

**THE NARRATIVE OF THE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA
AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE INDIAN BAPTIST CHURCH IN KWA
ZULU NATAL**

by

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Declaration

“I, Rodney Ragwan, declare that the thesis, which I hereby submit for the degree PHILOSOPHIAE DOCTOR at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at another university/institution.”

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABC.....	American Baptist Church
ABHMS.....	American Baptist Home Missionary Society
BASA.....	Baptist Association of South Africa
BCSA.....	Baptist Convention of South Africa
BMSA.....	Baptist Mission of South Africa
BUSA.....	Baptist Union of South Africa
BRBM.....	Bulwer Road Baptist Minutes
BWA.....	Baptist World Alliance
BWAW.....	Barkly West Awareness Workshop
CBM.....	Colesberg Baptist Minutes
DEIC.....	Dutch East India Company
KPC.....	Kempton Park Consultation
HMS.....	Home Mission Society
LAC.....	Local Arrangements Committee
NIBA.....	Natal Indian Baptist Association
SABMS.....	South African Baptist Missionary Services
SBC.....	Southern Baptist Convention
TBHMS.....	Telugu Baptist Home Missionary Service
TRC.....	Truth and Reconciliation Commission

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Abbreviations	iii
Chapter One	13
Introduction	13
1.1 Purpose.....	13
1.2 Describing the problem or issue.....	15
1.3 The key research questions.....	17
1.4 Motivation.....	18
1.5 Hypothesis.....	20
1.6 Methodology.....	21
1.7 Scope of the research.....	22
1.8 Literature Review.....	22
1.9 Outline.....	26
1.9.1 Chapter One - Introduction.....	26
1.9.2 Chapter Two - Europe, America, Asia and Africa in Global Missions.....	27
1.9.3 Chapter Three - The Early beginnings of Indian Baptist Work in South Africa.....	27
1.9.4 Chapter Four - The Baptist Association of South Africa in the New South Africa.....	28
1.9.5 Chapter Five – The Baptist Association of South Africa and the South African Baptist Alliance.....	28

1.9.6 Chapter Six - The Ministry Strategies of the Baptist Association of South Africa.....	29
1.9.7 Chapter Seven – Conclusion.....	29
Chapter Two.....	30
Europe, America, Asia and Africa in Baptist Global Missions.....	31
2.1 Europe.....	31
2.1.1 William Carey.....	33
2.2 America.....	37
2.2.1 Adoniram Judson.....	39
2.2.2 Southern Baptist Convention, USA.....	40
2.2.3 American Baptist Church, USA.....	42
2.3 Asia.....	43
2.3.1 American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society.....	44
2.3.1.1 Rev. Samuel S. Day.....	45
2.3.1.2 Layman Jewett.....	47
2.4 Africa.....	49
2.4.1 The Baptist Union of South Africa.....	50
2.4.2 The Baptist Convention of South Africa.....	52
2.4.3 The Afrikanse Baptiste Kerk.....	53
2.4.4 The Baptist Mission of South Africa.....	53
2.4.5 The Baptist Association of South Africa.....	53
Chapter Three	
The Beginnings and Development of Indian Baptist Work in South Africa.....	59

Section A

3.1 Missionary Union, 1953.....	61
3.2 Telugu Baptists requests assistance for a Baptist minister from India.....	64
3.2.1 Rev. John Rangiah.....	65
3.2.1.1 Reports and correspondence of John Rangiah.....	70
3.2.1.2 Report of indigenous work.....	71
3.2.1.3 Report of growth and expansion.....	72
3.2.1.4 Rangiah’s letter to the editor of the American Baptist International Magazine.....	75
3.2.1.5 Rangiah’s personal letter to David Downie.....	76
3.3 Reinforcement of the Telugu Baptist Mission: Rev. V.C. Jacob.....	82
3.4 Schism in the Indian Baptist Church.....	83
3.5 Rangiah’s model of ministry and mission.....	85
3.5.1 Mission - an inclusive task.....	85
3.5.2 Ministry - spiritual and social dimensions.....	86
3.5.3 Leadership training.....	87
3.5.4 Church planting.....	87
3.5.5 Culture.....	88
3.5.6 Ecumenical outlook.....	89
3.5.7 Rangiah’s response to the socio-political conditions in South Africa.....	90

Section B

3.6 Impact of the Bible and Bible themes on Rangiah’s ministry.....	92
3.6.1 The Bible.....	92
3.6.2 Prayer.....	98

3.6.3 Salvation.....	101
3.6.4 Eschatological Hope.....	102
Section C	
3.7 Rev. Theophilus Rangiah.....	104
3.8 Rev. David Newton Nathaniel.....	111
3.9 Women in Ministry with the Baptist Association of South Africa.....	115
3.10 Evaluation of the early ministry of the Baptist Association of South Africa.....	123
3.11 Conclusion.....	132
Chapter Four	134
The Baptist Association of South Africa in Unity Talks	134
4.1 The Dutch period.....	135
4.2 The British era.....	137
4.3 The Afrikaner period.....	139
4.3.1 Apartheid's influence on the Baptist Church.....	139
4.3.2 Apartheid and Racism.....	140
4.3.2.1 Apartheid.....	143
4.4 Racism.....	144
4.5 Ethnicity.....	154
4.5.1 Unique cultural traits.....	154
4.5.2 Sense of community.....	154
4.6 The Afrikanse Baptiste Kerk and the Baptist Union of South Africa.....	156
4.7 The Baptist Convention of South Africa and the Baptist Union of South Africa.....	160
4.7.1 Merger: Revision versus new look.....	161

4.7.2 History: mission versus submission.....	162
4.7.3 Theology: evangelism versus diakonia.....	162
4.7.4 Theological education: indoctrination versus contextualization.....	162
4.7.5 Leadership and the unity process: evolution versus revolution.....	163
4.7.6 Repentance: gospel verses law.....	164
4.8 The Baptist Association of South Africa and the Baptist Union of South Africa.....	165
4.8.1 Fellowship/interaction.....	165
4.8.2 Cost.....	166
4.8.3 Disputes.....	166
4.8.4 Identity.....	166
4.9 Baptist Union of South Africa – Baptist Association of South Africa relations.....	166
4.10 The Baptist Mission of South Africa and the Baptist Union of South Africa.....	168
4.11 BASA’s response to apartheid and racism.....	169
4.12 Division in the Indian Baptist work in South Africa.....	170
4.13 Movement towards unity.....	177
Chapter Five.....	179
The Baptist Association of South Africa and the South African Baptist Alliance.....	179
5.1 The Springfield Consultation.....	179
5.2 The Colesberg Consultation.....	180
5.3 The Bulwer Road Consultation.....	181
5.4 The Kempton Consultation.....	190

5.5 The Arena Park Consultation.....	191
5.5.1 Definitive statement.....	191
5.5.2 Pray for each other.....	192
5.5.3 Expand publication.....	192
5.5.4 Constitution.....	192
5.5.5 Cooperation in ministry.....	193
5.5.6 Sharing principles on leadership.....	194
5.5.7 Pastor’s roll.....	194
5.5.8 Constitution.....	194
5.5.9 A need for Christian schools.....	195
5.5.10 Public relations.....	195
5.5.11 Address government with one common Baptist voice on moral issues.....	195
5.5.12 Form a theological education committee.....	197
5.6 Data interpretation and recommendation.....	198
5.6.1 Baptists in dialogue.....	200
5.6.2 Dealing with the past.....	200
5.6.3 Achievements.....	204
5.6.4 Multiracial forum.....	204
5.6.5 An educational experience.....	205
5.7 Evaluation.....	205
5.8 The way forward	207
Chapter Six.....	209
Ministry Strategies of the Baptist Association of South Africa.....	211
6. Context.....	211

6.1 Spiritual.....	212
6.1.1 European spirituality.....	213
6.1.2 African spirituality.....	214
6.1.3 Culture.....	215
6.1.4 Social.....	216
6.1.5 Political.....	217
6.2 Specific context.....	219
6.2.1 Anti-Indian sentiments.....	219
6.2.2 Support for the indentured labour system.....	223
6.3 Social divisions among Indians.....	224
6.4 Mohandas K. Gandhi and the struggle of the Indians.....	224
6.5 Sir James Hulett's treatment of his Baptist indentured labourers.....	226
6.6 Strategies of leaders.....	227
6.6.1 John Rangiah (1903-1915).....	227
6.6.1.1 Establishing homogenous churches.....	228
6.6.1.2 Language.....	231
6.6.1.3 Festivals.....	232
6.6.1.4 Education.....	232
6.6.1.5 Cottage meetings.....	233
6.6.1.6 Evangelistic services.....	233
6.7 Theophilus Rangiah.....	233
6.7.1 Organization.....	234
6.7.2 Church planting.....	235
6.7.3 Education.....	236
6.7.4 Conflict Resolution.....	237
6.8 David Newton Nathaniel.....	237

6.8.1 Pastoral Care.....	237
6.8.2 Theological education.....	238
6.8.3 Newsletter.....	239
6.8.4 Revival	239
6.9 Mimosthram Rangiah.....	241
6.9.1 Music.....	241
6.10 Noah Moses Israel.....	241
6.10.1 Preservation of Indian Baptist History.....	242
6.12 Anthony Poliah.....	243
6.13 Rodney Ragwan.....	243
6.13.1 Networking with international organizations.....	244
6.13.2 Re-establishing connection with the American Baptist Church, USA.....	244
6.13.3 Establishing relationship with South African organizations.....	245
6.14 Analysis of the strategy of the Baptist Association of South Africa.....	246
6.14.1 Did the ministry strategies impact South Africa?.....	246
6.14.1.1 Ethnocentricity.....	247
6.14.1.2 Theological orientation.....	251
6.14 Suggestions.....	256
6.14.1 Training of laity.....	256
6.14.2 Position on race.....	256
6.14.3 Public statements.....	257
6.14.4 Pastor/theologian.....	257
6.14.5 Theological refecation.....	258
6.14.6 Pastor/administrator.....	258
6.14.7 Development ministry.....	259



Chapter 7	260
Conclusion.....	260
Bibliography.....	266

1. Introduction

Title: The Narrative of the Baptist Association of South Africa and its Significance for the Indian Baptist Church in Kwa Zulu Natal

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this research is to produce an in-depth study of the historical narrative of the Baptist Association of South Africa, a predominantly ethnic organization in Kwa Zulu Natal and its significance for the development of the Indian Baptist Church in South Africa. Indian Baptist narrative has not been given much prominence by church historians. The available records of this narrative appear in non-academic literature and are written mainly by laypersons with a few appearing in thesis and dissertations. These few academic writings do not fully reflect the socio-political forces that influenced the marginalization of this narrative. The researcher will provide a post-colonial narrative of history. In a world of post-colonial and post-modernist deconstruction of the meta-narrative, I want to propose a historical narrative of a particular people in a particular time that can serve not only as an important narrative to that people but as a critique of that meta-narrative that will hopefully expose its distortions and shortcomings.

Baptist mission in South Africa took place in the context of colonialism. Generally, in critiquing colonialism, scholars almost always criticized the West. Sugirtharajah (1998:16) contends that postcoloniality involves once colonized “Others” insisting on taking their place as historical subjects. He further asserts that unlike other

theoretical practices such as feminism and structuralism, postcolonial discourse is not about the West, but about the colonized “Other.” The narrative of the Baptist Association of South Africa is that “Other.” While this study focuses on this narrative, this narrative, as mentioned earlier, took place within a colonized and apartheid history. What sets this narrative apart from other narratives is that it uses postcolonial hermeneutics to interpret the narrative.

Rangiah, the founder of the Indian Baptist church in South Africa, was influenced by colonialism to a certain degree concerning his understanding of the Bible. However, on the issue of mission, he reflected an indigenous approach, which this research will address. Additionally, a critique of Rangiah’s influence of colonialism established that he was not exposed to the critical reflections of this phenomenon both in India and in South Africa. Largely the general membership of the current Baptist Association of South Africa has managed to insulate itself from the critical discourse generated by postcolonial critical theory.

A section of this research will also examine Rangiah’s understanding of the Bible and Bible themes. What hermeneutical principles guided his understanding and interpretation of the Bible and its themes? In the interpretation of the Biblical text, interpreters have often relied on critical theories as well as literary theories to make clear the Bible and the Bible’s textuality. Sugirtharajah (1998:ix) contends that even social science methods have also been applied to Biblical studies, but he points to a relative neglect of one of the most challenging, critical and controversial theoretical categories of this time, namely postcolonialism. The study will examine to what

extent Rangiah and the Baptist Association of South Africa neglected such a critical category.

In Rangiah's defence, theology, according to Dyrness and Karkkainen (2008: 683), is a relatively new dialogue partner with postcolonial theory, though Dyrness and Karkkainen adds that the conversation is quickly developing. Therefore Rangiah, who was reared in a colonial context, came to another colonial context and did not have the opportunity to fully engage this postcolonial theory. However, Rangiah represented a people, who, in India, were influenced and divided by the caste system. There are claims that this phenomenon influenced Rangiah's ministry in South Africa. These claims will be critically examined.

In addition, there will be an evaluative element, as no one else from the perspective of the Indian Baptist has or is countering the dominant Baptist history. The research will further critically evaluate the sequence of events of the Baptist Association of South Africa in the light of the transformation that is taking place in South Africa.

1.2 Describing the problem or issue

The four main population groups in South Africa consist of Blacks, Whites, Coloureds and Indians. Each of these groups has its unique history. Unfortunately, the histories of these people of colour were marginalized and often ignored. The colonial apartheid missiological paradigm made people of colour believe that their 'stories' were not important.

The narrative of the South African Indian Baptists was not academically recorded. The South African Baptist historians who represented the dominant Baptist organization did not adequately include the contributions of Black, Coloured and Indian Baptists in South Africa. The history of South African Indian Baptists is submerged in that of white Baptists and is written from a colonial and paternalistic perspective. In this way, its impact and importance is skewed or minimized. Furthermore, very little of this history appears in the curriculum at South African theological institutions.

Taylor (1987: xxi) in his book *Altarity*, writes about the suppression of minority voices by the dominant forces. He suggests that the systematic exclusion of the significance of difference in what he calls the “other” will according to him undoubtedly result in the politics of appropriation and domination. This phenomenon was evident in South Africa where the history of BASA, which represented a minority Baptist organization, suffered such a fate. Taylor (1987: xxi) further contends that the written history of nineteenth century colonial mission has been predicated on various themes of subordination of ancient culture, and socio-religious conversion of the colonized people. Additionally he states that subordination provided control over the silenced subjects.

Within the Indian Baptist church itself, not many took the initiative to document the contributions of Indians to the development of the Christian faith in South Africa. The few academics who did document these contributions have some limitations, which this study will critically evaluate. A significant omission in their writings is the role of

women. Consequently, the important role of women has not been fully recognized by the Indian Baptist Church in South Africa.

Furthermore, the vast majority of the South African Indian population depended on the oral transmission of its history. This was done through story-telling and sermons.

1.3 The key research questions

This study is an attempt to answer the following research questions in order to solve the research problem, namely the under-representation of Indian Baptist history in South African Baptist history. The following key research questions will be critically examined.

1.3.1 Why are South African Indian Baptists important?

1.3.2 Why is the history of the Baptist Association of South Africa important to South African Christian history?

1.3.3 What is the significance of the work of the three Indian-born missionaries to the Baptist Association of South Africa and what role did women play in this organization?

1.3.4 How did the Baptist Association of South Africa respond to unity amongst Baptists in post-apartheid South Africa?

1.3.5 What was the contribution of the Baptist Association of South Africa to the formation of the South African Baptist Alliance?

1.3.6 What strategy did the Indian Baptists generate and how did they impact the spiritual, social, cultural and political development in South Africa?

1.4 Motivation

In the late 1800, natives from India arrived in South Africa to work as indentured labourers on the tea and sugar estates in the then Natal Colony. Among this group of labourers were about 150 Telugu-speaking Baptists. They settled in the Natal North Coast where they worked on Sir Leigh Hullett's Tea Estate in Kearsney near Stanger. The need for a Telugu missionary became very evident as the work of an English minister among them was impeded due to language and cultural barriers. These Indian Baptists organized themselves and decided to write to the Telugu Home Missionary Society in India requesting a Telugu-speaking Baptist minister to lead the work in South Africa. In 1903, Rev. John Rangiah accepted this invitation to South Africa to work among the Telugu Indians. The result was the formation of the first Telugu Baptist Church in Africa, which gave birth to the Telugu Indian Baptist Mission in South Africa. This organization underwent a number of name changes over the years but the history, tradition and legacy of the heroes and heroines of this organization over the last 100 years are solidly grounded in the 'soil' of Africa and, in particular, South Africa. The historical relationship between the Indian Baptists and India as well as the American Baptist Churches, USA had not been fully developed. Not much was known about the specific American Baptist organization that contributed to the development of the church among the Telugus in India, which in turn sent its own Telugu missionary to South Africa. Only a few within the Indian Baptist organization knew about the historical roots which grew between the American Baptist Churches, USA and the Indian Baptist Church in South Africa. This knowledge was limited to a general understanding of a foreign Baptist organization. After Rangiah's death, virtually all communication between the

American Baptist Churches and the Telugu Home Missionary Society ceased. I am interested in investigating this relationship. Another US-based Baptist organization, the Southern Baptist Convention, worked with the Indian Baptist Church in South Africa came later in the early 1980s. This segment of the historical development will also be examined.

In 2000 I initiated a partnership between the American Baptist Churches, USA and the Indian Baptist Church in South Africa. In 2001, at the invitation of the American Baptist Churches, USA, I attended an International Mission Conference in Wisconsin, USA. This conference focused on the participation of American Baptist missions around the world. It was at this conference where a discovery was made that the American Baptist Churches, USA was the organization that was responsible for the arrival of John Rangiah in South Africa in 1903. Baptist historians have not adequately documented the narratives of South African Baptist Indian History. Furthermore the available mission history is unfortunately not fully and accurately represented in the historical records. This is a good example of how South African Indian Baptist history had been ignored. Reclaiming the history of the Indian Baptist work in South Africa is noteworthy in the context of the multiple levels of colonization and the three centuries of institutional racism in South Africa. At the heart of these two systems of oppression was the dehumanization of peoples in Africa, Asia and the Americas. During my studies at a prominent Baptist institution in South Africa I discovered how little of Indian Baptist history was reflected in the curriculum of a mission course.

This research will include the contribution of American Baptists, the Southern Baptist Convention, and the Telugu Home Missionary Society in India. The pioneering work of Rev. John Rangiah, the founder of the Indian Baptist Church in South Africa, was greatly influenced by the American Baptist Church, USA. His relationship with this organization dates back to their founding of a Baptist Church in India among the Telugu-speaking people. Some of his correspondence with this church is available in the archives at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, USA. The records of the Southern Baptist Convention's missionary work in South Africa among the Indians can be accessed in Nashville, Tennessee, USA as well. With this in mind, a large part of this research has been done in the USA. It will form part of the larger quest in South Africa, with regard to the reclaiming and rewriting of the narrative of the Baptist Association of South Africa so that it includes the narratives of people of colour. The researcher, a native of South Africa who is of Indian descent, believes in the scholarly necessity of what Michel Foucault (1980: 80-81) refers to as "the insurrection of subjugated knowledge". The study will also contribute to a better understanding of the theological, social, and cultural development the Baptist Association of South Africa made in South Africa.

1.5 Hypothesis

The action and theology of the dominant church in South Africa were influenced by colonialism and apartheid, which led to the distortion and marginalization of the history of people of colour, namely Indian Baptists. The researcher will show how this reality influenced the development of the Baptist Association of South Africa.

1.6 Methodology

A few academic theses and dissertations have been written on this subject. Two Doctoral and one Master of Divinity theses by South African Indians include the history of the Indian Baptists in South Africa. These will be critically examined. I also gather information from micro narratives such as newsletters and brochures that highlight the histories of the Indian Baptists in South Africa. The recording of oral history will also form part of the data gathering process. Interviews with the descendents of the leaders as well as current members of the Indian Baptist church will be conducted. These descendants of John Rangiah and members live mainly in the province of Kwa Zulu Natal. An evaluation of the findings and statistics will be undertaken.

This study will apply insights of a methodological discourse called postcolonial theory. Postcolonial theory, or “postcolonialism,” Dyrness and Karkkainen (2008: 683) examines the impact of European colonization on colonized societies. This theory addresses issues such as race, gender, identity, globalization and power relations. Sugirtharajah (1998: ix) describes postcolonial theory among other things as controversial. Marginal, non-Western historians are confronting and critiquing the colonial ideology and its underlying assumptions. Dyrness and Karkkainen (2008: 683) calls this a form of resistance discourse from the margins and that it undercuts those discourses that have supported colonizing attitudes, unmasking the Western ideologies behind colonial theories and texts.

1.7 Scope of the Research

The scope of this research spans the years from the late 1800s to 2006. The research will not examine the narrative of the Baptist Mission of South Africa, which is another Indian Baptist organization with John Rangiah as the founder, although the history of the Baptist Mission of South Africa is part of the Indian Baptist history and shares a cultural and ethnic heritage that is similar to the Baptist Association of South Africa. Nor will this study include the contributions of every leader of the Baptist Association of South Africa since its inception in 1914.

1.8 Review of literature

No major works on the narratives of the South African Indian Baptist exist. The following have written dissertations on South African Baptist History. Dr Charles Dayadharum, a former South African pastor now living in the United States of America, wrote a PhD dissertation, *The Role of John and Theophilus M. Rangiah in the Baptist Missionary Enterprise among Asian Indians in South Africa*. Dayadharum demonstrates in his research that John and Theophilus Rangiah were key persons in the initiation of Baptist work among Indians in South Africa from 1903 to 1947. He further discusses the homogenous and indigenous principles that the Rangiahs applied in their missionary work in South Africa. Dayadharum's study is located within the disciplines of Church History and Missiology and as such he provides a descriptive historical analysis of South Africa Indian Baptists up to 1947. His missiological observations and evaluation of Rangiah's mission work are noteworthy

given the fact that the Rangiahs were from a developing country that was influenced largely by Western and Eurocentric mission principles (Dayadharum 1999:1).

There are however limitations in Dayadharum's research. He does not fully locate this history of the Indian Baptist Church within the socio-political history of apartheid South Africa, significantly given the adverse effects this ideology had on people of colour. His treatment of apartheid received very little attention in his research. Furthermore the colonial missiological paradigm was not critically examined. Finally his research is confined to a specific period of the South African Indian Baptist church, 1903 to 1947.

This research will differ from Dayadharum's dissertation in its scope. He writes about the contributions mainly of John and Theophilus Rangiah to the Indian Baptist church in South Africa. I will go beyond the Rangiahs' tenure as missionaries and include the period up to 2006. Even the period from 1903 to 1947 does not fully reflect the history of South African Baptist Indians. An inclusive history representing men and women as well as the effects of apartheid on the Indian population will be examined.

Another fellow South African, Timothy Paul, now deceased, did another piece of research in this field. He, by his own testimony, declared in his doctoral dissertation, *From Telugu Baptist Church to open church: A study of the Indian Baptist Missionary Enterprise in South Africa*, that the main purpose of his dissertation was hermeneutical, i.e., "to understand the history of the present generation and then study it in retrospect to its initial establishment and finally coming to the present

generation.” In his research Paul showed how the Indian Baptist Churches in South Africa grew from conservative Telugu churches, to ethnic Indian churches, and finally to open Indian churches. Paul, unlike Dayadharum, who provided very little background to the socio-political history, discusses the social dynamics that were at play between the Telugus and the Whites in apartheid South Africa. Paul wrote from a layman’s perspective and thus lacked any theological reflection. Furthermore, his study tends to be located within the discipline of sociology as he focuses mainly on the social forces that were brought to bear on the Indian Baptist population (Paul 1990: 1).

Since the present study will be written from church historical and missiological perspectives, it will take into consideration the effects of societal influences on the South African Baptist population, but will include historical analysis as well as a missiological and theological examination of this mission of South African Indian Baptists. It is here that this study differs from Paul’s research.

David Newton Nathaniel, a native of India who arrived in South Africa in 1951 as a missionary to the Indians, wrote a thesis for his Master of Divinity degree at the former University of Durban-Westville, South Africa. In *The Origin and Development of the Indian Baptist Church in South Africa 1900-1978*, Nathaniel provides a good historical account of the Indian Baptists in South Africa from 1900 to 1978. A distinct feature of his thesis deals with the schism that took place in the Indian Baptist church in South Africa. He examines the notion of unity between the two factions within the Indian Church and provides a theological basis for unity (Nathaniel 1979: 1).

Here, too, this thesis will differ from Nathaniel's thesis primarily in its scope. He wrote about the Indian Baptists from the period 1900 to 1978 and about the need for reconciliation between two ethnic factions within the Indian Baptist church. The researcher will provide an expanded history that will include the period beyond 1978 and will incorporate significant historical events such as the membership of the Baptist Association of South into the Baptist World Alliance, All Africa Baptist Fellowship and the American Baptist Churches, USA. The participation of the Indian Baptists in the unity process amongst Baptists of all races in South Africa will also be included in this study.

The book *Rekindling the Fire*, by Rev. Brian Naidoo, a native South African Indian pastor, chronicles the Indian Baptist work in South Africa. He also narrates his personal journey to India where he makes acquaintances with fellow Baptists. Naidoo draws the historical data mainly from brochures and newsletters that the Indian Baptists wrote (Naidoo 2003:1).

Several brochures and newsletters were written by leaders of the South African Indian Baptist Church. These men included M. Rangiah, grandson of the pioneer missionary to the Indians, Noah Moses Israel, K. Daniel, Daniel Philip, Vijay Nathaniel, N. Timothy, Paul Daniel and Jacob and Cornelius. These brochures and newsletters address mainly the history of the South African Indian Baptists. They are well written narratives of men and women who have contributed to the work of the Indian Baptist Church in South Africa. However since almost all of them wrote from a lay perspective, the narratives lack critical theological reflection, except in Paul Daniels, a trained pastor who writes as a person who is well informed. His critical

analysis of the dominant Baptist history, being the white Baptist Union of South Africa, is worth examining. However his writings appear in newsletters and brochures and not in scholarly publications (Daniels 1993:2).

Most of the laypersons who recorded the history of the Indian Baptists wrote with the intention of preserving the legacy, traditions and customs of the Indian Baptists in South Africa. There is very little critical reflection of its ministry. This research will critically evaluate the narrative of the Baptist Association of South Africa and ministry in the light of the social transformation taking place in South Africa. This study will also critique the unity process currently taking place in South Africa amongst Baptists. The participation of Indian Baptists will be examined in the light of Scripture.

1.9 Outline

1.9.1 Chapter One – Introduction

The research will focus on a specific Indian group in Kwa Zulu Natal called the Baptist Association of South Africa. Its narrative and significance for the Indian Baptist Church in Kwa Zulu Natal will be examined. Chapter one will lay the foundation for the research. It will include the description of the problem, methodology, motivation for the study and a review of the literature written on this subject. Significantly, it will answer the key research question, why is South African Indian Baptist important?

1.9.2 Chapter Two - Europe, America, Asia and Africa in Global Missions

In this chapter, an overview of the Baptist Mission narrative, which includes four continents, Europe, North America, Asia and Africa will be provided. Here I will show 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. This chapter will answer the key research question, why is the history of the Baptist Association of South Africa important to South African Christian history?

1.9.3 Chapter Three - Beginnings of Indian Baptist Work in South Africa

There are three sections in chapter three. In section A the beginnings of Indian Baptist work in South Africa will be studied, starting with the life and work of Rev. John Rangiah, the pioneer of the Indian Baptist Church in South Africa. In section B I will provide a description of Rangiah's understanding of the Bible and Bible themes. The significance of this focus will provide the basic elements which influenced this church in South Africa, and will also provide insight with regards to socio-political questions. On this level, the study will analyze the impact of the Bible and Biblical themes on his theology and on the Indian Baptist Church in South Africa. Section C will study the contributions of women and other Indian Baptists. In this chapter the study will attempt to answer two key research questions: What was the significance of the work of the three Indian born missionaries to the Baptist Association of South Africa and what were the roles women play in this organization?

1.9.4 Chapter Four -The Baptist Association of South Africa in the New South Africa

In 1994 a new era dawned in South Africa. The socio-political landscape changed. It was a new beginning for South African Baptists. Baptists from the four main racially divided groups - the Baptist Convention of South Africa, which was the organization for Blacks; Baptist Union of South Africa, the organization for Whites; Baptist Association of South Africa and Baptist Mission of South Africa, both being Indian organizations; and the Afrikanse Baptiste Kerk, an Afrikaans oriented organization - began conversations on reconciliation and unity. The participation and contribution of the Baptist Association of South Africa will be critically examined. This chapter will attempt to answer the research question, how did the Baptist Association of South Africa respond to unity amongst Baptists in post-apartheid South Africa?

1.9.5 Chapter Five – The Baptist Association of South Africa and the South African Baptist Alliance

This chapter will examine the minutes of the meetings of the South African Baptist Alliance, as well as its formation prior to this watershed moment. The chapter will trace the events, bilateral meetings and consultations that took place among the various organizations. The key research question is what was the contribution of BASA in the formation of the South African Baptist Alliance?

1.9.6 Chapter Six - Ministry Strategies of the Baptist Association of South Africa

Chapter six will analyze the ministry strategies the leaders of the Baptist Association of South Africa generated and used and their impact on the spiritual, social, cultural and political development in South Africa. What strategy did the Indian Baptists generate, and how did they impact the spiritual, social, cultural and political development in South Africa? This is the key research question this chapter will attempt to answer.

1.9.7 Chapter Seven - Conclusion

This chapter will include a summary of each previous chapter. It will clearly state the importance of recognizing the 'stories' of Christian missions, particularly those of minorities. The significance of the narrative of the Baptist Association in Kwa Zulu Natal and its significance for the Indian Baptist Church in Kwa Zulu Natal will be emphasized.

Chapter Two

Europe, America, Asia and Africa in Baptist Global Missions

Baptists share a deep conviction that the Christian faith must be shared with all peoples and nations. In keeping with this conviction, Baptists have engaged in global missions since the 17th century. This chapter will chronicle the history of Baptist missions in four continents: Europe, America, Asia, and Africa. It will also examine the historical development of Baptist missions on these continents. In each of these continents, I will discuss significant Baptist persons and organizations including William Carey and Adoniram Judson. I will highlight two mission organizations, The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and the American Baptist Churches, USA (ABC). In addition, the researcher will discuss the American contributors Luther Rice and Samuel S Day. Finally, the research will provide an overview of missions in South Africa.

From a broad perspective, it is important to begin with an overview of Christian Missions in general. Myers (2003: 16-17) in his book *Exploring World Mission* traces the general historical roots of Christian mission. He maintains that these are found in six periods. The first is the Apocalyptic-Early Church (CE 33-200); the second, in Greek-Patristic Orthodoxy (CE 200-500); the third, in Christendom-Medieval Roman Catholic (CE 600-1400); the fourth, in Reformation-Protestant (CE 1500-1750); the fifth, in Modern Mission Era (CE 1750-1950) and the sixth, in an emerging mission paradigm for the third millennium (CE 1950 to the present). Since the Reformation, almost all mainline denominations have participated in world mission. In the six periods Myers (2003:16-20) discusses, denominations in western countries have

sent their missionaries mostly to developing countries. Therefore the conclusion can be drawn that western countries were a mission force as far as Christian missions are concerned. Baptists were a part of this movement. Has that changed? This research will show how non-western countries such as India and South Africa contributed to global mission. More specifically, it will examine in chapter 3 the narrative of the Baptist Association of South Africa and its significance for the Indian Baptist Church in Kwa Zulu Natal. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the continent that dominates mission studies, as far its origin and influence is concerned, is Europe.

2.1 Europe

Europe was in the forefront of initiating missions to other countries. It occurred in what Myers called the Reformation-Protestant period (CE 1500-1750). Reference is commonly made to the William Carey era of the 18th century. Carey is widely regarded as the father of the modern missionary movement. Interestingly, Brian Stanley (1992:4) places Germany's engagement in foreign missions before the Modern Missionary Period; he dates the German missionary engagement in foreign countries back to 1706. He further states that there were Moravian missionaries sent to the West Indies and the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa in the early 17th century.

Estep (1920:2) in his book *Whole Gospel Whole World, The Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1845-1995*, provides a historical account of Baptist Mission history. He also provides timelines for this history, which began in

1731 and ended in 1850. This helps to put Baptist Mission history into a global perspective. Estep's recording of this history largely concentrates on the contributions of the English to missions in India, with very little reference to the Germans. This is understandable, as Estep is a Baptist representing the Southern Baptist Convention and the Germans were not Baptists. It is important in a study of mission history, however, to recognize that omission of such information often skews history. The researcher contends that this was the case in South Africa, where important information and the contribution of a person and a people were omitted or inadequately recognized. This research will examine this later (Estep 1994).

Charles Dayadharum in his PhD thesis, *The Role of John and Theophilus M. Rangiah in the Baptist Missionary Enterprise Among the Asian Indians in South Africa* points to William Carey as the one who opened the door for other countries, to British, Canadian and American missionaries to India. While this is true to a certain extent, to be historically accurate almost 55 years before William Carey was born the two previously mentioned missionaries from Germany arrived in India with the Christian faith. Bartholomew Ziegenbalg and Henry Plutschan were the two German Missionaries who arrived in India on 19 July 1706. Although occupying a very limited tract in that country, the obligation of bringing the blessings of Christianity within the reach of its inhabitants was acknowledged by them several years before it was admitted by Great Britain (Sherring 1884:4). While these two European missionaries did contribute to global missions, it was William Carey who played a very significant role paving the way for the movement of missionaries from America to India. He was thus known as the "Father of the Modern Missionary movement."

2.1.1 William Carey

William Carey was born at Paulerspury near Northampton on 17 August 1761. He was an avid reader of books on science, history, and voyages. At the age of 14, he was an apprentice to a shoemaker. Hervey (1882:1) states that among the great beginnings of modern Christian progress was the meeting between a Baptist minister and Andrew Fuller, an Englishman in Moulton, England, which resulted in discussions on missions. At this shoe shop, Carey had hanging on the wall a large map of the world on which he had written important information about religion and population. He showed great interest in acquiring knowledge of the world and its people.

Carey's interest in world missions gained momentum. He wrote a pamphlet entitled, *An Inquiry into the Obligation of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens*. In 1792, he preached a sermon, "Expect Great Things from God; Attempt Great Things for God." On 2 October 1792, as a result of Carey's sermon, the *Baptist Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Heathens* was formed (Miller 1952: 37). By this time Carey was inspired further by the reading of Captain Cook's voyages to other lands to spread the Christian faith. In 1792, Carey's formation of the "Baptist Society for propagating the Gospel among the Heathens" marked the birth of the modern mission movement (Miller 1952:37). On 13 June 1793, Carey set sail for India on the Danish Kron Princessa Maria (Woodall 1951:24).

Carey (1994:6) argued that all Christians and not only the apostles were obligated to proclaim Christ to the heathen. He writes, "*If the command of Christ to teach all*

nations be restricted to all the apostles, or those under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost, then that of baptizing should be so too; and every denomination of Christians, except the Quakers, do wrong in baptizing with water.” During this period, many in the Baptist denomination in England opposed his proposal of foreign missions. It is recorded at a meeting in 1798 that when Carey asked whether the command given by Christ to the apostles to teach all nations was not obligatory on all ministers, Dr. John Ryland, the minister at this meeting responded, “Sit down, young man. You are a miserable enthusiast to ask such a question. If God wants to convert the world, He can do it without your help.” Various historians have given slightly different versions of Ryland’s response to Carey, but the essence of his communication to Carey was one of discouragement. Estep (1920:7) claims that the response was characteristic of both the man and the hyper-Calvinism predominant among the Particular Baptists at that time. There were those who shared Carey’s views on Christ’s command to teach all nations and were highly critical of the theology held by the Particular Baptists. One such critic was Andrew Fuller, who believed that if this theology had continued unabated among the Particular Baptists, Carey’s vision would have perished and possibly the denomination as well. Fuller became a critic of the theology advocated by the Particular Baptists.

Carey was up against the odds, as many did not fully embrace his understanding of sharing the Christian faith globally. Jonathan Edwards, an American, assisted Carey’s cause. Edwards made a significant contribution to the understanding of evangelism in his book, *Inquiry into the Freedom of the Will*. He wrote on how one could reconcile evangelism with Calvinism. The insight from the reading of this book

at that time began to spread to others among the ministers of the Particular Baptists and resulted in a change of their views on evangelism.

On examination of Carey's understanding and participation in foreign missions, it must be noted that he engaged critically in theological reflections on the biblical texts on missions. Those who did not share his views confronted him on this issue, but his conviction and perseverance won the day. Today he is recognized as a very significant person, particularly in the study of Protestant missions. The high value that most historians place on William Carey's contribution is justified given the impact his contribution and legacy has made to Protestant missions globally. Many historians and missiologists have acclaimed him as a significant person in Protestant world missions.

The more recent missiologist Denton Lotz (2003), in the book, *Proceedings of the Summit on Baptist Mission in the 21st Century*, asserts that Carey, made a major contribution to missions. Because of this, the next century became the Great Century of Christian missions. Lotz (2003:1) further states that at the beginning of the 20th century, the modern missionary endeavour was propelled into cooperative action through the Edinburgh Missionary Conference in 1910. Hervey (1882: xiii) claims, "Before the day of Carey, no attempt was made to call general attention to the duty of Christians to herald universally the Great Salvation." The importance of William Carey in Missions is critical to the understanding of global missions in the Baptist denomination.

Carey did stand up against the social evils of the day such as Sati (widow burning) and child sacrifice. He encouraged the British government to pass laws against such practices which were considered sacred religious practices. On the other hand, Dharmaraj (1993:53) has challenged traditional thinking on Carey's work in India. He argued that Carey was not very sensitive to the local people's economic needs. It seemed that Carey was less willing to speak against the political and economic oppression in India.

What this chapter describes is mission from Europe and North America. The former occurred during the colonial era and as such, it was colonial mission. While there were many positive developments concerning European mission in developing countries, there were some concerns. Dharmaraj (1993:xix), in referring to European mission in India, describes colonial mission as primarily a cultural, political and missiological phenomenon. He contends that this mission 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 cites 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:

To a post colonial historian the indigo industry is painfully significant for additional reasons. The history of the indigo industry can be traced to the exploitation of the colonizers but also to the missionaries' association with the indigo planters. It laid the foundation for the monetary investment of the British people in India, and for the intertwining of colonial monetarism and missionary evangelism.

Dharmaraj (1993:53) also laments the poor wages that the workers received even under Carey. Carey believed that his work as manager of the indigo factories was providential and that it helped support his mission. The income generated from this work, enabled him to establish the Serampore Mission. While this was helpful to Carey's mission and family needs, Dharmaraj (1993: 53) asserts that the native workers who laboured long hours under him were paid anywhere from two and a half rupees a month which was extremely low. Carey (1836:187), in writing to a fellow missionary from England, named Fountain about the cost of living in India, stated that a single person would need at least sixty rupees a month to have his basic needs met. Conventional Baptist historiography hardly discusses the experience of the victims of colonialism. Dharmaraj (1993: 53) does praise the work of Carey, but states that his character shows a limited understanding of a less privileged but violently colonized people. He also cites Carey's lack of interest to speak on behalf of the economically victimized. Carey, like John Philip, a missionary in South Africa had good intentions but found themselves trapped in the ideology of imperialism (Villa-Vicencio 1988:44).

Notwithstanding the relationship between colonialism, economics, and mission on the mission fields, the study of Protestant mission provides insights into how the Christian faith was communicated on the mission fields and recorded in mission literature. In addition, one has to recognize the role William Carey played in global missions, particularly within the Baptist contribution to missions in Europe, American, Asia, and Africa. Carey, an Englishman, paved the way for global missions. The English also played a role in influencing the Americans in global missions.

2.2 America

The participation of America in Global missions came about largely because of an unsuccessful attempt by the English to convert the Telugus of India to the Christian faith. Sherring (1884:4) claims that as early as 1805, the General Baptists of England made a feeble attempt to establish a mission among the Telugus of India by sending out the Rev. Sutton. He took up a position in Orissa, India. Apparently, because of the lack of success, the undertaking was abandoned by the withdrawal of Rev. Sutton, their only missionary. It would appear that Rev. Sutton himself never lost confidence in the mission, in as much as thirty years afterwards, when in the United States, he urged the American Baptists to take up what the English Baptists had given up on. It is important to note that the British played an important role in influencing the Americans to engage in Baptist missions in India. He stated (Teloogoo Mission 1888: 19)

The population is immense; they are a noble race, the country always accessible, the government favourable, the language beautiful, expense moderate intercourse with the people unrestrained, and a beginning made. In my opinion you better consider well before you abandon your present ground, you will never recover if you do.

The American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society (ABFMS) did take up Sutton's call to work among the Telugus and sent a number of missionaries to India for this purpose. The ABFMS was a very significant force in India as far as the establishment of mission work and the development of the Telugu people as a Christian force is concerned. A very significant missionary, Adoniram Judson, played a pioneering role in this process.

2.2.1 Adoniram Judson

Adoniram Judson graduated from Brown University, USA in 1807. He later attended Andover Theological Seminary, USA and in February 1810, he resolved to devote his life to the cause of Foreign Missions (Hervey 1882:108). Adoniram Judson, at twenty five years of age, startled the American Baptists and challenged world mission by offering to be the one to go. 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.”* Judson’s call to Americans to world mission, particularly to Burma and India, fortunately was heeded. In 1835, this resulted in the establishment of mission stations in these countries. A mission station was established in India where the Christian faith continued to spread. This mission was called the American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society. The research will provide a brief sketch of this Society with reference to significant figures whose names are now recorded in the annals of American Baptist Church History. Their contributions and concerns for the Telugus in India will be included.

The role of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and the American Baptist Churches (ABC) in the USA are but two of the larger American Baptist organizations that contributed to global mission that impacted South Africa. In the next section, the research will discuss these two Baptist organizations. The main reason is that these two organizations have a relationship with the Baptist Association of South Africa. The research will provide a general overview of the SBC and the ABC and their participation in global missions.

2.2.2 Southern Baptist Convention, USA

The Southern Baptist Convention was formed in 1845. It had two main mission boards—the Foreign Mission Board and the Domestic Mission Board (now North American Mission Board). The Foreign Mission Board, in Richmond, VA., held its first commissioning service in 1846. It is reported that more than 15,000 missionaries were appointed, about one-third that number still serve today. After Southern Baptists assumed support for some missionaries in China, the denomination's missionary efforts grew gradually. The Civil War and the south's agrarian economy made support difficult, and, between 1861 and 1943, debt hampered the board. Considerable growth in the board's overseas work did not occur until after World War II.

Since its organization in 1845 in Augusta, Georgia, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) has grown to over 16 million members who worship in more than 42,000 churches in the United States. Southern Baptists support about 5,000 home missionaries serving the United States, Canada, Guam and the Caribbean, as well as sponsoring more than 5,000 foreign missionaries in 153 nations of the world (Southern Baptist Convention 2009).

Empowered by the support of the Cooperative Program founded in 1925, and by an enlarged worldview, Southern Baptists reached 1,000 missionaries in 1955. Under the 25-year leadership of Baker James Cauthen global expansion continued, reaching 3,000-plus missionaries in 94 countries by 1980.

In 1976, the SBC initiated the Bold Mission Thrust as an effort to evangelize the world by A.D. 2000. From 1981 to 1992, Keith Parks, an SBC officer, led its International Missionary Board (IMB) to adopt new, innovative strategies to reach restricted nations and peoples that have not heard the Christian faith. In 1961 other initiatives such as the Missionary Associate Program were introduced for those not qualified for career appointment. The Journeyman Program that was designed for young college graduates began in 1965 and later expanded into the International Service Corps. In addition, the number of IMB volunteers has increased, topping 30,000 in 2000.

In 2004, IMB workers and their Baptist partners overseas reported a record 607,132 baptisms and 99,495 overseas churches. Church membership overseas in 2004 was a record 7.4 million. In the early 1980s, the SBC sent a missionary couple Rev. and Mrs Dwight Reagan to South Africa. Their Convention assigned them to work among the Asian Indians of Kwa Zulu Natal (formerly known as Natal). Their work spanned some 20 years and included church planting, organizing of youth camps, seminars and workshops, and facilitating theological education. Although the Reagans were assigned to work with the Asian Indians in South Africa, their official point of reference was the Baptist Union of South Africa. BUSA was the only recognized Baptist organization in South Africa. Other Baptist organizations depended on the BUSA on matters pertaining to receiving of missionaries, application to the State for marriage license for their ministers as well as representing them internationally. Neither the BUSA nor the South African government fully recognized the BASA.

2.2.3 American Baptist Churches, USA

The second largest Baptist organization in the USA is the American Baptist Churches, USA. Its organization began in the United States in the 1600s and grew out of the Puritan-Reformist movement in England, although other congregations emerged from established British churches in the colonies. Roger Williams and John Clarke in Rhode Island founded the earliest Baptist churches in 1639 and 1645, respectively. These Baptists experienced persecution for not allowing infant baptism. The number of Baptist churches began to grow significantly after the American Revolution. In 1907, the Northern Baptist Convention was formally organized. It became known as the American Baptist Convention in 1950 and assumed its present name in 1972. Today it is called the American Baptist Churches, USA. The ABC, USA has as one of its subsidiary departments the International Ministries, which co-ordinates its mission activities globally (Faithstreams 2009).

The website of ABC, USA states, "The American Baptist Churches are healthy missional churches that nurture devoted disciples of Jesus Christ who live their lives in mission and ministry for the healing of the world through the love of God." This statement reflects the organization's strong emphasis on missions both locally and globally (American Baptist Church, USA: 2009).

In 2001, when the researcher was the president of the BASA, he discovered a part of the BASA history while attending an International Missions Conference in Wisconsin, USA in 2001 that was unclear and to a large extent lost. This was in connection with

the relationship between the BASA and the ABC. He learned that through the ABC's mission work in India, John Rangiah converted to the Christian faith and it was the same John Rangiah who responded to an invitation and came with his family to Kwa Zulu Natal, South Africa in 1903 to work amongst the Telugu speaking Indians as their missionary. After a meeting with American Missionaries of the ABC at Conference at Wisconsin, the researcher learned that they knew the church that John Rangiah attended in India and he felt it was important to establish a partnership between the BASA and the ABC. This was done because he wanted the ABC's role in the narrative of the BASA, though indirect, to be acknowledged and documented. The research will now discuss the role Asia played in Baptist missions.

2.3 Asia

The American Baptist Church played a very significant role in missions in Asia. On 19 January 1813, Adoniram Judson, after challenging his denomination to embark on global missions, announced his plan to go to Asia as a missionary. In 1835, mission stations in Burma and India were established. This mission was called the American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society (ABFMS). A brief sketch will follow of this Society with reference to significant figures whose names are now recorded in the annals of American Baptist Church History. Their contributions and concerns for the Telugus in India will also be included.

2.3.1 American Baptist Foreign Mission Society

Adoniram Judson and Luther Rice prompted the organization of a missionary society to engage in missions. This organization became known as the American Baptist Missionary Society. Baptists joined to enter a number of countries. Burma was entered because of the Society's immediate association with the Judsons. Other countries such as China, Hong Kong, and Japan became mission fields. India was also identified as a mission field. Both Judson and Rice encouraged missionary work in India. The missionary society that had a part in it clarified its purpose (Brackney 1983:170) as that of:

Carrying into effect the benevolent Intentions of our
Constituents, by organizing, a plan for eliciting, combining,
and directing the Energies of the whole Denomination in one
sacred effort, for sending the glad tidings of Salvation to the
Heathen, and to Nations destitute of pure gospel-light.

With this purpose statement, it became clear at that time that the American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society emphasized the spiritual need as being the primary focus. Although the meeting of social needs was accepted as an important responsibility of believers who were expected to show the love of Christ to others, the sharing of the gospel came first as the essence of the church's mission to the world. Although the spiritual need was emphasized, the work in the field in India reflected a very balanced approach to mission work. The Americans met the many social needs of the Telugu people. It is very easy to articulate the missionary purpose of the church but when one finds oneself in a context of poverty and hunger, one has to reflect very carefully on what it means to have a balanced approach to mission work. Many schools, hospitals, and dispensaries were established to take care of the social needs of the Telugu people in India. According to statistics in 1866

in Ongole, India, there were about 13,794 patients and the Society had a hospital in this village to cater to the physical needs of these Telugu people. On many occasions, Mission Boards in the home countries had very little clue about the realities on the mission field and sometimes were very narrow in their theology. Here the American Baptist Foreign Missionaries demonstrated their willingness to embrace the social needs of the Telugus without having as their goal the salvation of these people. Dana M. Albaugh (1962:127) puts it very succinctly by stating that we must also try to achieve a proper balance between our deepest faith and our ministry to human need. He goes on to say that it is not enough to proclaim a limited gospel and that the gospel must express itself in meeting human need and in building a new order of relationships.

India was open to the Gospel and the question was, “Who was going to take up that challenge of becoming a missionary to the Telugus of India where there were both spiritual as well as social needs?” In 1835, the American Baptists took up the challenge and commissioned missionaries to this mission field in India. Rev. and Mrs. Samuel Day responded to that challenge.

2.3.1.1 Rev. Samuel S. Day

In 1835 Rev. Samuel S. Day, his wife and eleven others sailed on the ship *Louvre* to this Telugu field in India. Day was born in Ontario, Canada, and attended the Hamilton Literary and Theological Seminary. In 1835, he was appointed missionary to the Telugus (Shenston 1888:12). In early February 1836, the Days arrived in India and then proceeded to Vizagapatam where they commenced with their study of the

Telugu language. The following year in 1837, this couple travelled about 120 miles visiting about 40 villages, of which one-half had probably never before seen a missionary or even a Christian. Rev. Day recognized the huge responsibility that was his in terms of the mission to the Telugu people. He repeatedly made requests to the American Baptist Convention for more workers for India. He writes (Jacob and Cornelius 1953:53), "...Now, my heart sinks, or swells with a kind of desperation, my hands grow weak, or are nerved for a moment as by despair. Where are the young brethren I left in Hamilton, pledged to the foreign field? Have the heathen no claim?"

His request was accepted, and on 9 March 1840, Rev. S. Husen and his wife arrived in India to assist the Days. Having received assistance from the Husens, the Days worked hard in the spreading of the Gospel among the Telugus. Several tours were made in the early part of 1839; Rev. Day in one day is recorded as distributing 3500 tracts and 500 portions of scripture. Both he and Husen attended two festivals that were celebrated by the Telugu people. Here too, they distributed tracts and portions of scripture. It is here in Nellore that mission work was established and regular reports of the work were submitted to the American Baptist Convention in the USA.

In 1846, Rev. Day took ill and returned to America. During this period, the mission in Nellore was left in the care of the Telugu leaders. Here it is important to mention the leadership the Telugus gave to the mission. It is reported (Shenston 1888:18) "The native assistants in the sole charge of the mission are reported as 'steadfast, faithful, and diligent.' On his return, he learned that the executive Committee of the American Baptist Convention was discussing the propriety of abandoning the mission. This was the second attempt by the Board to discontinue the mission among the Telugus

(The History of the Telugu Mission: 1893:45). Both of these attempts failed, and in 1848 a decision was made by the Board to send the Days back to Nellore. Mr and Mrs Jewett accompanied the Days to Nellore.

2.3.1.2 Layman Jewett

Mr and Mrs Jewett worked amongst the Telugus, travelling from village to village. The natives in their tours of the villages assisted them. It was a custom at the mission house where they resided that at the beginning of each New Year, an early morning prayer be held on the top of a hill overlooking Ongole, which later became their mission bungalow. This place of prayer became known as Prayer Meeting Hill. In the March 1936 issue of *The Watchman Examiner*, J.A. Curtis (1936: 322) wrote about the significance of this place of prayer. Later, in John Rangiah's mission in South Africa, he also identified a hill in Kearsney, the headquarters of the Indian Baptist work where he spent many hours praying. That hill became known as Gospel Hill.

Jewett later acquired a house and land for the mission in Ongole. In Ongole Jewett baptized the first convert to Christianity called Obulu. Obulu became and remained a faithful preacher until his death in 1880. Due to ill health, Jewett and his family had to leave the Telugu mission and returned to the United States.

In appraising the work among the Telugus, one cannot ignore the social forces that were at play. The Telugus learned the administrative skills, the strong emphasis on social and educational programs and the fervour and passion for mission and

evangelism. The other noteworthy influence was the movement of these people towards self-sufficiency. Perhaps the greatest stride that the Telugu people took was to establish their own Mission Society, which came to be known as the Telugu Home Missionary Society. This Society sent John Rangiah as its own missionary to South Africa.

Prior to Rangiah's arrival in South Africa, he received his education at schools established by the American Baptist Foreign Society in India. Those Telugus that came to South Africa on the indentured labour system that was offered by the British in South Africa also received their education at the same school. One of these men was Mr D. Benjamin, an educated Christian. The Americans stressed the development of the indigenous workers for evangelism and Christian service. It is important to note that the Americans had a goal to have an indigenous pastor for every church established as well as a teacher for every village, a strategy that John Rangiah employed in his work among the Telugus in Kwa Zulu Natal (NIBA News: 1953:15) Americans were also concerned about the economic and spiritual welfare of the Telugus. In 1867 when a famine hit India, the American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society's Rev. J.E. Clough entered into a contract with the authorities to cut a canal, which gave employment for six months to many thousands of Indians. He employed his Indian preachers to supervise these workers with the understanding that they would preach, talk, and read to them as often as circumstances would allow. As a result, many converted from Hinduism to Christianity. It is recorded that during the latter part of June 1878, Clough baptized thousands of Telugus, and this resulted in the growth of the Baptist Church in India.

According to statistics, the membership of the Ongole Church rose to 12804 (Wood, Lipphard and Doris 1930:167).

The origin of Baptist missions had its roots in Europe, where two Germans in 1706 went to India to engage in mission work. The British, through the contribution of William Carey, started the modern missionary movement in the 18th century influencing the Americans to take up the challenge to go to India to work among the Telugus. Through the formation of the Telugu Baptist Home Missions Society, the Telugus of India became a self-sufficient mission organization and sent a missionary family to Africa in 1903.

2.4 Africa

African history in the early 1960s, according to Gaily Harry (1970: v), was a minor adjunct to European studies. Africans were believed to have undergone a series of experiences which had never been recorded, and as a result their past could not be recovered. Whilst this is largely true when examining European studies on Africa, American studies on the continent do reflect the experiences of Africans, particularly in the slave trade era in the United States of America. In this section, the research begins with a general overview of Baptist missions in Africa and will proceed to set the context for the historical development of Baptist missions in Africa with special emphasis on the Baptist Association of South Africa in Kwa Zulu Natal.

According to Brain Stanley (1992: 106-122) British Baptist missions in Africa included countries such as Cameroon and Congo (1992: 439-439). On the other

hand, American Baptist Mission in Africa included Liberia (Gammell 1849: 244). The history of missions in Africa not only includes the contribution of Europeans but of a black clergyman, Lott Carey. He was an African American slave. In 1821, Carey was ordained in Virginia, USA and sent as a missionary to Liberia in Africa (Gammell 1849: 244-247).

Did the Europeans play a role in missions in South Africa? In South Africa, there are five Baptist organizations, namely the Baptist Association of South Africa (BASA), The Baptist Mission of South Africa (BMSA), The Afrikanse Baptiste Kerk (ABK), the Baptist Convention of South Africa (BCSA), and the Baptist Union of South Africa (BUSA). A brief historical overview of each of the organization follows.

2.4.1 The Baptist Union of South Africa (BUSA)

According to Hudson-Reed (1983:15), a handful of Baptists left Britain in 1820 to come to the Cape Colony. These settlers maintained close contact with their home churches and founded the first Baptist church in Grahamstown. The early pioneers of the BUSA churches were Mr. and Mrs. J. Temlett, Mr. John Miller and Mr. William Shepherd, Mr. And Mrs. Trotter and Mr. And Mrs. Prior. William Miller was elected and inducted as minister of the first Baptist church in Grahamstown. Their meeting place for worship was a hut built with wattle and daub. In 1823, according to Hudson-Reed (1983:15), a permanent building was erected in St Bartholomew Street, Grahamstown, and in October 1977, when the BUSA celebrated its Centenary, it was declared a National Monument.

A second influx of immigrants was to play a very important part in Baptist beginnings in South Africa. They came from Germany in 1857 and were essentially military in character. On 15 April 1861, the first Baptist church of German origin was formed at Frankfort. The work grew at an amazing rate because the German Baptists followed the motto “every Baptist a missionary”. New churches were formed throughout South Africa. On 11 July 1877, the Baptist Union of South Africa was formed. The BUSA carried on with missionary zeal. This was confirmed by John N Johnson (Hudson-Reed 1977:34), who recorded the words of Rev. R. Matterson on 1 June 1887, at the at the BUSA Assembly. Matterson read an address on behalf of the Dutch Reformed, Congregational, Presbyterian and Wesleyan Methodists in which he stated (1977:34)

From the beginning it has also been in the forefront of missionary enterprise. You have the honour to belong to the Church of William Carey and Andrew Fuller, and a noble succession of Christian men and women of like large-heartedness, who have won signal triumphs for the Cross of Christ in other lands.

The role of William Carey, the Baptist from England is recognized by the three major denominations in South Africa as an important person in missions. It was through the influence of William Carey that South African White Baptists began to show interest in missions.

In 1892, the South African Baptist Missionary Society (SABMS) was formed. The purpose of this organisation was to get missionaries from England to witness to the “natives”. Many Blacks were converted. Between 1898 and 1918, Black members of the BUSA grew from 172 to 4185. Ministry also spread to the Coloured and Indian people. Many of the missionaries who came to work among the Blacks, Coloureds,

and Indians were from England and Germany. The BUSA sent missionaries to many parts of the world, including Malawi, Algeria, Botswana, Mauritius and other African countries. The first Indian Baptist to be sent as a missionary to a foreign country was Rev. Edward Moses and his so-called coloured wife, Mrs. Vivian Moses.

2.4.2 The Baptist Convention of South Africa (BCSA)

William Mashologu, a Black spiritual leader, started black Baptist churches wherever he opened Black schools. The National Black American Baptists aided him. Later, German missionaries and British settlers also started missionary work among blacks. However, their mission enterprise and the colonization policy were complementary to each other. The missionaries' job was to evangelise the 'natives' but also to make them subservient to the British crown. Missionaries became promoters of racial segregation as they felt that separate churches for settlers and Africans was necessary.

The Baptist Union, which was the only recognized Baptist Body in the country at that time, remained passive when the state, in 1957, proposed an additional clause to the Apartheid laws barring Blacks from attending churches in the so-called white areas. Even the policy of the Missionary Society (formed in 1892) was racist as whites dominated the mission field and church work. However, in the 1960s, the motto of this society was "Evangelization of the Bantu by the Bantu". Bantu Pastors were employed to evangelize Bantu communities. The Baptist Union appointed White missionaries to oversee the Bantu Pastors. Black churches rejected this policy because of the dominating attitude of many white missionaries. In 1987, the majority

of Blacks in the Baptist Union broke away from the BUSA and formed the BCSA (Hoffmeister and Gurney 1990:34).

2.4.3 The Afrikanse Baptiste Kerk (ABK)

The South African Afrikaans speaking Christians are important members of the Christian community. Their faith, history, tradition, and culture are well documented in South African church history. Among this population group are Baptists whose presence can be traced to the 1800s. Hudson-Reed (1983:207-232), in his book *By Taking Heed*, records that the ABK had its roots in the 1800s. Jacobus Daniel Odendaal, who was baptized by a German minister in 1867, played a significant role in the formation of the Afrikanse Baptiste Kerk. In the early days, before the formation of the ABK, a previous body called the Afrikanse Baptiste Vereeniging did not last long. (Reed further records that the Afrikanse Baptiste Vereeniging was short-lived.) Today the ABK is still in existence and has churches throughout South Africa.

2.4.4 The Baptist Mission of South Africa (BMSA)

The Baptist Mission of South Africa has a history similar to the Baptist Association of South Africa. Unfortunately, in 1914, BASA and BMSA suffered a schism, though the organizations have enjoyed a cordial relationship with each other since then. A significant leader of the BMSA is Rev. V.C. Jacob, who arrived from India in 1911 and worked as a missionary among the Indians of Kwa Zulu Natal (Brain 1983:156). The BMSA sent its first missionary, the Rev. Patrick John, to a foreign country,

Mozambique in the 1990s. He died in 2004 from malaria while still on the mission field.

2.4.5 The Baptist Association of South Africa (BASA)

Chapter 3 will examine the BASA and its participation in missions. In 1994, Revs T Rhandram and Rodney Ragwan co-led a mission trip to Swaziland. Later, other short-term trips were undertaken to Mozambique, Malawi and India. In 2001, a historic development took place; BASA sent its first missionary family, the Reverends Reggie and Evelyn Maistry and their two young sons, Andrew and Philip, to Malawi (Ragwan 2004:7).

Noah Moses Israel, the grandson-in-law of the pioneer missionary to South Africa, in a presentation to the 2004 Baptist World Alliance in Seoul, Korea, sketched the history of the Baptist Association of South Africa, beginning with North America where a missionary and his wife travelled to Asia and in particular to India. The Telugus received the Christian faith and sent an indigenous Christian missionary and his family to South Africa in 1903. Noah's presentation, however, does fall short because it excludes England's role in this historical narrative. To be more accurate historically, the history of BASA begins in England in the 17th century with William Carey. Therefore, the genesis of Indian Baptist Missions is in Europe. America joined this missionary enterprise, which influenced Asia, and finally Africa received a missionary family. Of importance in this historical study is the fact that Africa receives a missionary family from India resulting in the birth of the Baptist Association of South Africa. Later in this chapter, the research will examine

significant persons as well as the various Baptist mission organizations in these continents, which contributed to the spread of the Christian faith globally.

Unfortunately, unlike Lott Carey, who received some recognition for his contribution to Africa and (scholarly literature will testify to this) as a missionary, John Rangiah, the missionary to South Africa, is not adequately recognized in the history of missions in South Africa. Du Plessis (1911:1-494), in recording Christian missions in South Africa, states that South Africa received many missionaries from England, Germany, France, Holland, Scotland, Norway, Portugal and the Netherlands, but he failed to mention this important person, John Rangiah, who came as a missionary to the Indians in South Africa.

Since there is an omission by Du Plessis of Rangiah's arrival in South Africa in 1903 to do mission work among the indentured labourers, it renders the history of missions in South Africa incomplete as it excludes an important segment of the South African population. This pattern of the history of the Indian Baptists receiving inadequate recognition in scholarly literature has persisted since the formation of the Baptist Association of South Africa in 1914 up to the present. The researcher himself, while studying Missions at a Baptist College, observed in the syllabus how minimal recognition was given to the Indian Baptist history in South Africa. The study that is noteworthy within the scholarly literature is J. B. Brain's book *Christian Indians in Natal, 1860-1911* (1983: xv) in which she provides a historiography of South African Indians.

Brain's historiography (1993: xv) provides very insightful information on the Indians who emigrated from India to South Africa. According to her there were over 150,000 people who arrived from India in South Africa at various periods between 1860 and 1911. She cites the reasons for their immigration to South Africa, particularly to the province of Natal, now called Kwa Zulu Natal as periodic famine; poverty; high taxation; poor seasons; plant diseases and borer beetle infestation affecting the coffee plantations of South and Central India; the famines of 1877-8, 1896-7, and 1899-1900; the decline in the rupee and rising prices.

Brain (1983: xvi) also highlights a sociological phenomenon, the caste system. She describes the caste system as fostering "an attitude of reverence to members of the higher castes, of friendliness to those of equal status, and of antipathy to those of lower degree". Those who emigrated to Natal were people from every caste, from Brahmins, of whom only a small number migrated, to pariahs or dalits and all castes in between. Brain also recorded important statistics of the Christian immigrants to South Africa. She lists the year of arrival, ship name, date of arrival, entry number name of immigrant and their father, age, sex, place of origin, denomination and their status after they arrived. She also states that there were some who boarded these ships bound for South Africa who were not indentured labourers. The Rangiah family was among those passengers who boarded a ship in 1902 and arrived in South Africa in 1903 (Brain 1983:154).

The pioneer of the Indian Baptist work is Rev. John Rangiah. He established the first Indian Baptist Church in 1903 on the African continent. In 1910, Rangiah travelled to Edinburgh in Scotland to attend a missionary conference. His interest

was not confined to South Africa; he had a global outlook. A more in depth historical narrative of the Baptist Association of South Africa, which was founded by Rev. John Rangiah, together with his ministry and legacy, will be discussed in chapter three.

The key research question of why are South African Indian Baptists important will be answered in chapter two. The study traced the Baptist missionary enterprise, which had its genesis in Europe and its development in North America, India and South Africa, is very significant. It also provided a brief overview of Christian mission as well as an examination of the role of important persons and organizations in the Baptist missionary enterprise. The research then discussed the contribution of continents such as Europe, America, Asia, and Africa in global missions. It highlighted important individuals such as William Carey, Adoniram Judson, Samuel Day, and the various mission organizations. Finally, it provided a historical overview of five South African Baptist organizations.

In summarising the history of Baptists, their genesis being in Europe, but going on to include countries such as the US, India and South Africa, the following findings were observed. First, this history features the contributions mainly of Caucasian and western persons and the organizations they represent. The roles of India and South Africa are not mentioned as participants in this history. Secondly, even the research on Baptist history has focused mainly on two continents, Europe and America, and their participation in global missions. Thirdly, although these were historical developments in the study of Baptist global mission, there has not been a study that has chronicled this mission narrative involving Europe, America, Asia, and Africa. Finally, and more importantly, this missionary narrative has not included the

historical connection between South Africa and India, which eventually resulted in the formation of the Baptist Association of South Africa. It is the researcher's contention that Baptist mission history is exclusive. Specifically, the roles of India and South Africa, two developing countries, have been excluded. Furthermore, the roles of people of colour have been excluded. This creates an impression that mission is the responsibility of Europeans and Americans and that poorer countries are not important in the missionary enterprise. Given the historical fact that the first Indian Baptist Church in South Africa and in Africa was due to the participation of Indian Baptists from two countries, India and South Africa, it is important to highlight this key development. Finally, it is important to show how Christians who were people of Indian descent from India but living in South Africa cooperated in global missions to form the Baptist Association of South Africa. The next chapter will examine the narrative of the early beginnings of Indian Baptist churches in South Africa.

Chapter 3

The Beginnings and Development of Indian Baptist Work in South Africa

The previous chapter traced the origins and development of Baptist missions globally. It provided a brief overview of Christian mission and examined the role of important persons and organizations in the Baptist global missionary enterprise. It highlighted important individuals and the various mission organizations. Finally, it provided a historical overview of five South African Baptist organizations, namely, The Baptist Association of South Africa, The Baptist Mission of South Africa, the Baptist Convention of South Africa, the Afrikanse Baptiste Kerk and the Baptist Union of South Africa. Chapter 3 has three sections. Section A will discuss more specifically the history of the Baptist Association of South Africa, including its beginnings. John Rangiah, the son of a Hindu priest named T. Rangiah who converted to Christianity, became the pioneer missionary of the Indian Baptist work in South Africa. It will also take into account the historical events in the United States of America and how these events influenced the formation of the Baptist Association of South Africa. In section B I will provide a description of Rangiah's understanding of the Bible and Bible themes; provide the basic elements which influenced this church in South Africa; and will also provide insight with regards to socio-political questions. Additionally, the study will analyze the impact of the Bible and Biblical themes on his theology and on the Indian Baptist Church in South Africa. Section C will study the contributions of women and other Indian Baptists. In this chapter the study will attempt to answer two key research questions: What was the significance of the work of the three Indian born missionaries to the Baptist Association of South Africa and what were the roles women play in this organization?

Section A

The history of the Baptist Association of South Africa, as stated earlier in this study, was not fully chronicled due to the dominance of the history by white Baptists, which overshadowed the history of people of colour. Additionally, the little space that was accorded to Indian Baptists in significant academic narratives was largely written and interpreted by non-Indians. This chapter specifically will provide an “inside” recording and interpretation of this narrative. This chapter will answer the key research question, Why is the history of the BASA important to the history of Christian missions in South Africa? It will show that this narrative stands on its own and is not viewed from the perspective of the Baptist Union of South Africa. Moroka Humphrey Mogashoa, in his doctoral dissertation, *Baptist Finance Matters*, also contends that most Baptist historians rely heavily on Hudson Reed’s recording of Baptist history in South Africa. This research, however, begins with the early days of the Baptist Association of South Africa, which contain significant and expanded data omitted from Hudson-Reed’s works.

The formation of the Baptist Association of South Africa Church was preceded by a very crucial board meeting of the Missionary Union in New York in 1853. At this meeting the mission work among the Telugus was discussed. A brief account of this is included in this chapter. Chapter 3 will also provide a description of Rangiah’s understanding of the Bible and Bible themes that shaped and informed his ministry in South Africa. The significance of this focus will reveal the basic elements that influenced this church in South Africa and will also provide insight with regard to cultural and socio-political questions. On this level, the study will analyze the impact

of the Bible and Biblical themes on Rangiah's work and on the Baptist Association of South Africa in South Africa. The contributions of other members of the Baptist Association of South Africa, including women, will be studied as well. The meeting of the Missionary Union in New York provides a context for the early beginnings of the Baptist Association of South Africa Church in South Africa.

3.1 Missionary Union, 1853

Little did anyone realize the significance that the historical development of the mission work in India would have on mission in South Africa. The year 1853 was a critical period in the history of the Telugu mission in India. After seventeen years of American Baptist mission work among the Telugus in India, its viability came under review at a Missionary Union meeting in Albany, New York. The reports from missionaries in India were not very positive. However, the Missionary Union learned that the mission field had much potential, the missionaries had acquired the language, and there were a few converts as a result of the witness of these missionaries. On the other hand, the progress made was very small and this work could be handed over to other mission agencies (Downie 1928:46).

This possible closure of the Telugu mission in India was referred to a board; a proposition was made that a letter be written to Dr. Jewett, the American Baptist missionary in India, requesting that he close the mission and relocate to another mission in Burma. There was reluctance from the secretary to write this letter to Dr. Jewett, and eventually he refused to do so. Later that day, when the Telugu Mission was discussed by the board, one of the speakers, in the course of his address,

turned to the mission map which hung on the wall, pointing to Nellore, the location where the Telugu Mission was established. The speaker called it the “Lone Star,” as this was just one lonely mission in India.

The Rev. S.F. Smith, author of the *National Hymn*, was present at this meeting, and before going to bed that night he wrote, as recorded by David Downie (1928:47), the following lines:

The Lone Star

Shine on, “Lone Star!” Thy radiance bright
Shall spread o’er all the eastern sky;
More breaks apace from gloom and night;
Shine on, and bless the pilgrim’s eye.

Shine on, “Lone Star!” I would not dim
The light that gleams with dubious ray;
The lonely star of Bethlehem
Led on a bright and glorious day.

Shine on, “Lone Star!” in grief and tears,
And sad reverse oft baptized;
Shine on amid thy sister spheres;
Lone stars in heaven are not despised.

Shine on, “Lone Star!” Who lifts his hands
To dash to earth so bright a gem,
A new “lost plead” from the band
That sparkles in night’s diadem?

Shine on, “Lone Star!” The day draws near
When none shall shine more fair than thou;
Thou, born and nursed in doubt and fear
Wilt glitter on Immanuel’s brow.

Shine on, “Lone Star!” till earth redeemed,
In dust shall bid its idols fall;
And thousands, where thy radiance beamed
Shall “crown the Saviour, Lord of all.”

The following day this poem was read at the board meeting. Many wept and sobbed

during the reading, and whatever doubt the board had about the viability of the Telugu mission in India vanished. The board unanimously voted to reinforce the mission. Little did the board realize that this mission among the Telugus would someday have global implications for mission. The Baptist Association of South Africa churches in South Africa are indebted to the Dr. S. F. Smith for his contribution to the history of the Telugu Mission in India. The poem cited above is an important part of the history of the Baptist Association of South Africa (Downie 1928:47).

The work among the Telugus by the American Baptist missionaries grew. One of the most significant developments of their work was the initiative of the Telugus in establishing their own missionary organization called the Telugu Home Missionary Society. In 1897 this indigenous mission agency was established, 44 years after the Telugu mission was almost closed by the American Mission Union (Rangiah 1905:1). Their vision included the sending of their own indigenous missionary to another country. Rangiah (1905:1) described the economic status of these Telugu-speaking Christians as being extremely poor. Many of them earning only a few pence a day decided in faith to participate in a global mission enterprise by sending one of their own to the then Natal province as a missionary. The NIBA News (1953:9) reported, *“The Lone Star Church at Nellore was the happiest of them all, it was sending one of its cherished sons as the first Indian Baptist Missionary to a distant field.”* It was this same church that the American Missionary Union board almost closed in 1853. Almost 49 years later the significance of the decision to allow the church in Nellore, India bore fruit. Another continent was impacted as a result of that decision.

It is against this background that the Telugu Home Missionary Society sent a

missionary family to Natal, South Africa to provide spiritual services to the indentured Baptist labourers. During the year 1900, hundreds of Indian indentured labourers came to South Africa; among them were about 150 Baptist Christians from Madras, India. These labourers came in response to the British authorities in Natal for Indians from India to enter into contract to provide labour to the sugar and tea estate industries. According to the *Natal Mercury*, dated 22 November 1860, among this group were mechanics, household servants, domestics, gardeners and trades people. There were also bankers, carpenters and accountants amongst them. Many of the labourers were dispatched to the tea estates of Kearsney on the North Coast of Natal. Kearsney became a significant place where Telugus established themselves under the leadership of John Rangiah.

The history of the Telugu Baptist Church in South Africa, with its founder John Rangiah, includes its early beginnings and its relationship with the American Baptist Church Foreign Mission Society in India. John Rangiah corresponded with the Society, providing it with progress of the work in South Africa among the Telugus, sharing the needs of its ministry as well as expressing thanks for the prayer support given by the Society to this mission.

3.2 Telugu Baptists request assistance for a Baptist minister from India

The owners of the tea estates, the Huletts, sought the assistance of the Wesleyan missionaries for the spiritual needs of their indentured labourers. These labourers spoke very little English. Soon, language and denominational problems emerged and the Telugus found it challenging relating to these Wesleyan missionaries. The

Baptist Indians expressed the desire to have a Telugu Baptist Minister. In the meantime, the Telugu Church in South India planned on sending out missionaries of its own. One of the countries on their list was South Africa.

Here, it is worth reflecting on the great stride the indigenous Indians made in sending a missionary to South Africa. Both the sending Mission Society as well as the respondent to the missionary call must be commended. Given the economic status of these indigenous Christians and the uncertainty of life in Africa at that time, the Telugu people committed themselves to world mission. In 1903, Rev. John Rangiah and his family accepted the invitation to go to South Africa to work among the Telugu Indians (The NIBA News 1953: 10).

3.2.1 Rev. John Rangiah

Finette Jewett (1898:49) wrote about John Rangiah's father's eagerness to receive education. John's father, T. Rangiah, would consistently arrive at the American Baptist School in Nellore requesting the opportunity to learn. The Lymans, who were American Baptist missionaries in India, granted this request and recognized that T. Rangiah was a very diligent student. Consequently he was employed as a student tutor to others at the school. During his association with the American Baptist missionaries in Nellore, T. Rangiah converted to Christianity and later became the pastor of the Madras Baptist Church. T. Rangiah had four sons, one of whom was John Rangiah, and all of them were ministers.

There are no records of who was responsible for John Rangiah's conversion. American Baptists were probably instrumental in his conversion. However, Rangiah (1905:1) states that in the then Madras Presidency the Christians owed their conversion to the work of the American and Canadian missions. It seems that John spent much of his boyhood around American Baptist missionaries. As a young man he took an active part in Christian ministry. He served as a Sunday School teacher, Sunday School superintendent, Lay preacher, evangelist, treasurer and deacon. Rangiah also served as headmaster of the Nellore Boy's School from 1897-1900 and of the Nellore Girl's School from 1901-1903. On 20th April 1903, he was ordained as a minister of the Lone Star Baptist Church (NIBA 1953:10).

Mrs. Lyman Jewett (1913: 1-6)) wrote an article in a journal entitled *John Rangiah, The First Telugu Foreign Missionary* in which she records the life of Rangiah while in India and his work in South Africa. She provides a background of Rangiah's parents and their conversion to Christianity. Lyman describes Rangiah's commitment to the Christian faith and more specifically to his personal life. She wrote (1913: 4) about Rangiah's prayer request which he shared at his ordination service. He requested that the audience pray that he would not be proud, as he was the first foreign missionary and so many kind words were spoken of him. Layman further refers to the positive comments of two important leaders about Rangiah's work in South Africa. One is of David Downie and the other is a response from Dr. McLaurin, a professor at the Ramapatam Seminary in India. Dr. McLaurin shared the good work of Rangiah's ministry in South Africa, stating that it "*has given a mighty impetus to the revival spirit in the seminary at Ramapatnam, and we shall extend it, if possible, into every church.*"

When the request for a missionary was received from South Africa, Rev. John Rangiah, after much prayer, accepted this invitation to be the first missionary of the Telugu Baptist Home Mission Society.

The NIBA News (1953:9) describes Rangiah's vision that confirmed his missionary call to Natal, South Africa. On 24 January 1903, he had a vision where he saw two angels who comforted him with the words, "*We have been praying to the Lord for the past few years ... that He may send a Telugu preacher and today He has provided one for us.*" The angels then handed him Bibles. Rangiah describes this experience as "glorious." He was greatly encouraged by this experience.

In examining Rangiah's vision, the questions are, "What was the significance of this vision?" and "Are they vehicles through which God may reveal His will?" Diane S. Dew (1997) writing on *Visions and Dreams* provides insights into dreams and visions. She states that it must be recognized that God has spoken and revealed Himself to humans through dreams and visions. She refers to Numbers 12:6 and Jeremiah 23:28. These two texts support her view of God's revelation to man through dreams and visions. Additionally, she contends that the authenticity and source of a dream or vision may be determined when one recognizes who it is that receives the glory for it. Here, too, she supports her view with scriptural texts in Deuteronomy 13:1-5 and Daniel 2:19-23. She clearly refers to Daniel giving praise to God. Finally, she states that there are specific purposes for visions. According to her, visions are also for assurance, encouragement, and comfort. She cites Genesis 15:1; 28:12-17; 46:2 and Acts 18:9-11. Dew also states that visions give direction, instruction, and guidance. According to Dew the following Biblical texts are referred

to with regards to the purposes of a vision: Genesis 46:2, Job 33:15-18, Matthew 1:20, 24; 2:12, 13, 19 and Acts 9:10-12. There are other reasons for visions, which she discusses but for the purpose of this study, they are not relevant (Dew 1997:1).

Rangiah's vision does reflect Dew's understanding of this phenomenon. After the vision he praised God. The NIBA News (1953:9) recorded his response, "Praise be to the Lord." He also felt encouraged and was assured of the direction he needed to take with regards to his ministry. This clear direction that was communicated to him in a vision gave him the encouragement to undertake this mission to South Africa. Rangiah, his wife, Kanakamma and two children, Manoharam and Premaleelah, left India for South Africa.

Rev. Rangiah described this journey by ship to South Africa.

"I, with my wife and two children, left Nellore on the 9th May 1903, and on 11th took passage by the steamer 'Safari'. After just a month, i.e. on the 11 of June, we arrived at Port Natal and found shelter at the mission house of the South African General Mission" (Rangiah 1905:1).

Rev. Rangiah (1905:1) continued by relating one of his earliest experiences upon arrival in South Africa. He was requested to visit a prisoner at a prison in Durban where the prisoner was waiting to be hanged. Rev. Rangiah spent an entire month visiting this condemned man. Rangiah presented the Christian faith to him. It is recorded (Rangiah 1905:1) that moments before his hanging the prisoner remarked: "I go to the refuge at the feet of the Saviour, Jesus Christ."

Rev. Tomlinson, a white minister of the South African General Mission (SAGM) took Rangiah to Phoenix, Durban, Duffs Road, and Verulam, where he ministered to Indians. The SAGM attempted to persuade Rangiah to work with this mission

organization. However, Rangiah felt that his obligation was to the Telugus from Kearsney. He discussed with Mr. Walton of the SAGM his decision to go to Kearsney as well as his vision of starting the Telugu Baptist Mission. A short while later, Rangiah felt the need to go to the people of Kearsney, firstly because it was at their request that he was sent to South Africa, and secondly to advance his vision of the Telugu Baptist Mission. The SAGM suggested to Rangiah that the Telugu Baptist Mission be brought under the control of the SAGM. The SAGM promised to supplement his salary. After prayerful consideration Rangiah wrote to the SAGM and informed them that he could not join the SAGM. He cited two reasons. First, the Telugu Baptist Home Mission Society of India had sent him to Natal and had not given permission to join with the SAGM; neither was it in their interest to hand over the work to this organization. Second, for the little extra financial assistance and other material benefits, Rangiah would not like to be instrumental in dampening the enthusiasm and interest so far shown by the Home Mission Society in the Natal work. Rangiah was committed to the Telugu work in Natal and set out to Kearsney to begin his mission.

At Kearsney, the Huletts, owners of the Kearsney Tea Estate, received the Rangiahs warmly. Sir Liege Hulett was greatly touched by the humility of the Rangiahs and their devotion to God. He gave them a large house on his property. The generosity of the Huletts moved Rangiah, who expressed great thanks to God, saying, "He raiseth up the poor of the dust and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill" (Psalm 113:7). Mr. D. Benjamin, a Telugu Christian leader, met the Rangiahs as they made their transition from Phoenix, Durban to Kearsney on the Natal North Coast. Benjamin, too, extended hospitality to the Rangiahs and helped them acclimatize to

the new and different conditions in Kearsney.

The first Indian Telugu Baptist Church was formed on 27th December 1903 at Kearsney. Rangiah wrote to the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society about this historical development: “December 27th was a memorable day in South Africa, for on that Sunday we formed the first Telugu Baptist Church in this land. Sixty four Telugu Baptist Christians, including myself and my wife, formed the church” (1905:1-3).

Rangiah submitted reports to the American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society about his work in South Africa. He wrote about the approach he employed in his work among the Telugus. He also wrote about the missionary tours he undertook as he set about his mission work. These tours were typical of those made by the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society. Rev. Samuel Day as well as Rev. Jewett, American Baptist Missionaries in India, made similar tours of the villages where they accessed the needs and opportunities for evangelism.

3.2.1.1 Reports and Correspondence of John Rangiah

John Rangiah submitted annual reports of his work among the Telugus in South Africa to the American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society. Three reports sent by him to the ABFMS reflected the extent of his work in South Africa. His communication to an American missionary and a letter to an internal mission magazine also provide insight into his work and understanding of mission.

3.2.1.2 Report of indigenous mission work

Rev. Rangiah in his first and second annual reports on the Telugu Baptist Mission in Natal, South Africa, described his visits to Phoenix, which is an Indian township near Durban (1905:4). He had gone in search of Baptist Christians. He further reported on his visits to areas like Stanger on the Natal North Coast and then to Kearsney. Kearsney became the headquarters of the Indian Telugu work in South Africa. According to Rangiah, he settled in Kearsney on the 9th October 1903. Rangiah praised the landlords, Sir Liege and Lady Hulett, for their hospitality in providing them with a large house. He reported: "This liberal minded and benevolent gentleman takes a genuine and enthusiastic interest in enterprises pertaining to the Kingdom of Christ." Rangiah received rations as well as medicine for himself and his family.

As previously mentioned, the highlight of his reporting was the establishment of the first Baptist Telugu Church in South Africa. According to Rangiah, 64 members were part of this church that was established in Kearsney, South Africa. Rangiah provides further details of developments in his ministry at Kearsney. The first harvest they reaped was 6 new believers, who were baptized in the Umvoti River on the 14th of February, 1904. Rangiah gave a new name to this river. It was referred to as the Gundlacumma of Natal, with earnest hopes and prayers for the further progress of the Kingdom (The Gundlacumma is a river in South India, where 2, 222 people, mainly Telugus, were baptized in one day).

Rangiah, a fellow Telugu who was familiar with the culture of the indentured labourers, began an Indian church with Indian leadership. There are two main Protestant strategies proposed for the creation of indigenous churches as understood as churches suited to local culture and led by local Christians. The first is indigenization where foreign missionaries create well-organized churches and then hand them over to local converts. The foreign mission is generally seen as a scaffolding which must be removed once the fellowship of believers is functioning properly. Missionaries provide teaching, pastoral care, sacraments, buildings, finance and authority, and train local converts to take over these responsibilities. Thus the church becomes indigenous. It becomes self-supporting, self-propagating and self-governing. The second is indigeneity where foreign missionaries do not create churches, but simply help local converts develop their own spiritual gifts and leadership abilities and gradually develop their own churches. Missionaries provide teaching and pastoral care alone. The church is thus indigenous from the start. It has always been self-supporting, self-propagating and self-governing. Rangiah certainly created an indigenous church based on the indigenization strategy and set out to use local leadership for the churches he started. They also became self-supporting, self-propagating, and to a certain extent self-governing.

3.2.1.3 Report of Growth and Expansion

John Rangiah reported to the Foreign Missionary Society on his work on the mission field in South Africa. He began by revealing that the year under review, 1906, was successful but not without troubles, struggles and hardships, both within and outside of the church. These challenges included travelling to the various areas by

horseback and raising funds for the support of Christian leaders. However, due to his strong faith in God and with a resolute spirit, he remarked that the gracious spirit of the Lord followed him closely, and he overcame every challenge.

Rangiah (1905:3) wrote about his deep longing for revival amongst the Telugus. This desire is reflected in this report. It was no wonder that he recognized the obstacles to these revivals and confronted them through the preaching of the Bible. He reported (1905:3) that inside the church there were “secret sins being fondled.” According to him, the leading members of the church were involved in sinful activities. There was also the issue of self-support for the other Christian workers. This impeded the spread of the gospel, wrote Rangiah, as members were being disillusioned. To add to these challenges, there were Zulu uprisings, which caused alarm and slowed their movements for months. In view of all that was happening with the work amongst the Telugus, Rangiah was convinced that what was required of them was a full surrender to the Lord and His will.

As a result of their strong emphasis on prayer, revival broke out. Rangiah reported that 12 August 1906 was a day of inexpressible blessing. A sermon was preached from Galatians 6:6-8. Prayer meetings followed at the home of one of the members, where people began weeping. Many cried aloud and confessions of sins followed. According to Rangiah these prayer meetings carried on for more than four months. The churches that were established by Rangiah all began to experience similar revivals. A hill in Kearsney, the headquarters of the Telugu Baptist Mission, became a place of prayer as well. Many wanted to identify with Jesus when he went away from the crowd to be alone in prayer.

Rangiah reported on the five churches he established in Natal, South Africa. They were Kearsney, Verulam, Darnall, Durban and Stanger. He provided important information on each of these churches:

Kearsney – The first Sunday service was held on 11th October 1903. Rev. Rangiah preached from Zachariah 8:13. Mrs. Rangiah worked together with her husband. She provided leadership to the women of Kearsney, visited them regularly and prayed for them. She also provided care for the many who were sick. Mrs. Rangiah held special services where she taught women new songs. She was head of the Sunday School ministry at Kearsney.

Rangiah described a very significant meeting during which members discussed the ministry at Kearsney. Rev. D. Benjamin, Mr. Preyanadham and Rev. and Mrs. Rangiah met to pray about the possibility of starting a church in Kearsney. The church at Kearsney was organized on 27th December 1903; it was the first church of the Baptist Association of South Africa. Mr. D. Benjamin and K. Isaac were elected as deacons of this historic church. Later Rangiah baptized 12 and ended up with a membership of 75. He composed hymns and choruses which he taught to the congregation. These songs gained popularity among the members of this church. Regular Sunday services, women's prayer and prayer meetings were held. Once a month thanksgiving services were held, and during these services new hymns and choruses were sung. A great sense of community characterized these services. Rev. Rangiah also held Bible studies during the summer vacation. Rev. D. Benjamin rendered great assistance to this church, especially in the absence of John Rangiah.

The church at Darnall was organized on 22nd May, 1904. The membership at Darnall was 32, and it was reported that 4 people were baptized. According to Rangiah this church was experiencing many challenges, details of which he does not mention. However, Rangiah wrote that Mr. K. Daniels worked hard at this church.

The church in Stanger was organized in June, 1904. There were 6 baptisms with a membership of 30 which included those who were baptized. Despite the challenge of having their house church removed by non-Christians, wrote Rangiah, this church was able to relocate their church to another area. Their members contributed financially and physically to the rebuilding of a house church. This building, which had a chapel, cost them 6 pounds which would be equivalent to about R350 today.

The church in Durban was organized on 25 December, 1904. There were no baptisms during that year. Their membership stood at 15. Rangiah reported that the school that was established in Durban flourished. However, he was concerned about members relocating to other areas and attending other churches. Here too, Rangiah expressed the need for revival in this church. He was not only concerned about the work in South Africa but globally as well. Evidence of this is found in his letter to an international Baptist magazine.

3.2.1.4 Rangiah's letter to the editor of the *American Baptist International Magazine*

Rangiah evidenced a concern for Indian mission in other parts of the world such as the United States of America. He wrote to the editor of the *American Baptist*

International Magazine (American Baptist Convention: 1911) about the need for missionaries to work with the Indian immigrants in San Francisco. He challenged Americans to consider learning the language of the Hindu immigrants so as to serve their spiritual needs.

In concluding his report, Rangiah reflected on the work completed and the work still to be done. It might cause one to pause and reflect personally on this man's love and passion for the work amongst the Telugus. He recognized that the work he started was sustained by God and keenly supported by his wife. He mentioned that both of them walked many miles visiting the Telugus in spreading the Gospel. In his report Rangiah showed a deep concern for the spiritual needs of the people and expressed the need for revival. Yet in the accomplishments achieved by him in such a short space of time, he merely pointed to the future and the task that was before him. He wrote that his most important work was to take care of the Christians and churches already formed. Secondly it was to preach the Christian Gospel to those who had not yet received it.

Rangiah's letter to the editor provides insight into his knowledge of developments in global Baptist mission work. He certainly was keeping abreast of these developments by reading. Paul Borthwick (1987:67) contends that an important building block for world mission is reading.

3.2.1.5 Rangiah's personal letter to David Downie

During Rangiah's work in South Africa, he made several invitations to the American

Foreign Mission Society's Rev. David Downie and his wife to visit the Telugu Mission in South Africa. In the archives of the American Baptist Historical Society, a handwritten letter of John Rangiah to Rev. David Downie was located. Downie, an American Baptist missionary, played an important role in Rangiah's life while in Nellore, India. Rangiah wrote to him about his work in Natal. This letter contained some important aspects of the context of his work in which he wrote about the human and financial resources as well as ministry needs.

Rangiah wrote about the status of the indentured labourers. He wrote that at the end of their contract, the majority of them "re-indentured" themselves while a few returned to India. He described the returning indentured labourers as common, uneducated and shy. Rangiah advised Downie, who was in India during this period, to make contact with the returning immigrants and inquire of them of the mission work in Natal. According to Rangiah the uneducated and shy former labourers would provide a more accurate report of the work in South Africa than the educated indentured labourers. The reason for Rangiah's assumption is not known. It may seem that Rangiah enjoyed more support from the uneducated labourers than the educated ones. Later in his ministry, he did experience opposition by a section of the indentured labourer community; which led to a split in the Indian Baptist work in South Africa.

The letter also contained an update of the human and financial resources of the mission among the Telugus. Rangiah mentioned Palli Yellamanda and his wife, who served the Darnall Baptist Church, and Rev. D. Benjamin and his wife, who served in the Durban area. Rangiah stressed the point that since Durban was the chief port of

the colony with a large Indian population, it required a church with a preacher. Rangiah wrote about his own position at Kearsney, the headquarters of the Baptist Association of South Africa, and the need for him to be based there. He also wrote about the many tours he took visiting other mission stations.

Rangiah makes reference to the question, “How will the preachers for the work in Natal be paid?” He presents the cost for the support of a married preacher with a stipend of £1.10 per month and a single preacher with £1 per month, both with rations. Additionally, he states that a preacher in Durban will require £1 per month for rent.

Rangiah described as well how he raised support for those preachers. According to him he stopped receiving support from the churches he planted. Instead he saved funds from these churches to support preachers. Rangiah reports that by 11 June 1905, he was able to save £20 with which he started a fund to support the preachers who were inducted and appointed by himself to the various mission stations in Natal. He mentioned that this amount would provide remuneration for the preachers for 5 months. Rangiah was careful to indicate to the preachers that the fund would not provide support for them on a regular basis, as he felt that the church using their services was to meet that obligation. He encouraged the churches: *“And in return the churches are exhorted to take heed to bear the burdens of our preachers, to their utmost possibility.”* He also wrote about the need to depend on God in this matter.

A note of gratitude is reflected in the letter. Rangiah expresses his appreciation for helpers who came to support him in his ministry. He records that he was in prayer for

three preachers but he received five. He compared them to the five talents referred to in the Bible. According to him, two of the preachers received remuneration from the estate owners, Colonel Addison of Stanger and W.G. Armstrong of Verulam.

Rangiah considered the Downies as his spiritual parents and longed for a visit from them. After some time, Downie and his wife visited Rangiah in South Africa. He wrote (1928:53) that the Board thought it a good plan that the Downies go to South Africa to visit and encourage and advise Rangiah. On 17 October, 1909, Downie and his wife landed in Durban, South Africa. They had an opportunity to assess the mission work that Rangiah was doing among the Telugu indentured workers. Downie had much praise for Rangiah's work. He wrote:

I knew something of the high opinion that Sir Liege Hulett (Rangiah's landlord) had of John and his work, but it was a surprise and a pleasure to hear from his own lips the very high regard he had for John and his work. Nor was Sir Liege the only one who spoke of it in similar terms. During our stay in Natal we heard nothing but the highest praise of his untiring work and Christ-like spirit. The work John has done is much more extensive than we had been led to believe from what he had written us. (Downie 1909: 3).

David Downie (1928:53) wrote about his visit to South Africa at the invitation of John Rangiah: *"It was a great delight to us to see the fine work John was doing. ... Sir Liege spoke in the highest of terms of John and his work."* The visit of Downie to South Africa helped in assessing the mission and the effectiveness of John Rangiah's work amongst the Telugus. It is very evident from the comments he made about Rangiah and his work that he was extremely pleased with both of them.

It appears that Downie had influenced Rangiah back in India. Rangiah wrote a personal letter to Downie and expressed his thanks to him for the role he played in

his life in India and then went on to report on his work in South Africa. In this handwritten letter on the 31 July 1905, Rangiah addressed him as “My dearest Missionary father.” It is an indication of the bond that existed between the two. He wrote about the status of the indentured labourers who came from India to work on the sugar and tea estates in South Africa. He also reported on the indentured labour system and its termination by the British government. This meant that there were not going to be further Indians coming to Natal, South Africa to work in the tea and sugar estates.

The termination of the indentured labour system by the British authorities in Natal meant that the flow of Indians to places like Kearsney, the hub of the Baptist Association of South Africa work, was stopped. To add to this Rangiah had to find resources to support the leaders he appointed over the churches in the Natal North Coast region. He reported to David Downie about assistance received by local estate owners, Colonel Addison of Stanger and Mr. W.G. Armstrong, who agreed to support preachers who were on their respective estates. He shared this blessing and expressed thanks to God for this development.

It was the first time in Rangiah’s correspondence to the American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society that he raised the issue of finance. He did not raise this issue earlier because he believed and maintained that the Indian church in South Africa should be self-supportive. So far, the Indian indentured labourers out of their meagre earnings contributed to the work of the mission. Rangiah listed the number of preachers who were currently in service with the Telugu Mission in Natal, South

Africa. There were five of them, two who were supported by estate owners and three who were in need of support.

The lack of funds did not impede the work among the Telugus. There were some who agreed to work without any remuneration. Rev. Rangiah, together with his wife, worked closely with these preachers and provided spiritual service to Telugu people.

From the middle of 1904, Rev. Rangiah made frequent visits to the South Coast, Isipingo, the Railway and Magazine barracks, and the Umgeni areas in Durban. He preached at evangelistic meetings to the many indentured labourers in these places and provided prayer and encouragement to them. He also sought permission from the Protector of Indian Immigrants to visit Indian passengers on the ships and in the immigration depot. In 1904, through the vision and encouragement of John Rangiah, a church was organized in Durban in the house of Mr. D. Benjamin. In 1909 this house church moved into a new building, which was dedicated and a foundation stone laid by Dr. David Downie, Rangiah's mentor and friend of the American Baptist Missionary Society. The work carried out by Rangiah received affirmation from another missionary to the Indians in the Natal province, Mr. N. E. Tomlinson. Mr. Tomlinson of the South African General Mission (SAGM) wrote about Rangiah's work. Rangiah recorded Tomlinson's comments:

Tomlinson's comments about the Telugu Baptist work in South Africa are noteworthy given the general attitude of the dominant Baptist Union towards this indigenous mission work. Additionally, it was important for Rangiah that commendation from a person like Tomlinson be reported to the wider Christian community as it provided a degree of objectivity.

The strain of providing leadership to such a vast area from Durban to Kearsney in the Natal North Coast was taking its toll on the Rangiahs. At the suggestion of Dr. Downie, additional personnel were brought from India to assist with the Telugu work.

3.3 Reinforcement of the Telugu Baptist Mission: Rev. V.C. Jacob

The arrival of Rev. Valpula C. Jacob in 1910 to serve as the second missionary from India inaugurated a new era in the history of the Indian Baptists. A teacher for a number of years in the Ramapatnam Theological Seminary, he felt the call to come to South Africa to work among the Telugus. The Jacobs were welcomed by Rev. Rangiah and others at the Durban docks and were received warmly by the Telugus in South Africa.

Both Jacob and Rangiah worked well amongst the Telugus in Natal, South Africa. On 21 April 1911 Jacob was invited to reside in Durban and to provide spiritual care for the members of Somseu Road Baptist Church. Jacob worked with Rev. Rangiah and visited the various churches, preaching, counselling and encouraging the Telugu population. He spent three months in Kearsney at the home of the Rangiahs. On July 1912 Rev. Jacob left South Africa and returned to India due to ill health. He was described as having been held in very high regard by his peers in India as well as by the Missionaries of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society. He handed all the records of the mission to John Rangiah. However, he returned on 13 December 1915 to continue with the work as a missionary in South Africa. Jacob served as missionary until his death in 1932. He was an outstanding leader who worked well amongst the Telugus in Natal (Jacob and Cornelius 1953:23).

The Baptist Association of South Africa church that was pioneered by Rangiah was not without challenges. Tensions arose between Rangiah and certain members of the Kearsney Baptist Church. This led to a schism.

3.4 Schism in the Indian Baptist church

Rangiah (1978:2) wrote, “The year 1913 was an unpleasant one for the Mission, for differences arose between the Missionary, Rev. John Rangiah, and a certain section of his congregation.” Rangiah preached a sermon on the subject of sin and its results. A certain section of the congregation viewed his preaching on this subject as very controversial and interpreted it as their excommunication from the congregation. These aggrieved members took this matter up with the Telugu Baptist Home Missionary Society (TBHMS) in India. They sent a letter without the knowledge of Rangiah to the TBHMS about their grievance. Rangiah was disappointed that he was not informed about the letter that was sent to the TBHMS. The TBHMS responded by sending a representative to South Africa to attend to this conflict between Rangiah and the aggrieved congregation.

Rev. W. B. Boggs represented the TBHMS. On 31st May 1914, a council of sixty-six members met at Kearsney and deliberated over the conflict for twenty-four hours. Despite the intervention of Rev. Boggs, the talks failed. Rev. Rangiah resigned (Rangiah 1964:10).

The Baptist Missionary review, a publication of the American Baptist Church USA, records (1915:381) this schism between the two groups in the Natal province. Unfortunately it does not provide the reason for the schism but states that Rev.

Rangiah was not acceptable to a considerable section of the Telugu Baptists in Natal. However, churches that were established by Rangiah (1953:15), such as the Verulam Church (1904), The Darnall Church (1904), The Durban Church (1904) and the Stanger Church (1904), remained under the ministry of Rangiah thus it does seem that only a small section of the Telugus in Natal did not accept Rangiah. To date, there has been no information about the actual cause of this schism.

According to the Golden Jubilee Brochure, a publication of the aggrieved group, the two parties, headed by Rev. John Rangiah on one side and Mr. Y. A. Lazarus on the other side, were unwilling to compromise. On the 27 December 1914, Rangiah formed the Natal Baptist Association of South Africa, now called the Baptist Association of South Africa. The other group called itself the Indian Baptist Mission and is now the Baptist Mission of South Africa. Despite this setback in the Baptist Association of South Africa's work in South Africa, Rangiah went on to build the organization into a viable Baptist organization centred mainly in the Kwa Zulu Natal province. John Rangiah, after many years of faithful service, died on 23 December 1915. He was deeply missed because of the significant leadership he gave to the Telugus, especially those on the North Coast of Durban.

In reflecting on his work in South Africa it is important to discuss Rangiah's theology. His work among the Indians was informed by a distinct theology that was influenced by American Baptist missionaries in India. He also demonstrated the ability to contextualize the Christian faith among the Indian Christians in South Africa. The research will describe Rangiah's model of mission.

3.5 Rangiah's model of mission and ministry

The mission enterprise in South Africa in the 1800s saw European missionaries such as Andrew Murray, Jr., Johannes Van De Kemp, John Philip and Robert Moffat of the London Missionary Society develop their own models for mission in South Africa. John Rangiah too developed a mission model which had its own unique characteristics.

3.5.1 Mission - an inclusive task

In 1897, when the Christians in South India established the Telugu Home Missionary Society, they focused both on local and global mission, of which Rangiah was very much a part. Rangiah, like his American counterparts, recognized that mission must be to the furthest parts of the world and he believed that Indians, irrespective of their race, ethnicity, country of origin, language and social status, can participate in the missionary enterprise. Stan Nussbaum, in his attempt at clarifying and simplifying David Bosch's ideas and thoughts on mission (2005:27), writes almost a century later about Luke's gospel with regards to mission and its universal appeal. Nussbaum states that the hearers in Luke's gospel, who appear to be Gentiles, were both the product of mission and the bearers of mission. Rangiah maintained that mission is universal in scope and is inseparably related to God's cosmic purposes.

The notion that mission was mainly carried out by the powerful western countries is negated by Rangiah, who represented a country that was poor and at that time a mission field. Additionally his understanding of mission compares favourably with

Bosch's understanding of mission with the exception of ethnicity, an issue that will be discussed later. Bosch (1991: 84-122) states that mission should transcend class and ethnicity. Rangiah believed this and expressed this in his mission to South Africa.

Another significant insight into Rangiah's ministry was his view that women should be active participants in the ministry of the church. Rangiah's sterling report of the Women's Ministry also reflected an understanding of ministry that encouraged the participation of women. He stated that his wife, Mrs. K. Rangiah, helped with the preaching of the gospel to the women. Her frequent visits to women made them very receptive to the gospel, and she enjoyed much success in her efforts when she shared the gospel. Mrs. Rangiah also taught at the school for children at Kearsney. As a result of this ministry 31 new believers were added to the churches by baptism since 1904, reported Rangiah (Rangiah 1953:16).

3.5.2 Ministry – spiritual and social dimensions

In Rangiah's mission report (1905:1) he states that the American Baptist Missionaries began their mission in India. They established many churches, primary and high schools, as well as a college and two theological seminaries. As a missionary in South Africa, Rangiah's mission efforts included the building of a school in Kearsney, as well as establishing churches in the then Natal province (1905:4). His approach to mission embraced the notions that the social, educational and spiritual needs of the Indian people are important. However, his work evidenced

an emphasis on the educational and spiritual needs of the indentured labourers. His approach to other race groups will be discussed in chapter 5 of this study.

3.5.3 Leadership Training

In Rangiah's work in South Africa he evidenced a strong emphasis on training of local leaders for ministry. Although he did not advocate that the Telugus carry the Christian faith to other parts of the world, he trained lay persons to spread Christianity to many parts of Kwa Zulu Natal. He travelled the length and breadth of this province, preaching, teaching and training persons for ministry. Lay leaders who received training for Christian ministry were A. Reuben, D. Benjamin, V. Samson and Z. Robert (NIBA News 1953:15-22).

3.5.4 Church Planting

Rangiah adopted a very practical model for ministry amongst the Telugus in South Africa. In his report he stated that in his missionary tours in South Africa, wherever he found groups of Christians, he gathered them into churches and appointed elders from among them. He challenged the elders to spread the gospel to the utmost parts to the best of their ability. In his report, he listed the number of churches that were established as a result of this model. They were: the Verulam Church established on 22 May 1904, the Darnall Church on 12th June 1904, the Durban Church on 30th October 1904 and the Stanger Church on 25 December 1904.

3.5.5 Culture

Having been trained theologically in India, Rangiah was careful not to approach the South African mission from a purely western perspective, which can sometimes be insensitive to the culture and customs of the local people. He communicated the gospel in understandable terms appropriate to his audience. This was necessary as the Telugus were not very educated and had their own traditions and culture. As an evangelical, he took into account the cultural factors. Nicholls (2003:9) in his book *Contextualization: A Theology of Gospel and Culture*, laments that evangelical communicators have often underestimated the importance of cultural factors in communication. Rangiah preached in the Telugu language and composed and taught Christian hymns to the Telugus. Rangiah and his wife organized activities such as Thanksgiving services, song festivals, and fellowship meetings, all of which were culturally orientated and spiritually relevant. They further assisted with planning weddings.

Rangiah, as mentioned earlier, devoted much of his time to the spiritual and cultural aspects of the Telugus. He organized and facilitated services that were culturally sensitive. Indian culture is rich, diverse and unique. The Indian manner and way of communicating with one another are important components of their culture. Indian culture is rich in art, poetry, drama and theatre, music, and dance. Rangiah and his wife composed hymns, poetry, and produced plays during their work among the Indians in South Africa.

Although Rangiah received his theological training in an American Baptist seminary

in India, he developed the ability to contextualize the Christian faith among the Telugus, unlike many Western missionaries who were sometimes culturally insensitive by teaching the local Christians to sing English hymns and only play the organ at church services. Rangiah and his wife, Kanakamma, did not cease to dress like Indians. She wore her sari and he used his turban. Although Rangiah expressed the Christian faith without disregarding the cultural practices amongst the Indian Baptists, his strategy, did not take into account the social and political realities in Kwa Zulu Natal. Chapter 6 discusses critically his strategy.

3.5.6 Ecumenical outlook

A striking feature of Rangiah's understanding of the Christian faith was reflected in his ecumenical outlook. The notion of relationship with other communions and bodies of believers was not only encouraged but was practiced by Rangiah himself. In 1910 Rangiah (NIBA News 1953:25) sailed to Edinburgh, where he attended the International Missionary Conference that saw all the leading denominations in attendance. The purpose of this international gathering of mission agencies was to promote unity in the missionary enterprise. According to the NIBA News (1953:25), Rangiah was afforded an opportunity to speak at this conference. But there is no record of any public contribution by Rangiah to the conference. Rangiah was one of five Asian delegates of the American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society. Stanley makes the point that Rangiah was not simply the first missionary sent by the Telugu Baptist Home missionary Society to the Telugu-speaking Christians of the sugar plantations in Natal, but was also the first overseas missionary sent out by any of the mission churches of the American Baptists. He makes a further point that Rangiah is

an early example of what would be called a ‘south to south’ mission (Stanley 2009: 100). Writing about his impressions of the conference, Rangiah makes general comments about how global the gathering was. He was also impressed with the cleanliness of Edinburgh, surprised at the absence of idols and grateful for the benevolence of his hosts. He wrote that he was motivated by his experience in Edinburgh and eager to return to South Africa with a greater determination to engage in ministry (Rangiah 1910:662-663).

3.5.7 Rangiah’s response to the socio-political conditions in South Africa

Racial tension began very early in the history of South Africa. De Gruchy (1979:53) argued that this racism, which in 1948 became known as apartheid, began as early as 1910. As a result of this Baptists were segregated along racial lines. The Telugu Baptists functioned as an ethnic church, and even if they had a desire to embrace other racial groups, the conditions in South Africa would not have allowed it. Additionally, the missionaries-- Methodists, German and Norwegian Lutherans, the French Oblates of Mary Immaculate, the Anglicans, Scottish Presbyterians, and members of the American Board of Missions -- began their work in a highly segregated context and not much integration took place. When integration did take place, the Africans were generally ostracized by their people and discriminated against by the white community. Isichei (1995:100) records what an African Methodist said in 1863: “To the natives we are despised--to the English we are no more than Kaffirs.” Indians suffered the same fate as Blacks albeit not as severely. The study now turns to Rangiah’s response to the socio-political challenges.

Firstly, Rangiah lived in British-controlled India until he left in 1902 for South Africa. Since the 17th century India was influenced by British politics and social life; Rangiah was accustomed to British rule in Natal. His relationship with the English in Natal, including with his landlord Sir Liege Hullett and others, demonstrated his ability to approach them with regards to his work among the Indians. However he had no need to confront them on issues of discrimination and injustices that Indians experienced during that period in the history of Natal, as the records in BASA history do not show any discrimination and injustices by the Hulleys against the indentured Indians.

Secondly Rangiah's theological orientation did not allow him to address such social and political issues. Theologically he was schooled in India by American Baptist missionaries. American Baptist theology at that time did not challenge socio-political injustices in India. Also the advocates of this theology were mainly white males who did not strongly address social issues. Instead the American missionaries addressed them through socially oriented ministries such as the building of schools, hospitals, and colleges for the low caste Telugus in India.

In India, Rangiah appreciated the positive contributions of American Baptist missionaries towards the spiritual and social lives of the Telugus when they built a seminary, schools, colleges and hospitals. This approach to ministry influenced his work in South Africa. Also, the American missionaries in India did not confront the British authorities' unfair treatment of the Telugus. It seemed that Rangiah, as a result of his years in British-controlled India, was accustomed to such a political system and therefore did not find it difficult to adapt to such a system in Natal. It

appeared that he did not believe that he had the right as a foreigner to confront the British in Natal over any injustice or discrimination. In this regard it would be unfair to criticize the American Baptist missionaries in India for not doing the same. Having stated this, nowhere in the preaching of these missionaries does one find any preaching about the gospel's response to social and political injustices. In chapter 5 of this study there is a detailed analysis of Rangiah's as well as the strategies of other BASA leaders in the socio-political context of South Africa. The study now turns attention to Rangiah's son, Theophilus Rangiah, who came as a missionary from India to South Africa.

Section B

3.6 The impact of the Bible and Bible themes on Rangiah's ministry

3.6.1 The Bible

The formation of one's theology does not occur in a vacuum. It is influenced by a number of factors. Context, culture and education are some of the factors that contribute to this formation. John Rangiah, lived most of his adult life in India, received his education there and followed the Indian culture. The Indian culture was therefore deeply rooted his psyche which but at the same time, it also conflicted with the Christian faith as expressed by the American Baptist missionaries during Rangiah's stay in India. It is against this background that one must attempt to analyze Rangiah's theology. Here, we will discuss broadly the Bible themes as well as characteristics of his theology.

As mentioned earlier, Rangiah's early years were spent with American Baptists in his country of birth, India. These American Baptist missionaries were part of a strong denomination that had its evangelical roots in England. Rangiah was schooled in evangelical theology in India at a school started by American Baptist missionaries. However, he largely employed this theology in his work in South Africa. His understanding and interpretation of the Bible must be seen against his early association with and schooling in an American Baptist theological institution.

American Baptists have a distinct denominational identity. They are a biblically based people whose life and witness are grounded in the Scriptures which revolve around an evangelical centre. Broadly, the American Baptist missionaries' theology centred on God's sovereignty in which the theology of the Kingdom and the church feature strongly. Furthermore, according to this theology, Baptists are biblically based, inclusive, redeemed, interdependent, missional and worshipping in character (*American Baptist Churches in the USA* 1988). This theological orientation became very evident in Rangiah's work in South Africa. Rangiah can be best described as a moderate evangelical sometimes leaning more towards a conservative orientation.

Roger Olson (1998) mentions the core characteristics of authentic evangelical theology. They are (1) the Bible is the supreme norm of truth for Christian belief and practices and that the Biblical message is enshrined in its interpretation of those narratives; (2) a supernatural worldview that is centred in a transcendent personal God who interacts with, and intervenes in creation; (3) the forgiving and transforming grace of God through Jesus Christ in the experience called conversion. This experience is the centre of authentic Christian experience; (4) the primary task of

Christian theology is to serve the Christian Church's mission of bringing God's grace to the whole world through proclamation and service.

Rangiah worked out of this evangelical paradigm. However, there are features within his evangelical theology which places him more on the conservative side theologically. For instance, except for the establishment of a school for the Telugu children in Kearsney, he concentrated largely on evangelism and very little on social issues. Ron Sider (1993:121-135) asserts that Christians should concentrate in evangelism and social engagement. He (1993:136) further quotes Alan Walker, "There is no greater menace than a born-again Christian without a social conscience."

In preparing leaders and congregants, Rangiah believed that the Bible was critical in shaping their lives. He held Bible classes at Kearsney where he chose the lives of Biblical characters such as Joseph, Samson and Ruth as models for the male and female leaders and congregants (NIBA News 1953:18).

Rangiah's dependence on God evidenced a belief in the supernatural. When he decided to come to South Africa as a missionary, he realized that no human effort would convince his wife Kanakamma to agree to accompany him on such a mission. He engaged in prayer and this yielded the desired result. He commented, "God worked wonders" (NIBA News 10). He also believed that when he first arrived in Kearsney and was in need of accommodation, it was God's intervention which resulted in Sir James Hulett's providing accommodation for him. His prayer was, "He

raiseth up the poor out of the dust and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill” (NIBA News 1953:13).

When the poor Telugus on their own accord, decided to send Rangiah as their first foreign missionary, they showed their willingness to participate in God’s mission worldwide. Rangiah took that invitation to participate in that mission seriously when he and his family left India to work among the indentured Baptist labourers in Natal (NIBA News 1953:11). Not only did Rangiah evidence a commitment to Christian service and mission in Natal, in 1910 he also supported by his attendance one of eight goals of the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh, that is “Carrying the Gospel to all the World” (Stanley 2009: 49 and 100).

Rangiah championed the Bible as the bedrock of his Christian life and practice. Archival research revealed Rangiah’s letterhead dated 1905. On the letterhead is the name of the mission, Telugu Baptist, followed by his name, Rev. John Rangiah, and the address in Kearsney, South Africa. His letterhead has a drawing of a dove carrying a branch with the biblical text Isaiah 61:1 written below the dove:

“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.”

This text provides an insight into Rangiah’s faith. In attempting to understand the relevance of this text to his faith and mission, it does seem to convey the idea that

God has found favour in him and has put the Holy Spirit upon him as a seal of approval for the task of mission. He understood his task to be that of a missionary who engaged in extensive preaching. In 1903 when Rangiah arrived in South Africa he began almost immediately with his preaching ministry. The NIBA News (1953:12) reported that Rev. Rangiah made frequent visits to Durban and preached the Gospel in many of its suburbs. Rangiah took his ministry to the broken-hearted very seriously. His very first experience was of a Telugu man who was found guilty of murdering a fellow Indian. This criminal was awaiting execution when Rangiah was informed about his fate. Rangiah provided spiritual support for him and even pleaded with the Governor of Natal to spare the man's life, but he was unsuccessful (The NIBA News 1953:12).

After the condemned man responded favourably to Rangiah's counsel and indicated that he was ready to accept the Christian faith, Rangiah read a text from 2 Corinthians 4:7: *"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."* It appeared that Rangiah was encouraging the condemned man that his body was a fragile container that held his soul and that through God's power the gospel is now in him (that earthen vessel). It was indeed an appropriate encouragement to the brokenhearted man. Before the execution, the man gave a speech in which he repented of his crime and described how the Christian faith had transformed his life (NIBA News 1953: 12).

Another line in the text found on Rangiah's letterhead also provides an insight to his passion for his fellow Telugus. It reads, *"...to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the*

opening of the prison to them that are bound.” He believed that many of these Telugus were in need of spiritual freedom.

Right from the beginning of his arrival in South Africa Rangiah was an avid reader of the Bible. It is recorded that when the ship he was travelling from India to Durban, the *Safari*, docked at 6 pm at the Durban harbour, the passengers had to remain on board overnight until the next morning before disembarking. During this time Rangiah spent time reading the Bible, in particular the Acts of the Apostles (NIBA News 1953:11). Also at the conclusion of Rangiah’s report of the Telugu Baptist Mission to the Telugu Baptist Home Missionary Society, he quotes (1905:5) a very significant biblical text from Malachi 3:10-12, *“All nations shall call you blessed; for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the Lord of Hosts.”*

It is not very easy to clearly define Rangiah’s theological orientation based on his ministry in South Africa because the Indian Baptist church did not label people into different theological persuasions. Furthermore, the vast majority of the indentured labourers were illiterate (NIBA News 1953:16). However, since American Baptists influenced Rangiah’s theological education background, he worked mainly out of their paradigm which emphasized the sovereignty of God, the kingdom of God and the church. There is much debate in Christendom about the sovereignty of God regarding salvation. There is the Calvinistic and the Armenian views. Both of these views take into account the sovereignty of God but there is a divergent view with regard to the definition of the sovereignty of God pertaining to salvation. For Calvinists, the sovereignty of God is a cardinal aspect in their understanding of salvation. According to this understanding (Birch 2008:1), God has the right to elect

one person to be saved and reprobate another. The Arminian view maintains that humanity has a free will with regard to their salvation. Both views are compelling. Rangiah's approach to salvation reflects an Arminian orientation. His very first ministry assignment was to a prisoner called Subbadoo. Rangiah feared that Subbadoo would harden his heart towards God but was later pleased Subbadoo made a decision to accept the Christian faith (NIBA News 1953:12). In the twelve years that Rangiah worked in Natal, his hymns (Rangiah 1905:1) featured the theme of salvation. He travelled widely holding evangelistic services at Kearsney, Durban, Darnall, Amatikulu, Tinley Manor, Stanger, Verulam, Pietermaritzburg, Dundee and Glendale where he reported persons making decisions to receive salvation (NIBA News 1953:17-27).

The adventurous spirit and trusting faith of men like Paul the apostle became very evident in the life and ministry of Rangiah. Like Paul the apostle, Rangiah travelled on missionary assignments planting churches, training and mentoring leaders for ministry. In examining Rangiah's work among the Telugus in Natal, the following Bible themes are reflected in his ministry:

3.6.2 Prayer

Rangiah believed and maintained that prayer was an important spiritual discipline and practice. Prayer featured prominently in his reports as well. In 1902, when Rangiah was initially challenged about responding to a request to go to South Africa to work among the Telugu Christians, he went down on his knees and prayed for God's will to be done (NIBA News 1953: 8). This was a simple act of submission to

God; prayer and submission to God became the hallmarks of his work as a missionary.

Throughout Rangiah's writings one notices his emphasis on prayer as well as self sufficiency. In preparation for his ministry in South Africa, Rangiah spent three months in prayer (NIBA News 1953: 8). Even when his wife, Kanakamma resisted the idea of them coming to Natal to take up the mission work, Rangiah spent time in fasting and prayer. His prayer was:

O Lord grant if it is thy will that we should labour in Natal for Thee, open Thou the way. Grant Kanakamma courage, O lord, that she may be able to leave her beloved parents and friends and undertake the journey with me. Do tell us, O Lord, whether to leave behind these my two children or to take them with me. If it is Thy will that we leave them behind, grant Kanakamma and me that courage to endure the pangs of separation. Help us on our voyage and use us for Thy glory and service (NIBA News 1953: 9).

This prayer reflected a person's deep concern for his family and ministry. Rangiah recognized the spiritual resource that is available within the Christian faith particularly in a text in Proverbs 3:6 which states, "Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed." It does indicate an understanding of the supremacy of God in matters of family and ministry and that God must direct these matters. Rangiah's prayer was answered within six weeks. His wife informed him that she was ready to come to Natal and that there should be no delay (NIBA News 1953:10).

In 1903, when Rangiah arrived at Port Natal, he was so overwhelmed by the task that was before him that he prayed for God's strength and grace (NIBA News 1953:11). When Rangiah arrived in Kearsney, he organized a prayer meeting with

the expressed purpose to establish a church there. The result of this prayer was the establishment of the first Telugu Baptist Church in Africa (NIBA News 1953:14). In Natal, prayer continued to feature strongly in Rangiah's ministry. In 1906, Rangiah prayed for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (NIBA News 1953:17). He maintained that prayer was necessary for personal cleansing. At a prayer meeting which took place in 1906, congregants wept and cried aloud. They prayed for mercy and forgiveness. It was reported that this prayer meeting were held over a period of four months. In Nonoti, a hill (which was named Prayer Hill) was a place where Rangiah and others used for prayer (NIBA News 1953:17). Rangiah also initiated home prayer meetings (NIBA News 1953:21).

He also wrote that he and his wife were in earnest prayers for buildings for places of worship, and he gave thanks to God for providing them with buildings that he and his wife prayed for in places like Stanger and Verulam. In his second and third reports he lists the number of pastors that he appointed to the churches and the churches' financial support of those pastors despite the economic status they were in. He wrote, "We are trying hard to help ourselves, and when we do our part, we know the Lord will care for the rest." Rangiah recognized the impact of prayer with regards to education for the poor Telugus. He established a school in Kearsney. Here the influence of the American Baptists in India influenced his theology on education. American Baptists, according to R. H Elliot et al (1988:42), held to the view that, "The whole context of our humanity, therefore, is involved in our mission." In their work in India, American Baptist missionaries shared the Christian faith with the Telugus and contributed to the educational advancement and social uplifting of these people by building schools and hospitals. The NIBA News (1953:16) recorded that as a

missionary, Rangiah was responsible not only for the spiritual needs of the Indians in Natal, but also for the educational requirements of the many Indian children who were growing up illiterate. He once again presented this need to God in prayer. It is recorded that he went on his knees and asked for God's guidance and help in that matter. In answer to his prayer, his landlords, the Huletts, provided an old laundry building for this purpose. On Monday, October 10th, 1904 the first Indian school in Kearsney, South Africa was opened. Four pupils were in attendance. By the end of that year, the enrolment increased to 12 (NIBA News 1953:16).

3.6.3 Salvation

It seems from Rangiah's letterhead that his call to South Africa was based on the Isaiah 61:1 text. Although it is difficult to base one's theology on this text, such a text, without any exegesis is insufficient for anyone to do any meaningful analysis, it, nevertheless, conveys the idea that Rangiah was driven by this call to preach salvation.

Furthermore, Rangiah's hymn entitled *New Birth* (Rangiah 1890) reflects this theme of salvation. The English translation (Ramanjulu 2010) is:

New Birth

Chorus

The great teacher Jesus Christ confirmed that man should be born again in order to enter into heaven

Nicodemus the leader of the Jews who knew the law was thinking of Jesus
He went at night to the Lord, stood before him and talks to him in peace.

Rabbi, you are teaching about the word of the Lord of heaven and we understand it.

And the signs (works) of God that you do, cannot be done by ungodly men

As the Pharisees said these things Jesus replied to him with grace and mercy

Jesus told him the truth that none can be lifted up to the Kingdom of heaven without the new birth.

The Pharisees asked how an old man can enter his mother's womb to be born again.

Then Jesus said unless you are born of the spirit you cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.

Rangiah's hymn is based on John 3:1-21. In Christianity salvation is understood to be grounded in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The result of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ is redemption (McGrath 2001:407). It is at this point that a person experiences a new life. There are many instances in Rangiah's ministry which reflected aspects of salvation. His very first ministry opportunity was a visit to a prisoner which resulted in the prisoner's salvation (Rangiah 1905:1).

It does appear that Rangiah believed in the universal saving will of God and that salvation is possible only in and through Christ. His ministry to the prisoner in Durban evidenced this. Rangiah invited the prisoner to make a choice to either accept or reject salvation. The condemned chose salvation (Rangiah 1905:1).

3.6.4 Eschatological Hope

Rangiah, in a hymn entitled *The Door to Heaven* (Rangiah 1890) wrote about the hope. The English translation (Ramanjulu 2010) of this hymn is as follows:

Christ is the Door of Heaven

Chorus

Jesus is the beautiful door-the beautiful door-on the way to heaven.

He is the beautiful door through which you enter into the land of
Canaan where the milk and honey flow
He is the beautiful door through which people enter into the Holy
place of the temple in Jerusalem.
He is the beautiful door through which we enter into heaven as the
priest of the holy of the holiest
He is the beautiful door which is the right door even though it is
narrow, it leads us to happiness in spite of troubles

This hymn reflects a Johannine imagery, eschatology, which is, at the very least a very standard evangelical theology (Keener (2010) [*Discussion on Interpreting Hymns*] (Interview 28 February 2010)). Eschatology in the Christian tradition comes from the Greek term *ta eschata*, “the last things” and relates to such matters as the Christian expectations of Christ’s resurrection and judgement (McGrath 2001:553). It appears that Rangiah, through this hymn, was presenting hope to the indentured labourers in the midst of suffering. It must be stated that it is precarious to extrapolate from Rangiah’s hymn any meaning without an understanding of his social context (Keener (2010) [*Discussion on Interpreting Hymns*] (Interview 28 February 2010)). We do know through the writings of Dhupelia-Mesthrie (2008), indentured labourers suffered. On the other hand, there is no record of Rangiah addressing these sufferings; he does, however, through the medium of this hymn, although written in 1890, provide hope to the indentured labourers in the midst of their suffering.

It must be stressed that Rangiah was not a theologian but a missionary. Given this fact, it will not be plausible to attempt to locate his theology based on the hymns he composed and the work he did as a missionary. Generally, Western scholars tend to examine doctrine as it relates to whether one is an Arminian or a Calvinist. While this is important in theological inquiry, in Rangiah’s case, he was in Africa and the contextual realities required new questions pertaining to racism, apartheid, ethnicity

and colonialism. Applying the historical western form and thought, that was shaped and developed in the Western socio-cultural ethos, to Rangiah's theology, will not be entirely helpful. As he was educated in Western theology by American Baptists it becomes necessary to examine his work as it relates to the unique South African context.

Section C

3.7 Rev. Theophilus M. Rangiah

Rev. Theophilus M. Rangiah, the eldest son of John and Kanakamma Rangiah, arrived in South Africa from India in 1903 with his parents when he was six years old. At the age of 10, he returned to India for further schooling. He received his early education at the school that was established by his parents in Kearsney. He attended the Coles-Ackerman Memorial Boys' High School in Nellore, India. In India, Theophilus was brought up in the strictest and most orthodox environment under the care of his maternal grandmother. After completing high school, he studied at the Madras Christian College of the University of Madras in preparation for becoming a lawyer. During his second year as an Arts degree student, Theophilus was invited to Natal, South Africa to work among the Telugus. Before arriving in South Africa, he married Sugunamma Narsiah (Israel 1998:4).

In 1921 Rev. Theophilus Rangiah and his wife Sugunamma arrived in Kearsney. He continued in the work his mother and father had started among the Indians. His goal was re-organization and church planting. Theophilus began his work by visiting all the churches that had been established by his parents. He acquainted himself with

the people and the state of every area where Baptist Association of South Africa churches were located. Furthermore, he made contact with the white landlords and managers of the indentured labourers and encouraged them to take an interest in the spiritual needs of their employees. He encouraged the indentured labourers to consecrate their lives and to maintain holy living. He held the view that a close relationship with God was a pre-requisite for evangelism. In order to accomplish this, he held Consecration Meetings for pastors, deacons, evangelists, and other office bearers of the Baptist Association of South Africa Church. He further stressed that these men and women would not attain true leadership by virtue of their knowledge, prestige and influence but rather by their Christ-like lives.

Under his leadership, a number of churches were established and grew. At Glendale, Theophilus began ministry among the Indian labourers who worked at the Glendale Sugar Estate. The result was the establishment of the Glendale Baptist Church on 16 December 1923. His leadership contributed to the growth of the Darnall Baptist Church. The first building of this church was made of grass, then a wood and iron building replaced the grass building, and then another building was constructed to accommodate the numerical growth of this church. Theophilus was responsible for the establishment of the Umhlali Baptist Church on 14 October 1923. In Durban, a church was established in Cato Manor. This church later relocated to Hillary. All these churches were visited by Theophilus. He also raised funds to purchase property in North Street, Durban, where a church was built to accommodate the congregation living in the Durban area.

Despite the schism in the Baptist Association of South Africa in 1914, the two Baptist

organizations co-operated with each other. Theophilus assisted the Baptist Mission with their need for a missionary to work among them. A request was made to the Telugu Home Mission Society in India to send a missionary to South Africa. Rev. V.C. Jacob responded to this invitation and arrived in Durban on 28 July 1936 where he and his wife worked with the Baptist Mission churches.

Theophilus Rangiah expanded the work of his parents, which began in 1903. He died in 1947 after serving as a missionary among the Baptist Association of South Africa for almost 26 years. After his death, European Baptists (Israel 1998:10) assisted the Indians to continue with the Baptist Association of South Africa work.

The work of the Rangiahs which started off as a Telugu church became an inclusive church which Tamil-speaking as well as Hindi-speaking people became a part of. However, Timothy Paul in his thesis makes certain claims about the Rangiahs' attitude towards the Tamilians. Paul, a Tamilian (1990:144), asserts that Tamil Baptists were sidelined by Telugu Baptists with regards to leadership positions. It seems there was a manifestation of the caste system among the Baptist Indians in Natal. The indentured Baptist Indians who were mainly from the south of India spoke Telugu, while a few spoke Tamil. All worshiped in a predominantly Telugu speaking Church in Natal (NIBA News 1953: 8).

It is important to examine Paul's assertions on the relationship between the Tamil and Telugu Baptists as well as comments of individuals on the reasons for the split between John Rangiah's group and the aggrieved group led by Y.A Lazarus. In this split, it is alleged by individuals that Tamil speaking congregants were discriminated

against by the Telugu speaking leaders. This social categorization requires some additional background because of its implications for the Indian Baptist Church in Natal.

Within the Indian Baptist community, there were members of the Mala and the Madiga people. John Rangiah, a Telugu, belonged to the Mala (sometimes spelt Malla) group. The Tamil speaking Baptists belonged to the Madigas. These two formed part of a social group called the dalits or Dalits. The dalits came mainly from Andra Pradesh and they were marginalized in every respect by those higher up in the caste system. The dalits fell outside of the caste system which meant that they were outcastes and they lived away from the higher castes. Their lives were shaped by a system of sanctified apartheid (Carla Power 2009:1). The hierarchal caste system comprised the Brahmans, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra (The Caste System and the stages of Life in Hinduism 1996).

Within the untouchable social groups, the Malas, Madigas and Dakkals were divided by hereditary (Intercaste rivalry: Madigas and Malas 2008:1). Language also divided the dalits. The untouchable applied the same social rules of endogamy of the caste system. Members of these social systems married exclusively within the caste or sub-caste system (Barbara Joshi 1986:4).

In 1911 when the Indian Baptist church split, there were some who held to the view that this was as a result of tension between the Malas and the Madigas. Paul (1990:211) asserts that in his interview with a member of the Baptist Association of South Africa, Noah Israel, the caste system within the Indian Baptists characterized

the split between Rangiah's group and Lazarus's group. Paul (1990: 212) further refers to Chembiah's comments that John Rangiah spoke against sin only to a section of the congregation which was the lower class, while the friends of the missionary who were also equally guilty of living immoral lives was overlooked and condoned. He goes on to state that the Madiga's were treated as the "pariahs" a term which is used for an outcast (The American Heritage 2009) and were forced to be subservient to the Malas.

While it was true that the lives of these indentured Baptists were shaped by the caste system in India, their arrival into a new country forced them to adapt to a new reality. It was more the traders or passengers than the non-indentured labourers who maintained the caste system. Dhupelia-Mesthrie (2000:13) quotes an indentured labourer as saying "I have taken my caste and left it with the Port Officer." The passengers on the ships that arrived in South Africa comprised indentured labourer, free Indians and passenger. She (2000:13) further asserts that the voyage itself meant breaking the rules of caste. However, the passenger Indians, the vast majority of whom were Gujerati-speaking, had greater links with their country of birth and they retained their cast restrictions (2000:14). Both Israel's and Chembiah's comments about the reasons for the split between Rangiah's group and Lazarus's group is not convincing. Israel does state that the caste system characterized the split with no specific detail about how this played out and so it is difficult to assume that either party was using their social status to either demean or feel demeaned.

The records of the Baptist Association of South Africa and the Baptist Mission of South Africa do not share this view that Tamils were discriminated against by the

Telugus. The writing of the ex-president of the Baptist Mission of South Africa, Rev. Brian Naidoo (2003: 27-100) and PhD research undertaken by Charles Dayadharum does not share Paul's view that the Tamils were prejudiced by the Telugus.

In analyzing Paul's assertion, it must be noted that in 1978 Paul (a Tamil) himself was elected by the executive council of the Natal Indian Baptist Association to the position of vice-president (Timothy 1978:11). His son, Harold T. Paul, is currently the president of this organization.

Dayadharum refutes (1999: 128-132) Paul's hypothesis arguing that separate churches for Tamils and Baptists did not materialize and that as the Telugu Baptist Church developed, it became inclusive of other sub-cultures, namely the Tamils and the Hindustani. Although Theophilus Rangiah had to deal with the challenge of the caste system, the early pioneers, according to Dayadharum (1999:128), did well in their efforts to reach out to the different sub-cultures among South African Indians.

Another argument posited by Dayadharum was the fact that among Rangiah's first converts were the Pillay family, who were Tamils. The Pillay children were also among the first pupils in the school which Rangiah established. Three of the Pillay sons married John Rangiah's daughters. Rangiah it seemed did not apply the same social rules of endogamy of the caste system.

On one hand, Paul has made the assertion that Tamils were sidelined by the Telugus and on the other hand the title of his PhD thesis *From Telugu Baptist Church to Open Church: A Study of the Indian Baptist Missionary Enterprise in South*

Africa (1903-1989) suggests an opening of the membership of the Telugu Baptist churches to non-Telugus.

In an article written by John Rangiah, which was a tribute to Lady Hulett, the wife of his landlord, he makes reference to the caste system. He wrote:

Regardless of the distinction of caste on one side and colour on the other, orphans she guarded and brought them until they became parents of children, by supplying them with food and clothing and medicine while sick; the sick she nursed, the poor she helped, and to the servants she was kind and beneficent (Rangiah nd).

This reflects Rangiah's awareness of the caste system, and his comments suggest that he was affirming Lady Hulett's non-discriminatory attitude towards the different castes. It would therefore seem unlikely that Rangiah would have encouraged the caste system.

Finally, there is no empirical evidence to support Paul's claim. This, as well as Dayadharum's discussion on this issue, the silence in the records of the Baptist Mission of South Africa (including a significant work of Rev. Brian Naidoo ex-president and current general secretary of the BMSA), the fact that Rangiah's three daughters married Tamil speaking men and Rangiah's speech on the death of Lady Hullet, weakens Paul's claim that that Tamils were prejudiced against by the Telugus. David Newton Nathaniel, arrived in South Africa to continue with Rangiah's work with the Baptist Association of South Africa.

3.8 Rev. D. N. Nathaniel

After the death of Theophilus Rangiah in 1947, the Indian Baptist Church was without a missionary until 1951 when Rev. David Newton Nathaniel and his family arrived in Natal on the ship *Isipingo* to take up the position of superintendent missionary. Nathaniel was born on 24 October 1908 in the district of Ramayapatnam in South India (Timothy 1978: 7). Prior to his arrival, he was ordained in Allur, India after completing theological studies at the Ramapatnum Theological Seminary, an American Baptist seminary where he trained as a minister, as well as at the Bangalore Theological College in India, which was supported by the Baptist Mission of England. Nathaniel's early education was in a mission school in Kavali, India. Nathaniel was married to Jayamma.

To commemorate Nathaniel N. Timothy, a former general secretary of the BASA, wrote a biography of Nathaniel wherein he records the tributes paid by the churches in India to Nathaniel just before he left for South Africa. These included tributes by the field association, which comprised eleven churches, the Southern Baptist Association, the Lone Star Baptist Church (the church that John Rangiah was a member of), and other churches. The Telugu Baptist Church in Allur wrote "*Your meritorious services to the Church as deacon, secretary, treasurer and Sunday School Superintendent have always been helpful to the growth of the church.*" (Timothy 1976: 4) There were also warnings by some in India about his going to South Africa. In 1950, in a letter dated 30 September 1950, Nathaniel's call to South Africa was questioned, as there was a delay of almost a year before Nathaniel finally left India for South Africa. The letter stated "*If you go to South Africa you and your*

whole family will be beheaded the moment you step out of the boat. If you want to go, go yourself, but leave your family here.” Nathaniel replied “*We must serve the Lord not only when all things go well but even under adverse circumstances*” (Timothy 1976: 5-6).

On 9 June 1951 Mr. and Mrs. Nathaniel with their three children arrived in South Africa to work with the Telugus. Nathaniel and his family were received very warmly by the Natal Indian Baptist Association. At a reception held in 1951 in Durban, the missionary and his family were treated to a welcome service.

You, represent Sir, a rare combination of two important factors which are so very necessary in the ministry of our churches in this country, since we have in you a harmonious blend of high academic qualifications and practical experience accumulated over a number of years (Timothy 1976: 7).

It seemed when Nathaniel indicated to the churches in India his intention to go to South Africa as a missionary, there were those who were not supportive and ridiculed him at times. One church leader stated “*this is of your own choice and a capricious thinking.*” It seemed that Nathaniel not only faced this kind of reaction from a few leaders in India but also during his work as a missionary in South Africa. There were some in the Baptist Association of South Africa who ridiculed and mentally abused him (Timothy 1976:10).

Despite this, Nathaniel served the Baptist Association of South Africa churches as a superintendent missionary for almost thirty-five years, Nathaniel working hard and faithfully amongst the Telugus in South Africa. He became the superintendent missionary of NIBA in 1951. Nathaniel wrote many Telugu songs and translated some popular hymns into Telugu. The staff of the South African Baptist Missionary

Society (SABMS), a body formed by the Baptist Union, visited the Indian churches regularly. Rev. T.D. Pass of the Baptist Union worked closely with Rev. Nathaniel. Rev. Pass introduced Nathaniel to the circuit system, in which a minister pastored several churches in a particular region (Israel 1998:4).

All of the missionaries who came from India stressed the value of education. All of them received quality education from the American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society's educational program in India. This value is evident in the missionaries' attitude to theological education as well, and Rev. David Newton Nathaniel is no exception. He gained his Masters in Divinity degree at the age of seventy years at the University of Durban Westville, in Durban. He had completed the degree of Bachelor of Divinity and arrived in Natal with a good theological education (Timothy 1978:7). Dr. P.M. Krishna, who was a warden at the Bethesda Bible College in Durban, sponsored Nathaniel's theological graduate studies and also promised to do so till he completes the Doctor of Divinity (Timothy 1976: 16). Credit must be given to the American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society for its investment in these Telugu missionaries. As a result, these missionaries brought the same attitude to the mission field and their work in South Africa.

In the early years of Nathaniel's work as a missionary with the Baptist Association of South Africa, Nathaniel wrote about unification and the need to work closely with the other Indian Baptists. In his thesis, he presents a strong theological basis for unity and co-operation amongst the Telugus in South Africa (Nathaniel, D.N., 1979. *The Origin and Development of the Baptist Association of South Africa Church in South Africa, 1900-1978*. MDiv. University of Durban-Westville.) He states that, "To this end

no stone should be left unturned, unity then must be advocated and encouraged by every member and by every church.”

Rev. Nathaniel was a theologically trained minister. He stimulated the thinking of the Indians with regard to ministry. He wrote several books and commentaries. They were: *Helpful Commentary on Philippians, For the Preacher in the Making, Simple talks on Christian Doctrines, Three minute Digest, Commentaries on Deuteronomy and Pastoral Epistle* (Nathaniel 1969:1). He died at the age of 77 on 20 December 1985.

John Rangiah, his son T.M Rangiah and David Nathaniel contributed greatly to the Baptist Association of South Africa. Their respective wives also played important roles in this work in South Africa. They are Kanakamma Rangiah, who served from 1903-1931, Sungunamma Rangiah, 1921-1943, as well as Rangiah’s grand-daughter. Included with these wives is Rajithamma Israel who is more recent (1956-2006). Other women and their contributions also feature in the history of the Baptist Association of South Africa and this study will now focus on their contributions.

This research has discussed the three India-born missionary families who came to South Africa to work among the Telugu indentured labourers. Their contribution to Baptist work in South Africa is noteworthy given that world missions during that period involved mostly white western missionaries.

3.9 Women in Ministry with BASA

There is currently no literature on Baptist women in South Africa. They only appear in brochures of the Baptist Association of South Africa. There is little discussion in which their work is assessed and evaluated. Here, the research will examine important contributors to the mission of the Baptist Association of South Africa.

Although Rangiah showed an openness to women in ministry, the BASA does not have an official position on their role in ministry. Women were given opportunities to participate in ministry in various capacities. This lack of an official position on women in ministry was largely shaped by apartheid theology which this study will examine. What follows next are the contributions of women to the spiritual, social, and cultural development of the Baptist Association of South Africa. At a later stage, the researcher will critically discuss the dominant view held by most Baptists, including BASA, on the status of women. It will show how apartheid influenced this view. We now turn to the contributions of women. They include: Kanakamma Rangiah (1903-1931), Sungunamma Rangiah (1921-1943), Rajithamma Rangiah (1956 -2006), Martha Isaac (1970-1988), Rebecca Rhandram (1970- 2006), Esther Benjamin (1970-2006), Valerie Dayanandham (1989-2006), Marge Nathaniel (1998-2003), and Evelyn Maistry (1990-2006).

When John Rangiah arrived in Kearsney to establish the first Indian Baptist Church in South Africa, Kanakamma was part of the leadership team, which was compromised of John, D. Benjamin, herself and others. She taught the Telugu language to the young girls and taught hymns and conducted Bible studies with the

women. Kanakamma served as a teacher in the school that Rangiah established in Kearsney, where she provided education to the children of indentured labourers.

An orphanage was started by Mrs. Hullett, the landlady at the tea estate, and Kanakamma was invited to take care of the educational and spiritual needs of these orphans, aged 12-15 years. She played an important role in teaching girls to sing, leading worship services and participating in plays. When the membership of the historic Kearsney Baptist church increased, a decision was made to construct a larger building. Kanakamma and the women in the congregation assisted in raising financial support for this project. When her husband attended the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910, Kanakamma cared for the family, provided leadership to the Kearsney Baptist Church, liaised with leaders of other new established churches and provided counsel and moral and spiritual support to them during her husband's 5-month absence. A few years later when a schism in Indian Baptist work took place, Kanakamma provided Rangiah with the emotional support he needed so much during that extremely challenging period in their work in South Africa.

In 1916, when John Rangiah died, Kanakamma had to make some serious decisions about her future ministry with the Baptist Association of South Africa Church as well as her children's education. She was tempted to return to India but instead stayed to continue the work she and her husband had started. Kanakamma, however, decided to send her 10-year-old son and 6-year-old daughter to India so that they could receive a good education. After her son Theophilus completed his education in India, he returned to South Africa, and was received by his mother to continue the

work his parents started in 1903. Theophilus, who had lived in Nellore, an urban centre in India, and who was trained in law and theology, preached highly academic sermons. Kanakamma guided him and encouraged him to preach simple sermons so that the congregation, who were mostly indentured labourers, could understand his preaching. It is recorded that she once told him after a sermon, “Manoharam, nobody understood you today. Come down to their level” (NIBA News 1953: 36).

Kanakamma Rangiah, after working as a missionary among the Baptist Association of South Africa for almost 28 years, died on 13 April 1931. Her daughter-in-law, Sungunamma Rangiah followed in her footsteps, (Israel (2007) [*Discussion on the Role of Women in the Baptist Association of South Africa Work in South Africa*] Telephone (Communication, 16 September 2007).

Sungunamma Rangiah arrived in South Africa from India with her husband Theophilus on 5 March 1921 on board the *SS Umtata*. Initially, Sungunamma, a young 18-year-old girl who had just completed high school, found it difficult to adjust to the conditions in Natal. Through the support of her mother-in-law, she eventually acclimatized to the South African conditions.

One of the significant contributions she made along with her husband was the establishment of the Baptist Association of South Africa Church in Glendale in the Natal North Coast. A woman called “mother Subbamma” was seriously ill and needed healing. It is reported that Sugunamma spent much time in prayer, which resulted in the healing of this sick woman. This opened more opportunities for healing. The result was the establishment of a church in this region of Natal.

Sungunamma initiated socio-religious work among the Baptist Association of South Africa churches. She taught Telugu, English hymns and choruses and held cooking, dressing and hygiene classes. She was particularly interested in promoting the English language. Young people who passed standard six (grade 8) and who were entering high school were required to preach a sermon in English in the presence of Theophilus and Sungunamma Rangiah. On Tuesdays, services were held to promote the English language.

Sungunamma opened her house to strangers, young girls and boys who needed rehabilitation. Her hospitality was very evident in her ministry to the community at Kearsney, where she and her family lived and served. She played an important role in assisting families in organizing wedding ceremonies, advising on the choice of jewellery, clothing and food as well as providing guidance in choosing hymns for the church service. After serving the Indian Baptist Church for 23 years, Sungunamma died on 22 May 1943. After Sungunamma's death another woman, Rajithamma Rangiah, John Rangiah's granddaughter, emerged as an important leader in The Baptist Association of South Africa Church in South Africa (Israel (2007) [*Discussion on the Role of Women in the Baptist Association of South Africa Work in South Africa*] (Telephone Communication, 16 September 2007)).

Rajithamma was born at "Gospel Hill" Kearsney in 1932. She was trained as a school teacher. Wherever she lived, she organized Sunday schools for Indian and Black children. Hindu and Muslim children also attended these Sunday schools. Rajithamma annually prepared these children to write the National Baptist Union Scripture Examinations.

Rajithamma held the position of Assistant Secretary of the Baptist Association of South Africa for 8 years. She also served as president of the BASA Women's Department for 25 years. Under her leadership, the Women's Department assisted Bible college students financially, provided financial assistance to churches with building projects, contributed to HIV/AIDS projects and organized annual women's rallies, special Ascension Day services and spiritual camps for women.

A very significant seminar was initiated by Rajithamma on the "Status of Women in the Church and Community." Another important seminar arranged during her leadership was on HIV/AIDS. She also recognized the need to provide emotional and spiritual support to widows. Rajithamma organized a widow's fellowship, and this became an annual event in the BASA Women's Department.

Rajithamma travelled widely and attended many conferences. In 1975 she attended the Baptist World Alliance Congress in Sweden, where she presented a paper, "Today's Women in South Africa." She also participated in women's conferences in Malawi (2001), Ghana and Brazil (2003), participated in a mission conference in North Carolina, USA (2003), and attended the Baptist World Alliance Congress in Birmingham, England (2005).

Rajithamma taught young girls the Indian traditional stick dance, which they performed at the 2003 Indian Baptist centenary celebrations at the Durban City Hall. To mark the significance of this centenary celebration, she organized an art competition among the Baptist Association of South Africa churches where artists were encouraged to depict the historical scenes of the Baptist Association of South

Africa in South Africa. She herself was an art teacher. She also played the role of Kanakamma Rangiah in a radio play entitled, “Behold the Baptist Association of South Africa,” which was produced by Dr. Gabriel Naidoo. This play depicted the life of Rev. John Rangiah and was broadcast in three countries -- India, Pakistan and South Africa.

Rajithamma continues to this day to render service to Tongaat Baptist Church where she is a member. She continues to sing and promote the singing of Christian hymns in the Telugu language. She also cooperates with other denominations and organizations such as the Tongaat Minister’s Fraternal, and raised funds for the building of a neighbouring church in Tongaat. Her work with the Baptist Association of South Africa spans some 50 years. (Israel (2007) [*Discussion on the Role of Women in The Baptist Association of South Africa Work in South Africa*] (Telephone Communication, 23 September 2007).

The role of women, particularly from the Rangiah family in the narrative of the Baptist Association of South Africa church and in the narrative of the Baptist Association of South Africa church, is noteworthy, given the challenges of missions in South Africa. These challenges included raising financial support for their work and the promotion of culture and tradition in an African and English context as well as in a male-dominated Baptist history which reflects mainly the contributions of white male missionaries in South Africa. Other women who were not related to the Rangiahs also played important roles in the Baptist Association of South Africa.

Martha was a locally trained missionary who worked among the women and youth of the Baptist Association of South Africa. She studied at the Durban Bible College and

earned a diploma in theology. Martha rendered spiritual services to the women, youth and children of the Indian Baptist church. Martha was also employed as a missionary of the South African Baptist Missionary Society (Ragwan, D., *Women in Ministry: The Role of Martha Isaac in BASA*). [Letter] (Personal communication, 9 September 2008).

Rebecca Rhandram, born Rebecca Peter, is the only daughter of the five children of Mrs. Elsie and Evangelist V. Arumugam Peter. Evangelist Peter, along with Rev. N.E.Tomlinson founded the South African general mission, now known as the Evangelical Church of South Africa. Rebecca's four brothers followed in their father's footsteps and entered the ministry. Rebecca also took that route. She studied as a full-time student at the Durban Bible College and earned a diploma in theology. In 1968 Rebecca joined the staff of the South African Baptist Missionary Society (now known as the Baptist Missions department of the Baptist Union of Southern Africa) and worked among the Indian churches in Kwa Zulu Natal together with Rev. T.D Pass, Baptist Union missionary; Miss Judith Morck; Miss Julia Forgus; and Miss Martha Isaac. While with the South African Missionary Society, Rebecca was engaged in the following activities: speaking at ladies' services, daily vacation bible schools in different churches during church holidays, speaking at church youth groups and young women's church groups, teaching in church and wayside Sunday schools, and visiting church members and counselling those who wanted to put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Rebecca resigned from the South African Baptist Missionary Society in December 1971 when she married The Rev. T. Rhandram, who is currently a Baptist minister (Rhandram, T., *Women in Ministry: The Role of Rebecca Rhandram in BASA*). [Letter] (Personal communication, 9 September 2008).

Esther, unlike Martha and Rebecca, did not receive any formal training in mission work but worked with the Baptist Association of South Africa as its missionary. She contributed to the women's ministry of the BASA where she served as vice president of this organization. Mrs. Benjamin travelled widely and went on many short-term missions to Malawi, Swaziland and Mozambique. (Ragwan, D., *Women in Ministry: The Role of Esher Benjamin in BASA*). [Letter] (Personal communication, 9 September 2008)

Valerie was the great-granddaughter of David Rajanna, who came as an indentured labourer from India. He was the pastor of the Tinley Manor Baptist Church. Valerie was a graduate of Durban Bible College. She served as president of the Baptist Women's Department of the Baptist Association of South Africa. Valerie's work included working with women, speaking at youth and women's retreats, preaching, and leading worship. She also served as a missionary with the Baptist Association of South Africa. Valerie participated in short-term missions to Swaziland, Malawi and Mozambique. (Ragwan, D., *Women in Ministry: Women in Ministry: The Role of Valerie Dayananand in BASA*). [Letter] (Personal communication, 9 September 2008).

Marge Nathaniel is the daughter-in-law of the late Rev. D.N. Nathaniel. She is from a Catholic background but married the youngest son of Rev. and Mrs Nathaniel. Marge trained as a school teacher and in 1998 was elected as the first female general secretary of the BASA. Marge played an important role in the administrative affairs of the organization. She also addressed the organization at significant events. She possessed the gift of communication and articulated the vision of the organization

very ably. Marge was responsible for initiating important workshops and conferences notably on Leadership (Swamy: 1999: 10-11).

Although BASA did not formally recognize women ministers, a local church of BASA called Living Stones Baptist Church inducted the first woman minister. Then-president of BASA Anthony Poliah inducted Evelyn Maistry into ministry. Mrs Maistry served in various capacities in BASA, notably as vice president of the Baptist Women's Department and director of the Christian Education department. In 2003, she also travelled to the USA and participated in ministry and workshops that were planned by BASA. (Ragwan, D., Women in Ministry: Women in Ministry: The Role of Esher Benjamin in BASA). Letter] (Personal communication, 9 September 2008)

Although Rebecca Rhandram, Martha Isaac, Esther Benjamin, Valerie Dayanandham and Evelyn Maistry were not related to the pioneers of the Telugu missionaries, they nevertheless contributed and continue to contribute to the spiritual, cultural and educational development of the Indian Baptist work in Kwa Zulu Natal.

3.10 Evaluation of the early ministry of the Baptist Association of South Africa work

When the American Baptist missionaries began their work among the Telugus, little did they realize that in a short period of time their converts would rise to the occasion to form their own mission society and then send an indigenous missionary family to the Indians of South Africa. The notion of being self-sufficient, taking responsibility,

working hard and being creative was very evident among the Telugus in India and was reflected in Rev. and Mrs. Rangiah's work in South Africa. Although Rangiah received his theological training at an American Baptist seminary in India, and this was evident in his theology in South Africa, he nevertheless demonstrated the need to contextualize the Christian faith to the Telugus to whom he ministered.

When the Rangiahs left India to come to South Africa, they did so with the understanding that the church in South Africa would provide most of their remuneration. Since they were people who were deeply committed to prayer, they further believed that God would take care of their needs while in South Africa. The Hullets, at Kearsney, were touched by their humility and love for God and of their own will they provided a stipend of £20 per annum for the Rangiahs. The Rangiahs' belief in prayer was reinforced by the Huletts' action. When finance became an issue during the tension between Rangiah and a certain section of the congregation who accused him of living a sumptuous lifestyle, he requested that the contribution by the church in India be stopped. He also believed that the church in South Africa should take responsibility in providing for their physical needs. Here is further evidence of his life of faith and integrity.

What is of great significance as one considers missions in developing countries is the tendency of the nationals to be dependent on overseas financial support. While this is needed for a period of time, there must come a time when the nationals need to become less dependent on Western support and become more self-sufficient. Rangiah shows this very clearly in his mission among the Telugus in South Africa. He goes one step further and states that the sending mission agency in India, which

is the Telugu Home Mission Society, must not bear the responsibility of sustaining the work among the Telugus in South Africa, but it must be carried out and supported by the Indians in South Africa (Rangiah 1905:1-5).

The training of Telugu lay leaders for ministry was a hallmark of Rangiah's work. Having received education himself in India, he recognized the importance of this and set out to educate his parishioners. He built a school in Kearsney, trained men and women to lead congregations and appointed regional representatives to take care of the spiritual needs of the congregations. Given the lack of educational opportunities for Indians in the early 1900s in South Africa, Rangiah stands out as an important pioneer in the education of the Telugus in South Africa. For out of this school emerged leading men and women who have contributed to the advancement of the Indian population in South Africa.

Rangiah's arrival as an indigenous missionary to South Africa must be hailed as a great milestone, since at that time mostly western missionaries went to developing countries. Furthermore, he negated the idea that only western missionaries were capable of undertaking such an enterprise. Peruvian-born missiologist Samuel Escobar (2003:12) stated in his book *The New Global Missions: The Gospel from Everywhere to Everyone*, that the great commission is not only directed to Western Christians but to everyone. Rangiah showed that as a developing Christian, he was capable of participating in global missions. He did not allow his ethnicity, economic status and country of origin to impede his call to South Africa, and this he did over 100 years ago.

Although Rangiah demonstrated that as a developing missionary he could participate in global missions, he did not intentionally stress the need for South African Indians to consider foreign mission work. Somehow the missionary spirit of Rangiah did not influence Baptist Indians in South Africa, to the extent where it would be a sending agent. It was only later that foreign missions were stressed and encouraged. Rangiah did encourage local missions but that was confined to Indians in South Africa. It seems that the failure of Rangiah to engender a missionary spirit and zeal among the Indians in South Africa was due to the fact that the Telugu population was in need of much training and much work was needed to strengthen them. After all, these people were indentured labourers and their only medium of language was Telugu. Since India was the only country that had a Telugu-speaking population, the door for foreign missions for Telugus in the 1900s was very limited.

Another observation in Rangiah's work is that nowhere in the records of the history of the Baptist Association of South Africa work is there reference to any kind of relationship with Black Christian leaders or congregations. It may be because of the 1906 African uprising. This uprising took place because of a poll tax that the white authorities were enforcing on Zulu males in Natal. This uprising caused Rangiah to be fearful of being attacked. According to The NIBA News, Rangiah wrote (1953:17) that this 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. Another factor could have been the language barrier. While Rangiah was very proficient in English, he could not really use this language to minister to the Zulus.

Perhaps the greatest historical significance of the arrival of the Rangiahs in South Africa was their establishment of the Baptist Association of South Africa work in South Africa. The Baptist Association of South Africa work was not a product of colonial missions work as in the case of White, Coloured and Black Baptist work in South Africa. Baptist organizations from these racial populations fell under the jurisdiction of the Baptist Union of South Africa, a largely English denomination. The Baptist Association of South Africa work stands out as the most unique mission in South Africa because it was started by an Indian-born missionary and was and is an autonomous organization with its own constitution and structure.

The sugar and tea industries in South Africa greatly benefited from the contributions of the indentured labourers. Not only did these two industries gain from their labour but these labourers added richly to the culture and economy of Natal. Today one of the greatest concentrations of Indians outside of India is in Phoenix and Chatsworth, South Africa. These two Townships were mission fields of the Baptist Association of South Africa. The result of hard work by the pioneers of the Baptist Association of South Africa are very evident in Phoenix and Chatsworth.

An important aspect of the narrative of the Baptist Association of South Africa church is the contribution of women. The study highlights the roles of the wives of John and Theophilus Rangiah. The granddaughter of John Rangiah also features in this narrative. The contributions of Rebecca Rhandram, Martha Isaac, Esther Benjamin, Valerie Dayanandham and Evelyn Maistry were also noted. Although BASA has allowed women to engage in ministry, it has not formally put into place a policy with

regard to women in ministry. It still largely reflects a hierarchical model in its ministries, which no doubt was influenced by apartheid theology.

The contribution of women to the Indian Baptist work in South Africa is noteworthy given the view held by many of the churches during this period. However, this view still fell short of the biblical view of women. Although, BASA allowed women to engage in ministry, it reflected a view that women were not equal to men. This view was a result of the hermeneutics church leaders both in BASA and in the other South African Baptist organizations used to interpret scripture. In the South African context, the question of how to interpret the creation of human persons became an issue which influenced how Baptists viewed women in ministry. Compounded with this question of interpretation, White Christians, and more specifically the Afrikaner Christians, claimed that they were the ones who could interpret the Biblical text. They also believed that they were responsible for passing their interpretation of scripture on to people of colour. The people of colour had no participation in the formulation and construction of theology and, furthermore, were not allowed to criticize the theology that was passed on to them. South Africans of all races were influenced by apartheid theology. Apartheid theology, in addition to its restrictive framework, also applied racial and gender stereotypes to human persons. According to apartheid theology, white persons are superior to Blacks, Indians and so called Coloureds, and man is considered superior to woman. This theology has been oppressive and dehumanizing. What then is the alternative view of women from a biblical perspective?

In order to understand the nature of human persons, Manfred Brauch, a Biblical scholar, argues that scripture, and in particular the account of the creation of human persons, must be read in a particular way. He sheds light on the way the creation narrative in Genesis 1 and 2 should be read by pointing to the genres of the Genesis creation narrative. An incorrect genre judgment according to him will lead one astray in biblical interpretation. There are two creation narratives and they each have different genres. The genre of Genesis 1 is poetic in form and the genre of Genesis 2 is in a story form. These two narratives with two distinct genres as indicated before are “theological” in nature. Mosaic tradition places these two chapters side by side. Now, there are two ways of reading the creation account: theological and historical. A historical narrative reading focuses on the chronological sequence of events, such as the creation of the earth, waters, plants and human persons. A theological approach presents a multifaceted theological tradition about creation within the text. This approach requires that the researcher look beyond the mere sequence of events and read the creation account within the larger context of scripture, which includes the covenant of God with His people, Israel, as well as the revelation of God in Jesus. Which approach one uses affects one’s understanding of human persons, which in turn will affect one’s understanding of marriage and family and in particular women. The researcher opts for a theological reading/understanding of the narrative. (Brauch states that although chapters 1 and 2 are stylistically different, they do not conflict with each other. Furthermore, he says that while the creation narrative reports a historical event, it must not be read in a historical manner).

One can understand Brauch’s argument against this type of reading of the creation account of human persons with its emphasis on the order aspect of the creation

narrative and the claim that this reflects the nature of God because this type of reading looks at the texts historically rather than theologically. The conclusion is made that since God is a God of order, the creation of man first and woman second must be interpreted to mean that man should be the head of the woman. Brauch goes to the extent of saying that the reading of Genesis 1 historically violates the meaning of the narrative of the creation story. Should one agree with Brauch that we must read this theologically? The researcher is inclined in this direction. It is an important question, because how one answers it makes a huge difference in what one sees. Apartheid theologians read this narrative “historically” and argued that since man was created first followed by woman, man is superior to woman. According to this theology if one were to elevate the status of woman, one would alter God’s design. Here in the Genesis narrative we see how apartheid scholars, as well as a large number of Biblical scholars, are influenced by the larger Semitic culture where importance was attached to that which is first. In the study of the faith of Israel, one finds the frequent divine rejection of cultural norms. Throughout the Biblical narrative, the cultural pattern of assigning superiority to “first” is set aside in the accomplishment of God’s purpose. Thus Isaac was chosen over Ishmael, Jacob over Esau, and David over Saul as the “ideal messianic king.” The same note is heard in Jesus’ statement, “The first shall be last and the last first.” This is an example of looking at the creation account within the larger context of scripture.

In examining the phrase, “male and female are created in the image of God,” Brauch states that the creation narrative in chapter 1 is rhythmic and poetic and that it focuses on various relationships between different realities. He refers to three realities in Genesis chapter 2, *adamah* (earth: feminine), *adam* (man: masculine) and *havah* (eve: feminine) and states that man is out of earth (feminine), woman is out of

man (masculine), and man and woman are out of woman. Looking at this way, this text clearly reflects the mutual interdependence of man and woman. The reading of this text theologically (meaning that this text must not be interpreted in isolation from the whole of scripture on this subject) rather than historically provides a very different basis for our understanding of human persons as essentially relational, equal, and mutually responsible. Genesis 2:18, 20 respects this core relational nature: “It is not good that man should be alone; I will make a helper for him.” Such a theological interpretation receives significant exegetical support. In Genesis 2:18, 20 the word “helper” (from the Hebrew *ezer*) appears two times. This same word is used an additional sixteen times in the entire Old Testament and always in reference to God as Redeemer, as one who acts to rescue from danger or calamity (e.g. Psalms 33:20; 121:2; 115:9; Deuteronomy 33:7). Similarly, the verb *nagid* means “to save from extremity” and “to deliver from death.” In a literal sense, the word means “what is front of him, in front, facing (toward), face to face” and the metaphorical meaning is “corresponding to and complementary.”

Having established the meaning of the verb in the Hebrew, the researcher draws attention to the use of the noun, *nagid*, in Genesis 2:18-20. In the Hebrew it means “one who rules, one who leads, a ruler or prince.” This noun represents the woman as the one who is the leader.

Such a reading of the two terms together implies that the creation of the woman leads the man out of his aloneness and that her presence is redemptive and life giving. She is depicted not as a subordinate creature, but as one who is an equal partner, corresponding to him and complementing him. Further evidence of the equality of the man and woman in the creation account is found in chapter 2:23-24.

This text confirms and affirms the equality and correspondence between male and female. Verse 23 states, “bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh.”

In the creation of human persons in Genesis 1:26-27, God is referred to in the plural. Here is the first Biblical hint of the Trinity through whom all things are created and sustained. Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen (1990:40) points to a very interesting insight, which is that “God is not an abstract ‘first cause’ or a solitary ‘world governor’ devoid of emotion.” She contends that “God is intrinsically social: Creator, Redeemer and Holy Spirit working in cooperative interdependence throughout the whole of the Biblical drama.” She further asserts that “feminist theologians and psychologists have pointed out that one of the chief features of a feminine perspective on life is a concern for relationships.” Male theologians over the years as well as Baptists pastors have generally “tended to think of God in terms of hierarchy, rulership and top-down authority whereas female theologians have suggested that these images of dominion need to be balanced by an understanding of God in a more emotional and relational” manner Van Leeuwen cites (1990:40) Numbers 11:12 and Matthew 23:37 in advocating for the feminine trait of God to be considered.

3.11 Conclusion

This chapter has chronicled the ministry of the Baptist Association of South Africa Church in Natal, South Africa. It provided a brief context of this ministry, which was founded in India. The focus of the early part of this chapter included the historical arrival of the first Indian missionary, John Rangiah, to South Africa. Rangiah’s early ministry, which included training of leaders, establishing churches and appointing

leaders to lead churches, formed part of the focus of Rangiah's contribution to the Baptist Association of South Africa.

The chapter then described Rangiah's understanding of the Bible and Bible themes. The research also showed how the influence of American Baptist theology as well as Rangiah's experience under British rule in India influenced his work in South Africa. It further provided insight with regards to the socio-political issues/questions. In this regard, the study critically discusses Rangiah's role within this period of South Africa's history. The study then analyzed the impact of the Biblical themes on Rangiah's theology and on the Baptist Association of South Africa Church in South Africa. At the death of John Rangiah, his son, Theophilus Rangiah, continued the Baptist Association of South Africa work. His contribution to the establishment and re-organizing of churches in Natal were discussed. The study answered the key research question, Why is the history of the Baptist association of South Africa important to South African Christian history? It discussed in detail the ministries of the three Indian-born missionaries, which illustrated the self-supporting, self sustaining work of the Baptist Association of South Africa.

This chapter also discussed the contribution of women to the ministry of the Baptist Association of South Africa with a critique of BASA's view of women. It also provided a hermeneutic which challenged the traditional view and offered a new way of understanding the status of women. Here, it responded to the other key research question, What role women played in the BASA?

Chapter Four

The Baptist Association of South Africa in Unity Talks

The historic emergence of an indigenous Indian Baptist mission in South Africa occurred in an era of European expansion, colonialism, and apartheid. During this long period South Africa's population groups such as the Blacks, Coloureds, Indians and Whites were racially divided. Throughout this period there was no significant movement amongst Baptists towards racial reconciliation. There were, however, conversations between the predominantly White Baptist Union of South Africa and the Black Baptist Convention of South Africa as well as between the two ethnic Indian Baptists, the Baptist Association of South Africa and the Baptist Mission of South Africa. However these conversations were not inclusive. The conversations between the White and Black Baptists had to be terminated as they excluded the Indian and Afrikaans Baptists.

The political climate in South Africa in the 1990s provided the conditions for all races to engage one another and work towards reconciliation. In 1994 a new era dawned in South Africa. The release of Nelson Mandela from prison further created an opportunity for all South Africans to embrace reconciliation. In 1999 the leaders from the five Baptist organizations recognized this defining moment and began a process of dialogue with one another. It was a new beginning for South African Baptists. Baptists from the five racially divided groups, the Baptist Convention of South Africa, the Baptist Union of South Africa, the Baptist Association of South Africa and Baptist Mission of South Africa, and the Afrikanse Baptiste Kerk, an Afrikaans speaking organization, began a process of engagement on reconciliation and unity. The

researcher (Ragwan, 2004) examined this unity process in a Master of Arts thesis, *An Inquiry into the Unity Process among Baptists in South Africa*. This chapter will critically discuss the participation and contribution of BASA in this process. However, it is, important to locate BASA within the larger social and political framework and show how it was impacted in that framework. As such, this chapter will discuss the history of apartheid with special emphasis on three periods namely, the Dutch, British, and Afrikaner period. Additionally, it will show the effects of apartheid in South African societies, particularly the influence of apartheid on racism and ethnicity. This chapter will examine these phenomena within the larger historical framework. The history of the church in South Africa must be seen in three phases. They are the Dutch Period (1652-1795), the British Period (1795/1814/1948) and the Afrikaner Period (1924/1948-7).

4.1 The Dutch Period

Jan van Riebeeck was dispatched by the Dutch East India Company (DEIC) to build a fort and establish a garden at the Cape. In 1652 he established a refreshment station (Dvorin 1952: 10). This served as a halfway station for ships between Holland and the East. The purpose of this was to increase the profit of the DEIC's trade and small-scale farming. According to Regehr (1979: 105), Jan Van Riebeeck had no interest in conquest and subjugation.

During the Dutch occupation of the Cape, slave labour was introduced. In 1658 West Africans were first used as slaves and later the DEIC added to its African slave numbers slaves from territories such as India (particularly from Bengal and the

Coromandel and Malabar Coasts) and from the Indonesian islands. Dhupelia-Mesthrie (2000: 10) writes about a young boy in the seventeenth century called Ari. He was playing on a beach on the west coast of Bengal when he was captured and taken as a slave to the Cape where he became a possession of the Dutch. Many other Indians like Ari were brought as slaves to the Cape married other slaves from the East or from Africa, or the indigenous Khoisan inhabitants. The early Dutch Settlers depended upon the Khoisan inhabitants for their cattle. The Khoisan, who were the indigenous inhabitants, were a nomadic people who followed their herds of cattle and sheep to grazing areas. They later became known as the Hottentots (Regehr 1979:105).

Whilst both these communities lived side by side, the Dutch settlers initiated the first sign of apartheid when they erected a hedge that separated the Khoisan from the Dutch settlement. Further conflict between the two communities arose when problems over grazing rights and land occurred. This eventually led to two wars, which forced the Khoisan to accept the Dutch occupation. The Dutch hired the Khoisan as farm labourers and domestic servants. As a result of miscegenation between the San, Khoisan, slaves and whites, the coloured population (people of mixed blood) emerged (Stack and Morton 1976:11). Dhupelia-Mesthrie's (2000: 10) finding that Indian slaves who were brought to the Cape by the Dutch resulted in the miscegenation between the Indians and the San and Khoisan, which brought about the Coloured, people is worthy of further research.

Despite this mixing of races during this period, the whites, according to Loubser (1987:5), viewed themselves a distinct group from the others. Loubser further stated

that in 1788, a number of Stellenbosch people protested against a corporal who was "of dark and of heathen descent". At the end of the eighteenth century, race prejudice was firmly established everywhere, and shortly after this the Afrikaans language became a symbol of white identity (Davenport 1977:5).

The Bible played a part in the lives of the settlers as it guided and informed their lives in the colony. During the Dutch period, the public expression of Christianity was largely monopolized by the Dutch Reformed Church, closely overseen by the ruling Dutch East India Company. Elphick and Davenport (1997:2) argue that most social historians do not fully recognize that Reformed piety and doctrine were influential in the shaping of White society as well as White-Black relations

4.2 The British Era

Generally many have been critical of the Afrikaner because the Afrikaner is synonymous with apartheid. One must apportion blame to a certain extent as well to the British for the divisions in South Africa. The researcher recalls as a student attending a special lecture in 1986 by a leading evangelical scholar, John Stott, with the entire student body of the Baptist Theological College of Southern Africa in Parktown, Johannesburg. The subject was apartheid in South Africa and the Christian's response to it. John Stott shared the lecture with a few local English speakers. During the question and answer sessions, the Afrikaners were blamed for apartheid in South Africa. A fellow Black student confronted the speakers about the role the English had played in the divisions in South Africa. Confessions were made and apologies followed because of a one-sided viewpoint, especially by the South

African speakers. On the other hand it can be argued that some British promoted racial harmony and cannot be blamed for apartheid. Advocates of this may cite British sympathy for Blacks. They took issue with the Boers as far as their treatment of the Blacks was concerned. They were also concerned at the provocation of the Blacks by the Boers. The imperialistic attitudes of some of the British towards the Boers were evident.

According to Loubser (1987:10), within a decade the Cape suffered a change of government three times (1795, 1803, and 1806) and each time the church had to adapt itself to new situations. In 1806 when the British took control of South Africa, little changed for the welfare of the Blacks. They passed restrictive laws and suppressed most Blacks, took away most of their land and made them dependent on Europeans in order to make them subservient to White Rule (Ngcokovane 1984: 2). Regehr (1979: 121) on the other hand, argued that during this period more freedom was experienced by Blacks, who could now enter the colony freely under a pass system to sell labour and trade. He cites Dr. John Philip's work among the Blacks. Dr. Philip championed the cause of the Blacks and was not well received by the Boers because of his influence on the government regarding the issue of Ordinance 50, which was in favour of Blacks enjoying the same legal rights White colonists enjoyed (Regehr 1979:121). Although he advanced the course of the Khoisan, Philip felt that Blacks should live separate from Whites until such time as they could compete with Whites in White culture on an equal footing. Regehr (1979:121) also stated that John Philip wanted African chiefs to safeguard their land against the incursion of White farmers. Although Philip was committed to the well-being of the indigenous people, more than many of his fellow missionaries, he found himself

trapped in the ideology of imperialism. He argued that the missionaries extended British influence and the British Empire (Villa-Vicencio 1988: 44).

There were further attempts by the English to advance their imperialistic supremacy. They attempted to anglicize the Dutch, but this failed. However Regehr stated (1979:116) that the Afrikaans language became dominant amongst the "coloured" people.

The discovery of diamonds at Kimberly in 1870 and of Gold on the Witwatersrand in 1886 put South Africa on the path to industrialization (Elphick and Davenport 1997: 242). This development did not have a direct impact on the Indian population as mostly Blacks worked in the mines.

4.3 The Afrikaner Period

During this period in the history of South Africa, apartheid was introduced by the National Party when it came into power in 1948 (Stack and Morton 1976:16). It was during this period when apartheid became legally sanctioned in South Africa. Below will follow a definition of apartheid and racism and its effects on the population.

4.3.1 Apartheid's Influence on the Baptist Church

The single most disuniting force amongst Baptists has been apartheid. Apartheid manifested itself in many forms in the church, such as inferior theological education for blacks, insensitivity of white Baptists towards black Baptists, and structures of the

white Baptist Union of South Africa that were considered to be racist. Reading the various papers presented at the BCSA's Awareness Workshop held in Barkly West in 1990, one will discover that these papers reflect the claim of the Baptist Convention of South Africa that the Baptist Union of South Africa still practiced racism and apartheid within their structures and ministries. One would have thought that the church would be free from the influence of this ideology as the democratic forces in the country were challenging the apartheid ideology. Unfortunately, apartheid brought about much conflict between black and white Baptists; it also allowed other Baptists, such as the Afrikaanse Baptiste Kerk, the Baptist Mission of South Africa and the Baptist Association of South Africa to maintain their separateness. Before proceeding with the factors of disunity amongst the five groups, apartheid and racism will be defined and a description of the apartheid ideology will follow.

4.3.2 Apartheid and racism

Apartheid literally translated means "apart-ness" or "separation." It is pronounced "apar-hate" and was first used in a leading Afrikaans newspaper in 1943 (Stack and Morton 1976:17). Dr. Malan, the first Nationalist prime minister, used the term frequently to describe South Africa's goals of government. Central to this system was the notion that the different races and cultures of South Africa could never be an integrated whole, sharing a common citizenship. The whites (English and Afrikaans-speaking) perpetuated apartheid and Blacks, Indians and Coloureds who were on the receiving end of this ideology. Stack and Morton (1976:17) describe apartheid and its effects on the black population of South Africa. This gives one a sense of the

conditions of apartheid under which both black and white Christians and Baptists had to live out their faith. Black people were deprived of their land and were forcibly removed and given arid tribal "homelands." They were stripped of their right to vote for the all-white government, which controlled their destinies. They were reduced to offering their labour at poverty wages to gain the right to re-enter the "white" land (white people owned eighty-seven percent of the land) where they worked separated from their families eleven months out of the year as migrant labourers (1976:17-18). The fruits of the apartheid state accrued mainly to the Whites, which swallowed up almost seventy percent of the total national income. Apartheid was all about a life of privilege, power and plenty for the Whites, based on the exploitation of cheap "non-White" labour. Martin M. Marger, in his book *Race and Ethnic Relations*, states that the cruel irony of apartheid was that it was financed primarily by its victims. All non-Whites – Africans, Coloureds and Indians - were discriminated against, yet they had to underwrite the oppressive system by accepting artificially low wages and seriously deprived working and living arrangements (Marger 2003:440).

In reality the entire population were daily victims in one sense or another. Blacks suffered daily disasters, from homicide to humiliation. The researcher himself was thrown out of a first-class coach while travelling from Johannesburg to Germiston because of the colour of his skin since the first-class coach was reserved for Whites only (Ragwan 2003:19). From expropriation to grinding poverty, from brutal torture and imprisonment to relentless persecution, family life was shattered, careers wrecked, education withheld, and life was a round-the-clock survival. According to Stack and Morton (1977:18), even the supporters of apartheid paid a price, living in constant fear that they had created a monster and were losing basic human

sensitivity. Perhaps the best way to describe apartheid is to read the words by two Prime ministers, namely Mr. Strijdom and Mr. Verwoerd:

"Our policy is that the Europeans must stand their ground and must remain baas (boss) in South Africa. If we reject the Herrenvolk idea and the idea that the White man cannot remain baas, if the franchise is to be extended to the non-Europeans, and if the non-Europeans are developed on the same basis as the Europeans, how can the European remain baas? Our view is that in every sphere we must retain the right to rule the country and keep it a White man's country." (Stack and Morton 1976:18)

T.R.H. Davenport, in his book *South Africa – Modern History*, confirms this by stating (1977:331) that the mystique of apartheid as elaborated by its exponents after 1948 came to mean separation in all possible fields - political, territorial, residential, cultural and economic. Upon analysis of a statement of this nature it becomes clear that the principles of apartheid are clearly reflected as strongly advocating the separation of races.

Stack and Morton recorded (1976:17) Mr. Verwoerd's speech in the House of Assembly on 25 January 1963 in which he stated, "Reduced to its simplest form the problem is nothing else than this: We want to keep South Africa White. Keeping it White can only mean one thing, namely White domination, not leadership, not guidance, but control, supremacy." Here, too, the strong insistence was that South Africa be a country where the separateness of the races be maintained with Whites enjoying supremacy over Blacks, Coloureds and Indians. The church was adversely affected by this phenomenon.

4.3.2.1 Apartheid

It could be said that the idea of racial separation started in the late 1800s, though many would be tempted to suggest that it started in 1948 when the National Party came to power with its racist policies. De Gruchy (1979:9) states that the settler church and in particular the Dutch Reformed Church's missionary program through its custom and culture provided an ecclesiological blueprint for the nationalistic policy of separate development. The British, too, joined in by perpetuating this ideology as will be seen in this chapter. It is within such a milieu that Baptists began their work.

It also must be stated that Baptists were among the settlers who came to South Africa. Hudson-Reed (183:15) confirms this by stating, "Among the intrepid British Settlers of 1820 was a small group of Baptist laymen." Due to historical reasons, Baptists too were influenced by the colonial missionary model and were divided along racial and ethnic lines. It may seem unfair to single out two of the organizations, the BUSA and the ABK that historically enjoyed full citizenship and were protected by the law of the land; the reality was that they benefitted from such a system.

History records that the five Baptist organizations started their organizations at different periods in history. BUSA was formed in 1877 (Reed 1983:361), ABK in 1944 (Hudson-Reed 1983:218), BCSA in 1927 (Hoffmeister and Gurney 1990:33), BASA in 1914 (Rangiah 1964:10) and BMSA in 1903 (Indian Baptist Mission Golden Jubilee 1953:3).

Having described briefly the apartheid system, it should be made known that this system occurred in a country that was populated by a majority of Blacks (Stack and Morton 1976:10). The population groups of South Africa were separated from each other politically, socially, culturally and territorially along racial lines. Racism played a major role in this process. Apartheid meant the separation of Blacks in every field.

4.4 Racism

Having looked at an ideological system that caused so much division, we now examine another phenomenon, which is racism, that also adversely affected the population of South Africa.

The term “race” is defined by A.S. Park in his book, *Racial Conflict and Healing*, as “group of human beings possessing in common certain physical characteristics which are determined by heredity.” He further states that racism is the “dogma that one ethnic group is condemned by nature to congenital inferiority and another group to congenital superiority” (Parks 1996:24). Denton Lotz, the former General Secretary of the Baptist World Alliance (1993:22), defined racism as being rooted in the belief that a group or groups of people are by heredity and nature intrinsically superior to the rest of mankind. Racism demands, supports and legitimizes the use of power in order to define, devalue, dominate and discriminate against those considered inferior.

Lotz (1993:9) answers an important question of why racism has become a worldwide problem. He states that from the beginning of human history there has been racism

that it has manifested itself in very different forms. According to Lotz (1993:10) this is shown in “rudimentary drawings on the walls of prehistoric caves and paintings in Egyptians tombs.” Lauren, in his book *Power and Prejudice*, maintains that discrimination is ancient in its origins. He goes on to say that from the earliest periods of human existence, groups developed prejudices towards others and then discriminated against those whom they regarded as different or inferior (Lauren 1988:5).

Lotz (1993:9) stated that the real problem of the twentieth century would be the problem of the colour line – the relation of the darker to the lighter races. He highlights information from the Human Rights Watch World Report of 1993 where racial and ethnic conflicts around the world have taken place. They were: Somalia: the violent Destruction caused by fighting among the clans and sub-clans; Sri Lanka: the Sinhalese against the Tamil minority, resulting in 1.5 million displaced persons; Sudan: the Arab North against the Black animist/Christian South; Turkey: the Turkish majority against the minority Kurds; Iraq: Iraqis against the Kurds; Palestine: the Arab - Israeli conflict; Kenya: tribal tensions; Nigeria: ethnic conflicts; Germany: conflict with foreign workers; Myanmar: conflict with the Muslim minority, and tribal aspirations; Mauritania: Arab-Berber government used fraud and violence to disenfranchise a large number of Blacks (Human Rights Watch World Report 1993).

The European people, after setting foot on African soil, were involved in a racial conflict and a struggle for survival. Loubser wrote (1987:3) that because of their European background they were totally unprepared for the life in a new country. To add to their frustrations, the Afrikaners did not favour racial integration of the

churches, and this caused divisions between the Dutch Reformed Church and the English-speaking churches. Loubser's analysis of the unpreparedness of the Europeans is correct. Europeans faced the challenge of racial diversity and the search for new identities. Despite these, they survived but not without imposing their language, religion, culture, political institutions and laws

De Gruchy (1979:18) elaborates further on the struggles of the Afrikaner against British imperialism. This frustration and unhappiness of the Afrikaner with British imperialism led them to trek northwards with a hope of building their own permanent nation (Regehr 1979:103). This outrage and frustration is reflected in the words of a Voortreker woman called Anna Steenkamp.

It is not so much their freeing which drove us to such lengths, as their being placed on equal footing with Christians, contrary to the laws of God, and the natural distinction of race and colour so that it was intolerable for any decent Christian to bow down beneath such a yoke, wherefore we rather withdrew in order to preserve our doctrines of purity (De Gruchy 1979:19).

The real reason for the Afrikaners trekking away from British control seems to be a theological one. This can be disputed. In fact, Hexham argues that the origins and underlying causes of the nationalist movement were matters of academic dispute. He goes on to say that some sought to analyze the movement's class dynamics, while others sought less comprehensive solutions or invoked ideal types to explain its historical significance. But according to Hexman most agree that the ideological roots of Afrikaner Nationalism are to be found in the Calvinist religion of the early White settlers who arrived at the Cape of Good Hope in the mid-seventeenth century (Hexham 1981:1).

Hexham further claims that another factor that played a continuing role in holding the Afrikaner people together and shaped their philosophy is the Calvinism preached and practiced by the three largest Afrikaner reformed churches, of which ninety percent of Afrikaners were adherents. The Old Testament was also like a mirror of their own lives. In it they found the deserts and fountains, the droughts and plagues, the captivity and the exodus. Above all they found a chosen people guided by a stern but partial deity through the midst of the heathen to a promised land. Hexham says that the Old Testament and the doctrines of Calvin moulded the Boer into the Afrikaner of today. This exclusive and sectarian view of themselves did very little to improve race relations, which for decades had become an impediment to a free and just South Africa. This divisive system of apartheid had an adverse effect on the Baptist church in South Africa as well. By this time all five Baptist organizations were in existence and all five of them were affected by colonialism and apartheid, some more adversely than others.

Hoffmeister and Gurney record Louise Kretzschmar's paper, *A Theology of Dominance – an Alternative History of the Baptist Union of South Africa*, which she presented at the BWAU. Here she recalls (1990:27) a settler type ideology in a pamphlet of the BUSA. In this pamphlet it is said that the Baptist settlers “ventured the stormy seas of the Cape where the scattered settlers were too few to keep the kaffirs to their agreed upon eastern side of the Great Fish River. They treated their pledges as scraps of paper, and when it pleased them they crossed the river to plunder cattle.”

The Baptist settlers seemed to regard their possession of the land as being justified

on the spurious grounds that the Xhosas were treaty breakers, cattle thieves and invaders, thus their actions were understandable (though not excusable). The repetition of such views in the recent years, says Kretzschmar (1990:27), is completely unjustifiable. C. M. Wilson, in his book *Co-operation and Conflict: The Eastern Frontier* agrees with Kretzschmar by referring to the findings of a historical analysis. He stated (1969:233) that the extent of these treaties were greatly misunderstood by both the settlers and colonial authorities, that the Xhosa were not the only cattle thieves and that the series of border conflicts were, at least in part, desperate attempts by the Xhosa to defend what remained of their land. In the recording of the histories of the five Baptist organizations by their respective historians all but the Baptist Convention of South Africa write about the social, political and economic injustices that apartheid created. Instead they highlight their achievements, victories and strides they have made as Baptists in South Africa. Hudson-Reed's recording of the BUSA is one such example. In his view (1983:7) the Baptist history, particularly BUSA history, is an outstanding one. Whilst from a BUSA perspective it has been an outstanding one, the reality is that the history of Baptists in this country has been one of division that for many years existed along racial lines. The existence of five different Baptist organizations is proof of that.

How did the Christian church respond to the problem of apartheid, which contributed to the disunity of the church as well as disunity among the peoples of this country? Although there were racial divisions in South Africa prior to 1948 little was being done by the church to address this problem. De Gruchy (1979:39) stated that generally the church in South Africa prior to 1948 was preoccupied with the desire for peace. The Christian Council of South Africa (CCSA), which was formed in 1936 to foster co-operation among the churches, had called a conference at the University

of Fort Hare in 1940 to discuss the task of the churches in "Christian Reconstruction" after the war (De Gruchy 1979:39). It seemed that after the war with Hitler the world would be at peace. Seven years later the Christian Council convened another conference, this time at Rosettenville in Johannesburg. The theme at this conference was "The Church in a Multi-Racial Society." De Gruchy recorded that the optimism of Fort Hare had gone. The mood was one of apprehension. Apartheid had arrived (De Gruchy 1979:53).

How did Baptists in South Africa respond to this apartheid that had arrived? The conference convened by the Christian Council in 1949 invited leaders from various denominations, including the Baptists, to deal with the church's response to apartheid. BASA was not invited to this conference; BUSA represented the Baptist denomination. Given its position on matters such as politics as well as the all-white government, BUSA would not have been a fully representative voice, and therefore most likely would not offer a strong opposition to apartheid. Furthermore the Baptist Union of South Africa, according to De Gruchy (1979:61), generally was more cautious on political matters. Since 1949 up to 1990, the BUSA continued to be cautious.

In 1990 the mainly Black Baptist Convention of South Africa convened a workshop to deal with the issue of apartheid and to come up with a way forward. Most of the Black Baptists' response was expressed at a workshop that was held in 1990 in Barkly West called the Barkly West Awareness Workshop (BWAWS). This workshop brought together leaders who applied their minds to working out an "empowered future." In doing so they made an attempt to come to terms with, in the words of the

editors Rev. Desmond Hoffmeister and Brian Gurney (1990:5), the "official history of Baptist witness in South Africa." It was also stated that apartheid had wound itself into the structures of the Baptist witness in Southern Africa (Hoffmeister and Gurney 1990:5). This workshop dealt mainly with the BCSA's response to the history of the BUSA, which in their opinion was racist. The response and reactions of the other groups will be dealt with later in this chapter.

At this BWAU conference the Baptist Convention of South Africa listed the effects of apartheid on the Baptist Convention. It lists firstly the training of their pastors. BCSA pastors were first trained at Millard Bible School in Orlando, Soweto. The school was later relocated to Ciskei. This relocation was motivated by apartheid as the government wanted to remove Blacks from the urban areas (BWAU 1990:54). Stack and Morton (1976:26), in their book *Torment to Triumph*, explain the Influx Control Act, which stipulates that no African may be permitted to remain in an urban area for longer than 72 hours without a permit, unless he or she was born there and has been continuously resident. Exceptions were made for persons who worked in one area continuously for ten years for one employer or for fifteen years for more than one employer.

Black pastors of the BCSA received inferior theological education. Hoffmeister (1990:54) bemoaned the criteria applied by the then-White Baptist Union, which stated, "It is desirable that a candidate should have passed at least the equivalent education of junior (standard eight)." With regards to the training of the BCSA pastors, he says, "Theological training of Convention pastors was subjected to the standards imposed by the Baptist Union. Our potential was limited. The curriculum

was foreign in all respects. It became an insult to our dignity and humanness" (BWAU 1990:54). Kretzschmar (1990:30) calls the education taught at these institutions both Euro-centered and privatized. By this she meant that the questions, subject matter, books and lecturers were predominantly based on European and North American theology. Further criticism of the theological education received by the BCSA pastors according to her was that students were not exposed to the significance of the rise of African and Black theologies. She adds that social ethics, especially issues directly related to the South African context, received little or no emphasis. It is quite obvious that the pastors trained at a Black theological school were not being adequately prepared to minister within a context of political oppression and economic deprivation. Nor were they given the tools to evaluate the BUSA's own perception of the Christian gospel (BWAU 1990:30).

When one reads De Gruchy's recording (1979:54) of the Baptist Union's statement to the apartheid government when the government wanted to deprive Africans of their limited Parliamentary representation, one is tempted to come to the defence of the Baptist Union of South Africa. Hoffmeister, however, (1990:28) argued that no practical steps were taken by BUSA to challenge the state. Nevertheless BUSA, together with the Presbyterian Church of South Africa, the Methodists and the Congregational Assembly, stated its opposition to the government's proposed legislation aimed at depriving Africans of their limited Parliamentary representation. According to De Gruchy (1979:54) the Assembly of the Baptist Union condemned this proposed legislation by stating that,

any tampering with the accepted constitutional understanding that the franchise rights of non-Europeans will continue to be entrenched as provided in the South Africa Act. Furthermore it was gravely concerned at the rising tide of bitterness and resentment,

non co-operation and hatred, which is evident among those people concerned, by any suggestion of the limitation of their existing rights and legitimate aspirations, and the Assembly resolutely dissociates itself from any policy which would restrict or reduce the present rights of representation in Parliament or Senate of any section of the community (De Gruchy 1979:54-55).

The above statement sent to the government was not the only one where BUSA expressed concern about apartheid laws. Over the years there have been individuals within the BUSA who have supported statements made at its Annual Assembly that were critical of the government, or they addressed letters to the State President and other officials. As mentioned earlier one is tempted to come to BUSA's defence as one reads of their criticism of apartheid laws, but Louise Kretzschmar (1990:24-31) in a paper presented at the BCSA's Awareness Workshop entitled "A Theology of Dominance - An Alternative History of the South African Baptist Union", helps us understand the level of commitment the BUSA had in truly opposing apartheid. Kretzschmar (1990:28) states, "But to agree to a statement of protest at Assembly is one thing, to devise practical steps to implement such protest is quite another." This indicated a lack of commitment by the BUSA to address and help remove the injustices of apartheid.

It could be said in the words of Villa-Vicencio (1988:1) in regards to the protests of most English speaking churches, "Their protest was neither harsh nor rigorous." Kretzschmar (1990:29) further cited another discriminatory practice employed by the BUSA. A close examination of the BUSA's mission policies indicated discrimination and White domination. It was, according to her, revealed in their mission policies. Rather than pursuing a policy of partnership in mission or practicing a form of mission that included concern for the material needs of communities, mission was

conceived of as evangelism by Whites to Blacks. The South African Missionary Society (SABMS), which was a division of the BUSA, undertook the mission work of the BUSA, and the Black churches that were started by BUSA fell under the control of the SABMS. Increasingly the pattern of separate churches for different races became entrenched. Kretzschmar continued in her criticism of the BUSA by stating that these churches under the SABMS had very little representation on the BUSA executive committee and were subject to the policy decisions of these bodies as well as to the White missionary superintendents (BWA 1990:28-29).

The listing of the Baptist ministers in the BUSA's handbook along racial lines illustrates apartheid practiced by the BUSA. Kretzschmar's further contention is that the BUSA stated in its 1976 Assembly: "Assembly reaffirmed that the Baptist Union of South Africa is open to all churches which desire to join it and which qualify in terms of the constitution, regardless of race or colour." It affirmed that such churches would be welcomed into the Union and charged the executive committee to make this known to all churches within the Baptist Union Associations. Yet the BUSA had the names of Black ministers listed separately.

Racial discrimination was reflected in the BUSA 1989 Assembly, which was held in Kimberley. Racially separate accommodation was provided for all delegates. The venue of this Kimberley Assembly, which was held in a military barracks, was hurtful to the Black members of the BUSA who attended this Assembly. The Baptist Union was accused of being insensitive to Blacks as the venue was a symbol of White oppression and violence. This resulted in the walkout of Blacks in protest against the BUSA for their choice of venue. The military in South Africa was an instrument of the

apartheid state that crushed anti-apartheid activists.

4.5 Ethnicity

Cornell and Hartman (1988), in their book *Ethnicity and Race*, assert that the word “ethnic” has a long history and that it is a derivative of the Greek word *ethnos*, meaning “nation.” This term “ethnic” was previously thought of as race or nation. In English the word “ethnic” referred to someone who was neither Christian nor Jewish, in other words a pagan or heathen (Cornell and Hartman 1998:16). These terms, according to Marger (2003:10), are clearly different in meaning.

4.5.1 Unique cultural traits

Marger (2003:11) draws our attention to the fact that ethnic groups are groups within a larger society that display a unique set of cultural traits. Marger draws on the comments of Melvin Tumin, a sociologist who provides a definition of an ethnic group as a “social group, which, within a larger cultural and social system, claims or is accorded special status in terms of a complex of traits (ethnic traits), which exhibits or is believed to exhibit.” It can be said that ethnic groups are subcultures that maintain certain behavioural characteristics that in some degree set them apart from society’s mainstream culture.

Three of the five Baptist organizations, BASA, BMSA and ABK, would fall into this category of ethnic group. The ABK, which represented Afrikaans-speaking people, held dearly to their language and culture. According to Reed (1983:218), the ABK is

a language-union of the BUSA, meaning that its members spoke Afrikaans.

4.5.2 Sense of community

Marger's second assertion (2003:11) is that in addition to a common sharing of cultural traits, ethnic groups display a sense of community among members. He says that there is a consciousness of kind or awareness of close association. Gordon Milton, in his book *Assimilation in American Life*, suggests that the ethnic group serves, above all, as a social-psychological referent in creating a "sense of people hood." He further states that this sense of community, or oneness, derives from an understanding of a shared ancestry or heritage and that ethnic groups view themselves as having common roots (Milton 1964:84).

John Rangiah, the grandson of the founder of the Indian Baptist Church in South Africa, Manhoran Rangiah, in his editorial comments in the *Natal Indian Baptist Golden Jubilee Brochure*, supports Merger's suggestion that in ethnic groups there is a sense of community, which is derived from an understanding of a shared ancestry or heritage. M. Rangiah stated:

NIBA is our sacred heritage handed to us by those who have gone before us. By the grace of God, we have, with all our limitations and inadequacies, guarded the interests of the Association jealously, upheld its traditions sacredly, its principles resolutely and kept aflame the spirit our forbears put into the Association. May we be privileged to hand over this cherished heritage to our children when we depart from them" (NIBA News 1964:2).

In analyzing Rangiah's comments against Merger's definition (2003:11), it is very clear that he was reflecting ethnic characteristics. BASA has remained largely an ethnic Baptist organization since 1914. Whilst BASA is a member of the South

African Baptist Alliance, any suggestion to form a united Baptist organisation will not be easily accepted by this organization (SABA Minutes 1999:6). As far as the BMSA is concerned, it has indicated that it is ready and willing to form one united Baptist body. Although BMSA is also a largely ethnic organization, it remains to be seen what influence ethnicity will play when Baptists finally agree to form that one united Baptist organisation in South Africa. It would be naïve to think that ethnicity has not influenced the unification process in South Africa. As was stated, the three ethnic Baptist organizations held strongly to their traditions, heritage and, in one case language. The true test will come when structural unity becomes a reality amongst Baptists in South Africa.

SABA has allowed for the five Baptist organizations to engage each other in the area of unity and co-operation. However, there is a past that was painful and challenging. The relationship of the ABK, BASA, BSCA and BMSA with the BUSA had its challenges and at times caused pain. Each of these four organizations relationships with BUSA will be examined.

4.6 The ABK and the BUSA

The Afrikanse Baptiste Kerk (ABK) was an ethnic and language union of the BUSA. Although strong representations were made by the ABK to the BUSA to discuss having its own legal entity, these attempts were unsuccessful. It was accepted that the ABK, because of language and cultural differences, should make provision for the expansion of its own membership (Hudson-Reed 1983:218).

Hudson-Reed, in his book *By Taking Heed*, records the relationship between the BUSA and the ABK. He states that the stunted growth of the Baptist community among the Afrikaans-speaking people is attributable in large measure to the sometimes negative and unsympathetic attitude of the BUSA. Despite this, a good relationship between the two organizations followed. Tensions arose when the BUSA formulated a strongly worded resolution to the National Party that came into power in 1948, which dealt with race relations in particular. Reed records the disappointment of the ABK regarding these resolutions. The ABK regarded these actions as unwarranted and felt that the BUSA was meddling in politics. Furthermore, these resolutions, according to Hudson-Reed, proved to be a real obstacle to reaching Afrikaners with the Gospel (Hudson-Reed 1983: 229).

Relationships with the BUSA deteriorated, and in 1960 a BUSA delegation visited the ABK to discuss its relationship with the Union. The purpose of this meeting was also to find ways of overcoming misunderstandings and to establish better relationships. The Committee of the BUSA recommended to the ABK that it consider the formation of a separate Baptist Union. The motivation for such a recommendation is recorded by Hudson-Reed as follows:

- the ABK's attitude in respect of race relations;
- the frustration experienced in some congregations on account of the limited representation on the Baptist Union's Executive Committee;
- the importance of the development of Baptists among Afrikaans-speaking people;
- the foundation of the Seminarium as an official training centre of the ABK;
- the fact that the ABK already functions as an independent Union.

The BUSA executive committee did not accept this resolution. A recommendation was made to the BUSA to strengthen the bonds of unity. In assessing this relationship the BUSA still had some control over certain matters, such as that ministers of the ABK would be interviewed by the BUSA, all applications for marriage licenses would be made by the General Secretary of BUSA, and that the minutes of the ABK would be sent to BUSA. It must be stressed here that although the ABK remained an integral part of the BUSA it functioned as a separate association. Furthermore the BUSA did not make any provision for representation of ethnic and language groups within the BUSA. The BUSA promised the ethnic groups that they would be consulted from time to time. Hudson-Reed states (1983:230) that the ABK members of the BUSA executive committee regarded with suspicion the long drawn-out uncertainty in connection with the policy.

The BUSA allowed associations to be in membership with it. These associations had representatives at the BUSA executive committee of which the ABK, BASA and BMSA, as associations, were members. The ABK felt comfortable with this, as they would not have to join the territorial associations of the BUSA. The territorial associations, as the name suggests, required that churches in a particular province would be affiliated with that territorial association which had representation on the BUSA executive board. As an ethnic and language association the ABK desired to have their representations on the executive board of the BUSA and not through the territorial association. The ABK feared that joining the territorial association would be a threat to its existence, as the territorial associations would be wholly multi-racial. Hudson-Reed (1983:230) records that attempts were made to keep the status quo

with respect to ABK representation on the Executive Committee of the BUSA, and these were eventually accepted by the BUSA Assembly. Although it was accommodated on the executive committee, the ABK, as did the other associations, still maintained its respective identity. At an interview with Dr C.W.R. Lehmkuhl, the General Secretary of the ABK, on the 18 October 2003, it was learnt that in 1996 the BUSA terminated the membership of associations within the BUSA. The BUSA had hoped that all ethnic and language associations would disband and their churches affiliate directly with the BUSA. The BUSA's rationale was that the BUSA was a union of Churches and not a union of associations.

The relationship of the ABK and the BUSA did have its high as well as low points. There were times when they differed, for example, when the BUSA applied for membership to the South African Council of Churches. The ABK, according to Hudson-Reed, considered this unacceptable. Only a limited number of ABK members attend the BUSA assembly meetings. Hudson-Reed hoped that both sides would take advantage of the current changing political climate to work for a greater degree of unity (Hudson-Reed 1983: 231).

In reading through the history of the Afrikaners in South Africa as recorded by Stack and Morton (1976: 26), Loubser (1987:5), Davenport (1977:331), de Gruchy (1979:54), and Regehr (1979:103), one sees the pattern amongst Afrikaners in general as well as in the ABK at that time. The issue of race relations became an issue in the ABK. The BUSA raised this with them in a protracted meeting held in 1960 and as mentioned earlier the BUSA recommended to the ABK that it should form a separate Union (Hudson-Reed 1983:229). Was that British imperialism or

Afrikaner leaning towards apartheid? The response of BUSA to the government on several occasions where they opposed certain laws concerning the rights of Blacks suggests that the BUSA was serious about the issue of race relations, at least in words.

4.7 The BCSA and the BUSA

William Mashologu is recorded as being the person who started the Baptist Convention of South Africa, formerly known as the Bantu Baptist Church. During his missionary activity in the Transkei, now called Eastern Cape, Mashologu recognized how fragmented Baptists in South Africa were (Hoffmeister and Gurney 1990:33).

In a document, “Proposal Concerning Promoting Reconciliation Between the Baptist Convention and the Baptist Union of South Africa,” it was stated that one of the basic reasons for the present divisions between the BUSA and BCSA appears to be different perceptions of the past. This document goes on to qualify this statement. The BUSA has repeatedly claimed that it did not support apartheid. Indeed, it spoke out against apartheid. However, its perception of the BCSA’s own structures as well as its failure to actively resist apartheid was questionable. Kretzschmar strongly supported this claim about the lack of practical commitment by the BUSA to oppose apartheid as stated earlier in this chapter.

The Baptist World Alliance (BWA), under the leadership of its General Secretary Dr. Denton Lotz, captured other reasons for the disunity that existed between the BUSA and the BCSA. He did this by gathering his leadership in the BWA to listen to the

voices of both these organizations, which took place on the 18 November 1995 at the Rosebank Union Church in Johannesburg. Lotz called this a “Listening Tour.” On Thursday 16 November 1995 he, together with his leadership, met separately with the BCSA and the following day with the BUSA. Each of the delegates of the BWA was required to summarize what he/she heard.

Their summaries reflected the same underlying misunderstanding of the past by the two groups. Emmet Dunn, the youth director of the Baptist World Alliance, observed that the same story of the past was told but from different perspectives. He also stated that he was not sure if the younger generation understood the issues of the past. He warned that this division might produce two generations of fighting. This was echoed by Paul Montacute of the BWA who went on to say that historical perceptions differ between the two organizations. Eleazar Zihembere (BWA) admitted that the more he listened to the two sides, the less he understood the problem. He challenged the two organizations to work together.

Lotz, who acted as the facilitator at these talks, summarized their observations. The following themes surfaced during this “Listening Tour.”

4.7.1 Merger: Revision versus New Vision

The BUSA and the BCSA did not succeed in an earlier attempt to reconcile. In 1987 the merger talks between these two organizations did not yield any results.

The failure of the merger talks of 1987 revolves around the understanding of unity and the Constitution. Merger failed because one wanted a revision of the constitution and the other wanted a new vision

exemplified in a completely new constitution, not a re-write of the old one (Rosebank Union Minutes 1995:3).

4.7.2 History: Mission versus Submission

Whereas the Union viewed their history as a glorious story of mission to the unevangelised and non-Christian natives, the Convention viewed this history as one of submission. The natives suffered the indignities of being treated as children and inferiors, ruled by the White leaders with no power sharing (Rosebank Union Minutes 1995:3).

The Baptist Union's history as recorded by Hudson-Reed (1983:15) does reflect a one-sided narrative in which the efforts of their pioneers and achievements of the BUSA's ministry are highlighted. This history is critically viewed by Kretzschmar (1990:30), and Hoffmeister (1990:52-55). They pointed out the suppression of knowledge of the plight of Black Baptists.

4.7.3 Theology: Evangelism versus Diakonia

In South Africa at that time, with its social, economic and political inequalities, it seemed that only the BCSA was serious about this state of affairs which affected the every day lives of Black Baptists. According to the observation made by Lotz's leadership, the difference in the theologies of the two organizations and how they contributed to the misunderstanding:

There are two theologies at play between the two organizations which, according to him, is the main driving force that has caused much misunderstanding. The BUSA constantly speaks of church growth, evangelism and personal conversion. The BCSA peaks constantly of diakonia, service and justice (Rosebank Union Minutes 1995:3).

4.7.4 Theological Education: Indoctrination versus Contextualization

Theological education is an important area that has been identified by Lotz and his leadership team.

Training of pastors is a key to the future ministry of the church. Indoctrination versus contextualization may be a caricature of how the union and the convention do theological education, but it does highlight two different streams of structures of education. Whereas the BUSA has an elaborate system of theological colleges and Bible Schools, the BCSA is financially prevented from this. The BCSA theological courses are too Western and White and do not understand the contextual problems of the Blacks (Rosebank Union Minutes 1995:3).

The researcher himself is a graduate of the Baptist Union Theological College and had noticed the two different streams of theological education. Although some Blacks were allowed to study at their Colleges, they were largely designed for Whites, and the colleges adopted a very restrictive theological framework. One's social and political context was generally ignored.

4.7.5 Leadership and the Unity Process: Evolution versus Revolution

The impatience of the BCSA was evident, and it seemed that the political developments in the country gave them the motivation and encouragement to pursue unity with the BUSA.

The Union leaders seem to be saying that it is inevitable that ten or fifteen union leaders will be Black, they will be the majority and they will rule. In a sense it will be a growing process, an evolutionary process. The BCSA leadership, on the other hand, is not prepared to wait. The secular government of Nelson Mandela assumed power in a peaceful revolution. What are Baptists waiting for? (Rosebank Union Minutes 1995:1-3).

4.7.6 Repentance: Gospel versus Law

Since repentance is such a critical issue in the Bible, a biblical understanding of this is necessary. It seemed that there was a difference of understanding with this issue.

The BUSA feels that their resolution of repentance sent by the letter to the BCSA is enough of a sign of repentance and should be received with forgiveness by the BCSA. This is the Gospel way. The BCSA feels that the content of the repentance is not enough. There can be no cheap repentance. It needs to be the cross and suffering. It needs to mention specific acts of evil perpetuated by the BUSA, e.g., sending chaplains to minister to the other side of the border. What about specific instances where the intelligence forces used Baptists to report on activities of Black Baptists causing harm? What is the solution and what is the content of repentance? Is it 'an eye for an eye' or is 'it love your enemies' (Rosebank Union Minutes 1995:1-3).

The BUSA's first step of sending the BCSA the aforementioned letter was a necessary one but does not measure up to genuine repentance. The BCSA's call for being specific is the next step so that the perpetrator and victim can find each other.

Lotz, being an outsider, demonstrated a high degree of objectivity, and his observations of the tensions, perceptions and interpretations of issues by the BUSA and the BCSA were summarized very well. Whilst the Awareness Workshop of the BCSA held in 1990 dealt with many of the issues summarized by Lotz, such as inferior theological education for Blacks, mission work by the BUSA to the Black churches, the structures of the BUSA and its understanding of repentance, Lotz is very specific in the areas that contrasted the polarized views, which had often been portrayed or misunderstood by one side about the other. His thematic analysis of the differing views reflected by the two organizations were well presented (Rosebank Union Minutes 1995:1-8).

4.8 The BASA and the BUSA

As mentioned earlier in this research there is not much available literature that reflects the history of BASA that highlights the relationship between these two organizations. According to Hudson-Reed (nd 86:), formal contact with the BUSA is first referred to as having occurred in 1923. He also records the acceptance of Rev. T.M. Rangiah as a ministerial member of the Union. The BASA was accepted as a special association of BUSA and had representation on the executive committee of the BUSA. BASA had a good relationship with the SABMS, a missionary society of the BUSA through which BUSA sent a number of missionaries to work among the Indians in BASA and BMSA. When the BUSA changed its constitution to encourage special associations to affiliate with its territorial association and the churches within those special associations were requested to join the BUSA directly, two organizations opposed this. They were the ABK and the BASA. Then-General Secretary of BASA, V.P. Nathaniel, sent a letter to the BUSA outlining its objection to such a decision. In summary BASA objected for the following reasons.

4.8.1 Fellowship/Interaction

Through apartheid generally and the Group Areas Act of 1950 in particular, Indians have lived in Indian areas and developed Baptist work in their own areas. This Act provided for the setting aside of separate areas for business and residence for Indians, coloureds, blacks and whites (Palmer 1957:142). Nathaniel's (1993:2) rationale was that it was not practical for fellowship and interaction. He also cited the absence of white churches between Durban North and Empangeni, where most of

the BASA churches are located to further substantiate his rationale.

4.8.2 Cost

Nathaniel (1993:2) stated that the cost of travelling to the executive meetings was another factor and that the building of their churches was a priority. The executive meetings rotated among the various provinces of South Africa.

4.8.3 Disputes

In the event of disputes in churches, the arbitrators could be BASA, NBA or the BUSA, perhaps all three. Nathaniel (1993:2) expressed his fear that in the event of a split the aggrieved party has a ready haven in the BUSA. Such a pattern had developed.

4.8.4 Identity

Nathaniel (1993:2) stressed BASA's intentions to maintain its identity. Affiliation with the BUSA would lead to dual allegiance. He belaboured the point that BASA was of the opinion that dual allegiance would militate against the organizational norms, practices and control so carefully nurtured since 1903.

4.9 BUSA- BASA Relations

Nathaniel (1993:3) described an incident that caused BASA disappointment. The

BUSA president and his wife were in Natal during 1992. Mr. N.M. Israel of BASA met them by coincidence and hastily arranged a tour of BASA churches for the following day. A car was provided to take them to Kearsney and the Bible College on the Natal North Coast. They covered seven churches and four hundred kilometres in five hours. The next day, at the BASA Easter assembly, the President brought greetings and mentioned with appreciation the trip and history of each church related by Mr. N.M. Israel. Two months later, at the BUSA Annual Assembly, a BASA representative gave the president an album of photographs of the trip. In the BUSA's presidential report to the executive he reported on his visit to the Western Province churches but there was not a single word about the Indian experience.

Nathaniel registered a further concern and disappointment in that the women's president of the Baptist Women's Department of BUSA, who was invited to a rally by the Women's Department of BASA, reported to her executive committee very little about the BASA women's rally at which she was a guest speaker. In addition, the BASA youth department was sending its newsletter "Youth Update" to the Youth Department of BUSA but no communication regarding their youth work was shared with BASA youth.

Nathaniel (1993:3) drew the BUSA's attention to the recording of minutes of BASA's representative to the BUSA executive. N.M. Israel, at the March executive meeting of BUSA held in Claremont, shared the history of Indian Baptist work in South Africa as well as the split that occurred, resulting in the formation of BASA and the BMSA. The minutes read, "Mr. N.M. Israel addressed the executive committee on some historical details of the split between two Indian groups in Natal" (Nathaniel 1993:3).

Fortunately at that meeting no representative from the BMSA was present; otherwise those minutes would have caused problems if they were read by non-executive members.

It is apparent that BASA has been aggrieved by the attitude and actions of the BUSA. The reasons given by Nathaniel (1993:4) are no way seen as obstacles to unity; instead they are obstacles to closer co-operation and more so obstacles to affiliation with the Natal Baptist Association, which, as mentioned earlier, is the territorial association of BUSA. Presently BASA has no representation on the BUSA executive committee or on its territorial association, but has a cordial relationship with BUSA.

4.10 The BMSA and the BUSA

The Baptist Mission of South Africa (BMSA) is the smallest of the five Baptist organizations in South Africa. It has 13 churches with a combined membership of approximately 1500 (Baptist World Alliance Member Bodies and Statistics 2007). On 29 July 1951, the BMSA executive committee decided to join the BUSA. By the decision of 1951, the general assembly of the BUSA accepted the BMSA as a member church. This implied that the BMSA enjoyed the privilege of having the liberty to carry on with its own work. Hudson-Reed (1983:276) writes that later, in 1974, the BMSA applied for association status with the BUSA but this was unsuccessful. Some of the BMSA churches, such as Arena Park Baptist Church, Asherville Baptist Church and Bethel Baptist Church in Stanger, affiliated directly with the BUSA. Although the BMSA was not accepted as an association within the

structures of BUSA, it was represented on the executive committee of the BUSA (Hudson-Reed 1983:276).

4.11 BASA's response to racism and apartheid

Although, BASA experienced racism in its relationship with the BUSA, BASA's response to the idea of a united Baptist organization in South Africa must be seen against its response to apartheid and racism. In 1964, the South African government established the National Indian Council, which enforced the Indian identity along the lines of separate development (Dhupelia-Mesthrie 2000:24). And then in the mid-1980s the National Party continued with its racial policies by introducing a system of government that included Indians by allowing them limited political power. This system of government which allowed Indians and Coloureds limited political power was called the tri-cameral parliament. It consisted of three houses of chamber: the House of Assembly for Whites, House of Representatives for Coloureds and the House of Delegates for Indians. By 1993 most of the House of Delegates members supported the National Party (2000:24). When an election was held to elect members to the House of Delegates, only 20.3% of the Indian community went to the polls (2000:25). Although this was a low turn-out for this election, a pattern developed among Indian voting in the 1994 and 1999 democratic elections. In both these elections 60% of Indians voted for the National Party (2000:27). It seemed that despite the oppressive ideology of the National Party the majority of Indians did not make a break from its ethnic orientation. The National Party provided a system through its separate development policy that promoted the Indian propensity towards ethnicity. None of the BASA leaders or members publicly supported the liberation

movements such as the Natal Indian Congress, African National Congress, United Democratic Front, Azanian Peoples Organization, and the Pan African Congress. Some of the significant members of the Indian community such as Strini Moodley, Jay Naidoo, Saths Cooper, Mac Maharaj, Pravin Gordan, and Frene Ginwala did not support the House of Delegates. These leaders warned the Indian community against participating in the tri-cameral elections. The NIBA News, which was written by M. Rangiah, great grandson of John Rangiah, does not make reference to racism and apartheid in its survey of missionary enterprise of the Natal Indian Baptist Association from 1903-1953 (NIBA News 1953: 1-57).

Although, Timothy (1989:7) wrote about the Group Areas Act and its effect on the Indian community which resulted in the Indians being removed from Cato Manor, North Street in Durban and were resettled in Chatsworth and Phoenix, BASA has been largely silent on the issue of racism and apartheid.

This research has examined the obstacles to unification, namely apartheid, racism and ethnicity. The historical periods in which these obstacles surfaced or came about were also examined. The research also covered the relationship of each of the Baptist organizations with the BUSA followed by a brief discussion on BASA's response to racism and apartheid.

4.12 Division in the Indian Baptist work in South Africa

Indian Baptists in South Africa once belonged to the Telugu Indian Baptist Mission Church. Rev. John Rangiah, an Indian born missionary, is the founder of the Telugu

Indian Baptist Church. However, 1911-1914 saw the Indian Baptist work go through difficult times. Division amongst Indian Baptists surfaced. Rangiah, editor of the *Natal Indian Baptist Association Brochure* describes this division,

“Rev. Rangiah preached a sermon on sin and its results and this was interpreted as excommunication by the dissentient group. The group then persuaded a few others to join it and wrote without Rev. Rangiah’s knowledge, to the Home Missionary Society (HMS) in India. Rangiah was disappointed that he was not informed of this decision to write to the HMS in India and that the proper channels were not followed. After meeting with Rev. W.B. Boggs who was sent by the HMS in India to settle the dispute, Rev. Rangiah resigned from the HMS. Rev. Boggs returned to India without success in settling the dispute” (M. Rangiah 1964:10).

The BMSA’s brochure, *The Indian Baptist Mission 1903-1953* (1953:12), also recorded the schism in the Indian work in South Africa in the following words: “The year 1913 was an unpleasant one for the Mission, for differences arose between the Missionary, Rev. John Rangiah, and a certain section of his congregation.” This schism is also recorded in both the records of the BASA and BMSA. A council of sixty-six members met at Kearsney on 30 and 31 May 1914 to settle the differences; the meeting lasted twenty-four and a half hours. Despite the intervention of an arbitrator, Rev. Wheeler Boggs, the talks failed. Rev. Rangiah resigned from the Telugu Baptist Home Missionary Society in India and formed the Natal Indian Baptist Association on 27 December 1914 (The Indian Baptist History 1953:12). The brochure of the BMSA (1953:12) states that the two parties, headed by Rev. John Rangiah on one side and Mr. Y. A. Lazarus on the other, were not willing to come to a compromise. The BASA (1964:10) records this same schism as follows: “The missionary found that some of his members in Kearsney, Tinley Manor and Darnall were living sinful lives. Persuasive talk and pleading from the missionary did not help. Special prayers hardly moved them.”

T. Paul in his research on Pentecostalism amongst the Indian churches in the Stanger area, records this schism between the two organizations. (Paul 1987:4-5) According to him (1987:4-5) the reasons cited in his research are similar to the one in the NIBA Golden Jubilee of 1964 except Paul gave the following information that was not contained in the above publication. He stated that a group of aggrieved members sent a petition to the TBHMS accusing the missionary of living a sumptuous life at the expense of the labourers and that he was making efforts to sever his connection with the HMS in India. These accusations, however, do not appear in any of the minutes of the BASA and the BMSA.

The difficulty is that neither of these records is specific as far as the differences were concerned. Rev. T.D. Pass, a BUSA missionary to the Indian Baptists, is quoted in the *Diamond Jubilee Brochure* (1978:2) as saying, “Explaining the causes of the rift between Rev. Rangiah and the group now called the Indian Baptist Mission is difficult since only BASA has offered any explanation and not with enough detail to permit evaluation and judgment.” He continued by saying, “It may be that the real roots lie below the surface and their germination in relationship between various parties before they left India.” To date neither the BASA nor the BMSA are able to specifically state the reasons for the schism. It may seem by Rangiah’s version that the differences were either ones of morality or of theology. A deeper analysis would lead one to probe the nature of the “sinful lives” as stated by Rev. Rangiah, as well as the theological credentials of the two, Mr. Y.A. Lazarus and Rev. John Rangiah.

Firstly, Rev. Rangiah’s vocal and forthright utterances about the “sins” as recorded in the *Diamond Jubilee Brochure* of 1978 were misconstrued as “excommunication” by

the dissident group. If this was the dispute then could the two have not talked about this with their minister and have the minister speak to those concerned privately about these alleged sins? In researching Rev. Rangiah's life it has to be said that he was a very organized, methodical person who maintained accurate records. Every two years he issued a report of his work. In a report submitted by the Telugu Home Mission Society to the American Baptist Missionary Society, the Secretary wrote that most of those of Africa were as sheep having no shepherd. The Telugu Home Mission Society decided to send them a man as soon as a suitable one was found. He continued by stating that one of their best men, John Rangiah, who had been engaged in educational work in the Mission for a number of years, volunteered for the Foreign Mission Service (NIBA Diamond Jubilee Brochure 1978:2).

It may be correct to claim that Rev. Rangiah was a theologically trained minister, as he is referred to by the title Reverend and that when a request was made by the Baptists from South Africa for a minister, a three-man committee was appointed by the TBHMS in India to find a suitable candidate (Golden Jubilee 1964:6). It seemed that a thorough screening process of Rev. Rangiah was undertaken, which made him the right candidate for this religious work in South Africa.

On the other hand there is very little information on Mr. Y.A. Lazarus, leader of the aggrieved group, in the records of the BMSA. The only information about him was that he later became the president of the BMSA. The date of his presidency is not recorded in the *Golden and Diamond Jubilee Brochures* of the BMSA. These brochures placed him in the period 1914-1934. This, however, cannot be used to dispute his presidency. What is strange is that he is not recognized as a leading

force in the BMSA. Other leaders of the BMSA, such as Reverends V.C. Jacob and V.J. Jacob, are accorded much honour by BMSA. Mr. K.D. Moses, editor of the *Indian Baptist Mission Diamond Jubilee Brochure*, praised leaders that have made great contributions to the Indian Baptist Work in South Africa. He wrote, “We cannot bypass this rare opportunity of recording names of such spiritual giants as Rev. John Rangiah, Rev. T.M. Rangiah, Rev. V.C. Jacob, and Rev. V. J. Jacob, who in the obedience call laid themselves on the missionary altar.” Whilst he goes on to acknowledge the contribution of laymen, of which it is assumed Y.A. Lazarus was one, he does not mention names, understandably so because of the large numbers that were involved in the work of the BMSA.

If Mr. Y.A. Lazarus was a layman, would that have played a part in his lack of understanding and interpretation of Rev. Rangiah’s sermon, which dealt with sins in the church? If Mr. Y.A. Lazarus was a layman, then he could have been there before Rev. Rangiah. The *Diamond Jubilee Brochure* (1978:3) of BASA stated that before the arrival of the pioneer missionary in 1903, faithful laymen administered the work and tendered the scattered flock. One could speculate that these two leaders could not work together since Rev. Rangiah came after Mr. Y.A. Lazarus or that the new minister did not recognize the presence of laypersons in his congregation. With reference to the latter, the people who were said to have been living sinful lives were in different churches. Some of the members at Kearsney, Darnall and Tinley Manor were living sinful lives. (*The Diamond Jubilee* 1978:4). If Rangiah’s sermon was of a confrontational nature, why did the others from these churches not respond in the same manner that Mr. Y.A. Lazarus did?

The other reason for the differences between these two leaders is one of speculation as well. The subject of the caste system surfaces. Whilst there is no visible evidence of this, it must be borne in mind that these two leaders came from India where the caste system was practiced. Furthermore it was recorded in the *Natal Indian Baptist Association Golden Jubilee* brochure that Rev. John Rangiah was a son of an orthodox Hindu priest in India (*Natal Indian Baptist Association Golden Jubilee Brochure* 1964:6). Could the fact that Rev. Rangiah came from this caste, which was considered high caste, have contributed to tension between Rev. Rangiah and Mr. Lazarus? The suggestion by T.D. Pass (*Diamond Jubilee Brochure* 1978:2) about the caste system and that the real roots lie below the surface and that their germination in relationship took place between the various parties before they left India must be noted.

J.H. Hutton, in his book *Caste in India*, describes India as a country composed of all sorts of different elements of great diversity, of different creeds, different customs and even different colours (Hutton 1946:1). One sociologist would define caste as:

hereditary, endogamous, usually localized group, having a traditional association with an occupation, and a particular position in the local hierarchy of castes. Relations between castes are governed among other things by the concepts of pollution and purity, and generally, maximum commensality occurs within the caste (Srinivas 1962:3).

In the above definition, it is assumed that a caste group is always easily identifiable and that it does not change its social boundaries. Srinivas disagrees with this. He goes on to say that a caste is usually segmented into several sub-castes and each sub-caste is endogamous. There are thought to be some three thousand castes in India; the scope of this research does not allow an exhaustive account of individual castes but salient aspects as far as its definition is concerned will be mentioned.

According to Hutton the caste system is an exclusively Indian phenomenon and no comparable institution to be seen elsewhere has anything like the complexity, elaboration and rigidity of caste in India. Hutton's definition of the caste system is very helpful. He defines it as "a collection of families or groups of families bearing a common name, claiming a common descent from a mythical ancestor, human or divine; professing to follow the same heredity calling; and regarded by those who are competent to give an opinion as forming a single homogeneous community" (Hutton 1946:47,48).

Whatever the reasons for this schism that took place between 1911 –1914 in which the BASA and BMSA parted ways were, there have been attempts to amalgamate but without success. In assessing these attempts, not many leaders, especially in BASA, have examined the theological basis for unity except for the late Rev. D.N. Nathaniel, an Indian born minister who arrived in South Africa in 1951 and served the BASA until his death in the late 1980s. In his research he provides a theological basis for unity by making references to biblical texts and providing an important interpretation of them as well. Of significance he quotes John 17:21, the prayer of Jesus for unity. He goes on to state: "As we strive to achieve Church union under an appropriate title it would be right and proper if we eliminate selfish and divergent views." Nathaniel strongly advocated unity. His statement that no stone should be left unturned substantiates this (Nathaniel 1979:109-111).

The political change in South Africa provided BASA with an opportunity to engage other Baptists with regards to unity. The research will now turn to the various consultations and meetings of the five Baptist organizations which evidenced a

desire to move towards unity.

4.13 Movement towards Unity

The new political dispensation in South Africa in 1994 and the meeting of the Baptist World Alliance in Durban, South Africa in July of 1998 saw a very significant development as far as Baptist unity was concerned. Leading figures such as Rev. Desmond Hoffmeister of the BCSA initiated discussions with BASA and BMSA, which took place at the Springfield College of Education in Durban in 1997. Another significant consultation between the BCSA and the BUSA took place at Colesberg in 1998. All of these bilateral consultations between and among the various groups were a positive sign. The researcher will examine these important consultations as well as the very first Baptist forum that initially included the BASA, BCSA, BMSA and the BUSA; later the ABK also became part of the process of reconciliation. The breakthrough came when the Baptist World Alliance held its General Council meetings in Durban in 1998. The researcher, in his book *In His Service*, wrote, "...this was the first time the Baptist World Alliance would be meeting in South Africa. They had not made a previous visit due to apartheid in our country, which they strongly opposed" (Ragwan 2003:40).

The BUSA and the BCSA invited the BWA to hold its General Council in Durban in July 1998. Rev. Desmond Hoffmeister, General Secretary of the BCSA requested that the BWA to include other Baptists in South Africa to form part of the Local Arrangements Committee for the BWA. During this General Council meeting, Terry Rae, the General Secretary of the BUSA, said: "We need to sit down and talk to

each other.” It was decided at that General Council meeting by the leaders of the South African Baptist organizations, Reverends Desmond Hoffmeister (BCSA), Terry Rae (BUSA), Mr. Dan Philip (BMSA), President of the BASA Anthony Poliah, and Vice-President of BASA and chair of the Local Arrangements Committee (LAC) Rev. Rodney Ragwan, to meet and begin a process of dialogue.

At a meeting in Durban in 1997 a Local Arrangements Committee (LAC) had been elected with the researcher as chairman. For the first time in the history of Baptists, a multi-racial Baptist committee was established to work together in organizing the logistics for the arrival of the General Council delegates of the BWA. Despite certain challenges, one of which was the resignation of the secretary (a member of the BUSA) of the LAC at the first formal meeting of this committee, the General Council Meeting was a huge success (Ragwan 2003:63).

The working of the South African Baptists particularly in the LAC paved the way for Baptists to move closer towards cooperation. The formation of the South African Baptist Alliance was a result of the cooperative efforts of the five Baptists organizations in South Africa.

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 BCSEA 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 BCSEA 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 Hullett'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.

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