to Americans to engage in global missions, particularly to Asia. Thereafter it discussed the two very significant missionaries of the American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society that influenced the Telugu Baptists in India.

The chapter then provided a general overview of Baptist missions in Africa and proceeded to set the context for the historical development of Baptist missions in Africa and South Africa. The chapter then briefly examined the mission involvement of the four South African Baptist organizations - BUSA, BMSA, BCSA, and ABK with a more detailed account of BASA's missions. It concluded with a critical assessment of the missionary enterprise which spanned four continents: America, Europe, Asia and Africa. It contended that this significant Baptist mission, the establishment of an indigenous mission agency which sent one of its own missionaries, John Rangiah, to South Africa is not fully reflected in the historical records of South African mission history.

Chapter three discussed the beginnings of Indian Baptist work in South Africa, starting with the life of Rev. John Rangiah, the pioneer of the Indian Baptist Church in South Africa. It also provided a description of Rangiah's understanding of the Bible and Bible themes. It then focused on the basic elements which influenced the Baptist

Association of South Africa. The study also provided insight with regards to socio-political questions. On that level, the study analyzed the impact of the Bible and Biblical themes on Rangiah's theology and on the Baptist Association of South Africa. Finally it discussed the contribution of women to the BASA.

Chapter four examined an important development in the history of Baptists in South Africa and unity talks among the five Baptist organizations. It provided a broad historical context, showing the different periods in South Africa and how racism and apartheid affected the church in the country. Ethnicity and the caste system also received treatment in this chapter. A significant section of the chapter focussed on the Baptist Union of South Africa and how it perpetuated racial discrimination in its relationship with the BCSA, BMSA and BASA, which influenced the disunity amongst Baptists in South Africa.

Chapter five recorded the movement of the five Baptist organizations towards unity and reconciliation and the contribution of the Baptist Association of South Africa to the formation of the South African Baptist Alliance. It included the various consultations and unity talks with references to the important resolutions adopted at these meetings, followed by analysis and evaluation.

Chapter six discussed the ministry strategies that the main leaders generated and used, and how they impacted spiritual, social, cultural and political development in South Africa. It provided a broad spiritual, cultural, social and political context with an understanding of the ministry of BASA in South Africa. Thereafter it discussed the

specific context in Kwa Zulu Natal, the province where BASA has its churches and ministry.

Another significant aspect of this chapter was the analysis of the ministry strategies of the leaders of BASA and in this regard it discussed ethnocentrism and theological orientation. The chapter concluded that the strategies employed by BASA leaders contributed to the spiritual, cultural (and economic) development of South Africa with no significant contribution to the socio-political progress. This chapter concluded by offering BASA suggestions for future ministry. The concluding chapter seven provided a summary of each chapter.

This study has attempted to reclaim the narrative of the Baptist Association of South Africa. This narrative was written from “the underside,” i.e., from the point of the victim. The study has hopefully given new meaning and offered a new understanding of events which were viewed mainly from the colonial perspective (Dharamraj: 1953:xi). It raised issues of racism and ethnicity and showed how the dominant colonial Baptist history played out in the life of Black, Coloured and Indian churches. It has concluded that colonialism, apartheid, racism and ethnicity played major roles in influencing the recording and interpretation of the history of the Baptist Association of South Africa.