

***MORAL REGENERATION: THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN
REVIVING MORALITY IN THE SOCIETY.***

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***THIS SUBMISSION IS THE PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
DEGREE IN MASTER OF ARTS IN THEOLOGY***

OCTOBER 2004

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I dedicate my special thanks to my most precious and wonderful wife, Moipone, and two God given daughters Ofentse and Galaletsang. They have supported me in my studies, sometimes in difficult times. Sorry for not being there when you needed me most. I give thanks to them through financial situation we find ourselves in, as we continued remained focus towards the objective we set ourselves.

To my closest and critical friend Tebogo Jairus Mokgotho and my classmates. For you Tebogo in particular, all what we shared as we traveled together from homes to university fortnightly. May God shower you with many blessings. Classmates, your contributions from different cultures, experiences, denominations, context etc, helped me to compile this thesis.

To many church members in which I had pastoral oversight as a minister. To all people of greater Zeerust municipality, for sharing yourselves with me, helped me in this journey to prepare this thesis. A special thanks to two elderly men - Mr Mnqibisa and Mr Raphala, who shared with me stories that cannot be shared to people who do not have a mountain experience (initiation school).

Lastly to Prof. Maake Masango, the father of us all, the passionate teacher, the motivator, a friend and therapeutic counsellor. May God keep you and your family for others.

ACRONYMS

- a) **MCSA** - **Methodist Church of Southern Africa**
- b) **HIV** - **Human Immune Virus**
- c) **AIDS** - **Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome**
- d) **(i.e)** - **that is**
- e) **AME** - **African Methodist Episcopal Church**
- f) **(Eg)** - **for an example**
- g) **EEOC** - **Equal Employment Opportunity Council**
- h) **NGO's** - **Non Government Organisations**
- i) **ELCSA** - **Evangelical Lutheran Church of South Africa**
- j) **ATR** - **African Tradition Religion**

SUMMARY

This thesis seeks to be an answer, to the unanswered questions. The writer tries to page back, and find out that which is lost in human kind. The writer tries to find out society in which he was born and nurtured. A society characterised by good morals, virtues, good standards and culture. Something is lost in humanity. What is that? - Morality.

The present society seems to contradict the latter society. The present lifestyle seemed to have no morals. If they do, they must have inherited from somewhere. They seem to have lost respect for other people's property etc.

South Africa's, new dispensation seemed to have eroded Ubuntu away. I am trying to recapture, revive, relive, and resuscitate morality back in the agenda of every South African. How? Moral regeneration is the vision or dream of the South African Deputy President. But I believe it has taken a wrong direction. Politicians cannot lead moral regeneration. Instead the church must lead it, because the church has the spirituality.

The answer to moral decay is in the church. The church need to teach, rebuke and lead by example on morality. It shall not compromise its gospel of Jesus Christ. Today, South Africa is facing a serious crisis of sexuality, unfaithfulness in marriages, corruption, unemployment, HIV Aids etc. morality is the broad concept,

and in this thesis I've confirmed myself in addressing: sexuality, marriage unfaithfulness and corruption.

Moral regeneration can be realised in this country, the church can address unfaithfulness in marriages, sexuality and corruption vigorously. Parliament cannot legislate on these issues. But the church can consciously teach people responsibilities coupled with democracy.

Zeerust, is the small town in the North West Province. I have chosen to write this thesis from Zeerust context. The reason being, I have pastoral oversight of Methodist people in Zeerust and surrounding villages. Zeerust shares the same problems the country is facing that of corruption, sexuality and unfaithfulness in marriages.

Lastly, the church needs to take seriously the cultural factors of its indigenous people. Before we became Christians, we were Africans. The church must be ready to learn from people's cultures, and the way they kept moral uprightness. Dialogue and consultations is a dire need between the church and the culture, between theologians and African healers. This thesis says the church is the answer to moral regeneration.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH STORY:

As I was pastoring a congregation in a semi-rural place called Zeerust, a small town surrounded by many villages, some villages been under my pastoral care, I found that it was imperative for me to further my scope on pastoral theology. The reason being to enable me to respond pastorally the needs of these people here in Zeerust. I have gained first hand exper of how low moral standards can become detrimental to humanity and household. 

In my Honours Degree class, Prof. Maake-Masango challenged and encouraged all students to come up with topics that are therapeutic to individuals, and that can also shape and heal the nation. This challenge in class moved me to begin to address the issue of moral regeneration a problem faced by Zeerust people and the rest of the nation.

I then had to check as how this topic will help resolve the problems I' m experiencing, with other pastors and the church in order to be more practical, vocal and theologically sound towards moral regeneration. It is the procedure in the Methodist Church of Southern African (MCSA) that any person who wishes to pursue his/her studies, to consult with the department of education within the church structure, to look in to the area in which one intends to pursue, and to check as to what extent will the study impact the church and student positively. To check whether the study would shape the student, in ploughing back in the context of his or her daily ministry. And whether would the church embark and cherish this process of moral regeneration. I therefore, had to choose to research on this topic: Moral regeneration - the role of the church in reviving morality in the society. The

choice of this topic came as a result of my struggles in ministry, among broken people who were trying to survive in the midst of poverty.

1.2 THE TOPIC STORY:

Addressing the situation, the reader needs to understand my journey of where the whole problem began. Let me share what life was like for me. In the early age and teens of my life, life was bearable, enjoyable and worthy to be cherished by everybody in the society. One household was a haven of few households in the vicinity. This is an African concept that families used to live as one big family. By this I mean Masango's family would share a little loaf of bread with the Matsane's family without asking, begging and nagging the Masango's-: a slogan of the 1970's and 80's of political struggle in South Africa "an injury to one is an injury to all". While in the old tradition way John Mbiti would say "I'm because you are, you are because I 'm."(1987:107) Jesus further emphasized this kind of ministry saying "if you do these things to the least of these ones you have done them to me.(Mt:25:40).

I yearn to look back and share a story that have impacted my life at the early age of eleven (11yr) in the village called Mafisa, ten kilometres away from Windburg (Makeleketla) Free State Province. It was a norm in those days in my family, that every school holidays my parents will take me to my grandparents at Windburg to assist them with their livestock. That afternoon, my friends and I were from taking care of the cattle and sheep, where we passed a group of fifteen (15) elderly men of the village holding and waving sticks in their hands, ready to discipline someone who misbehaved in the society. A man who was indeed a grown up roughly between 45-55 years, his name was Mr Moeketsane (fictitious name permission not granted) was led by those elders to a place called Lekgotla - a place where traditionally would handle issues for mending and disciplines - a legal court for

elderly men only in the village, a place where issues are discussed and decided upon by men only.

Just before sunset, my grandfather came back, called me while sitting under the nice shade of a tree, and began to relate a story of what I had seen earlier on. He said “we have taught him how people should behave morally in the society by beating him thoroughly with sticks”. He (grandfather) told me that Mr Moeketsane failed to support and take good care of his family and he had extra marital affairs in this community. As he was rebuked, he used derogatory word. Now, this is the story that has impacted my life, and made me to understand good values in that society called Mafisa in Windburg. Today the deterioration of morals, one wish the story could be resurrected in order to become a reality again. This story taught me a lesson that woman and children should be treated with respect. Life is journeyman must be men and boys must be boys. Life is not stagnant but progressive. This has been a pillar of my life, to live life responsibly and to respect others and their properties and also to champion good morals.

In the Western world, particularly whites, the beating of someone may be interpreted as barbaric, cruel and violation of human rights. Yes it might be a violation of human right, but in my culture and in those days this was an acceptable norm to religion people into values that benefit the society in which he or she lives. In the white context, they would probably consider the Sharian law, which, is not accepted by all western world. Some would wish this practice to be faced out; others would wish to maintain it.

I am now a grown up boy, man, husband father of two young girls, living in a moral decay society, and it is a matter of concern to me, to seek those fifteen elderly men,

who can indeed hold and waive high sticks of good morals and to roll out good values and moral to those who misbehave. These elders have taught us something that the church and leaders can, in a small way regenerate and become good havens for all. The church must be a well where everybody can drink and learn good morals. It is a teaching place where we learn to correct moral decay.

1.3 EXPLANATION OF CONCEPT: MORALITY, REGENERATION, SOCIETY AND CHURCH

Most scholars have tried to define what morality is, or how to depict good values and even what influences good moral behaviour or values. Wayne F. Oates in his book *'the psychology of religion'* quotes Allport saying "personality is perceived as being supreme value"(1991:173), this means that one's personality is important because it markets a person. Hence, you will always hear people say, first impression is the impression because it lasts long.

1.3.1 MORALITY:

Dealing with the issue of Morality, the Mugambi in his book *'the church and reconstruction of africa'* had this to say about the issue, "Religion is the most basic stratum of this foundation. The cultural and religious heritage of Africa has been undermined to the extent that African people have lost confidence in themselves as a people"(1997:17).

This quotation tries to show why most African people misbehave in the manner they do today. But it is no excuse anyway.

The missionary and colonial enterprises have inculcated in African people, the attitude that their morals and tradition are primitive and barbaric, in contrast with those of missionaries and colonial masters, which have been portrayed as civilized and advanced.

In other words the Western concept of morality is accepted as norms, while the Africans are excluded and yet they had a communal way of sympathy to each other. The Western is individualistic and less caring in approach. For me then, a moral evolves as ways and means of regulating behaviour within a specific cultural context. Moral relations can be configured in an infinite number of ways. The variables are determined by the creativity and imagination of opinion of leaders in a community, and also by the dominant religious beliefs of the community, which is colonized. The invading culture almost invariably tries to impose its moral values on the invaded community. A clean example is in the area of language, in Mozambique Portuguese was learned as a legacy. They (missionaries and colonists) would ensure the values of the conquerors. Mugambi places this problem by saying: “It is important to note that the effort to replicate European and North American moral norms in africa has been successful only in creating a superficial appearance of modernity, over a deeply traditional ethic that is difficult to erode.”(1997:18)

Good morals are inherited or spring out from opinion leaders, influenced by circumstances of that particular community. Hence, everybody is expected to behave in accordance to the expectations of the customs and values that are cherished by a given society. Morals and values are inseparable. Wayne E Oates further carries on this silence suggestion by saying: “From ethical and social behaviour point of view, there are at least four (4) different patterns of morality (i.e.) forensic, prudential, situational and covenantal patterns.” (1991:175).

Forensic pattern of moral behaviour means behaviour govern by law, without there is no good behaviour. He alluded some verses from the Bible (New King James Version) quoting from Leviticus says “you shall surely not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your neighbour, and not bear a sin because of him (Lev.19: 17-18””1982:80). (Psalm 119:7) ‘I will praise you with uprightness of heart, when I learn your righteous judgement’ (1984:402).

In the situational pattern of moral behaviour is delivered from Jewish faith which extracts is ethical patterning of behaviour through the wisdom literature, the book of proverbs. It says people do carry and cherish the advice of others who are revered, trusted and accepted by the society in which he or she lives.

In a situational patterning of ethical behaviour, he says this is the behaviour pursued by love, love of God and neighbour. A situationist enters every decision-making fully armed with ethical maxims of his community, and its heritage treats them with total respect”(1991:176).

I therefore agree with the above quotation because an upright minded person always observes, listens and respond where necessary. This is a measure of pastoral care. A pastoral care giver must be a person who at least can listen, observe and respond with humanity. Covenantal patterning of behaviour emanates from good or bad relations. Commitment happens between people and among people. When there is commitment between people among people it means community is bonded, there is union, oneness and commonality where people live. A possibility of common behaviour is due to prevail because people uphold one common practice. There is a common psychology of loyalty among people. Hence Josiah Royce had this to say

about loyalty. “Loyalty is the willing, practical and thorough going of devotion of a person to a cause”(Royce, 1991:177).

What Royce is saying is that loyalty is not a coercion, or something pushed by force to individual, but a clear meditated action, a well thought behaviour that comes from heart. In Macmillan dictionary of religious quotations ‘few authors defined morality in different ways. Let me highlight only one of them: Robert Bolt says: “Morality is not practical, morality is not a gesture. But a complicated gesture learned from books”(1989:292). Personal morality is nurtured by people within the community. A person is a person through and with other persons.

This means that there is a need sometimes to formulate morals by opinion leaders in order to give guidance as to how to behave in the community. By personal morality he is referring to prudential patterning of moral behaviour emanating from Wisdom Literature which says man carries and cherish the advise of good opinion leaders who are revered, trusted and accepted by the community in which they live. In short, morality is lived within the community by the people as they cherish that which is good.

1.3.2 REGENERATION

This word implies that there was once something, which presently is no longer existing or been shelved aside or probably deleted. That something which is no longer visible needs to be visible again. The word ‘re’ means again or bring back. We seem to be saying we are not a whole nation; something is missing from within or within us. What is it? Can’t we own it back? We need to go to the basics. Our lives need to be recaptured, rekindled, revisited, reclaimed and renewed. But this is not an event, a process that requires an involvement of all stakeholders.

Martin Buber's philosophy is helpful here, when he embarked on the religious quest, and the quest for the meaning of personality. In the *I - Thou* book he says, "Relationship is characterized by loving, encountering and participating." (1987:101). This is true because only human beings can show and express love better than any living creature. However, I am aware for instance that elephants have a concept of expressing love, for they will move in

On the other hand, monkeys too, have a group tribal way of protecting young ones, and if you come to their territory they will protect the weaker ones. So, some concept of human behaviourist tells us that some animals such as elephants or monkeys have some human concept. However, in this thesis I am concentrating on human beings, and formation of morality and loyalty. If we can love, encounter and participate in an individual affairs, we will be able therefore to extend that to others, and by so doing, we will be reaffirming others around us and the process of regeneration can be captured by all.

A process is something that happens both to individuals and community. For us to live a morally oriented life-style requires not only person but also everybody, for it is an African concept to do things communally. Moral decay is a concept to all of us. Every journey started with the first step forward. If an individual can capture the mode of moral regeneration, the whole community can enjoy in this process. Hence the African concept that says values is created firstly in institution such as: homes, schools, church and society. Regeneration is the awakening of self, doing self-introspection in our nation. The concept is needed in this new South Africa we are living in today

1.3.3 SOCIETY

The word society means a place where people live with their diverse cultures, religion, languages and creed. South Africa can be referred to as a society, and so is the particular province. The M.C.S.A - Methodist Church of Southern Africa calls group of congregation as societies. A parish in the Methodist concept is called a Methodist society. But in this topic the word society referred to entire geographical setting of town called Zeerust, surrounding areas where I do pastoral work. African concept of life is true when it says that every journey start with one tiny step. Zeerust town will be my tiny step of operation. I might sound too confined in dealing with this national issue, but I believe my context is a bigger grid of this thesis.

This society is comprised of different ethnic groups (i.e) Tswana's, South's and Xhosa's both elderly and young, semi rich and poverty stricken area, literates and illiterates, employed and unemployed. This thesis will be interacting specifically with Tswana's and Xhosa's both elders and youth, both semi haves and have nots, both churchd and unchurchd people and both urban and rural. I'm intending to exclude Sotho's because am Sotho, and know the culture and values of the Sotho's. Another reason for exclusion of others is that majority of this society at large are Tswana's and Xhosa's. I want to learn more about the two, as to sharpen my pastoral care element around the society in which I live.

1.3.4 THE CHURCH

The general Biblical understanding of the word church is the assembly of faithful orientated people, a group of people coming together for a common goal

worshipping the Lord. A church is a group of people believing in the teaching and commandments of God. It can be these people everywhere around the globe. But in this topic the word church is referred to people called Christians here in Zeerust surroundings especially the M.C.S.A members- commonly known as the body of Christ.

I am specifically picking M.C.S.A because I know its principles, doctrines, constitution, vision and mission. I do not want to sight another denominations because am not well vested with them, and so the church here is the denomination called Methodist in Zeerust. Churches or denomination preach one God, one faith, one salvation and emphasises the doctrine of baptism through Jesus Christ. Therefore, in that way is Catholicism by the virtue of its oneness but confine myself with Methodist church of Southern Africa.

1.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Through that policy used by the village elders of Mafisa, by entrenching good morals to those who are immoral. I'm convinced the sleeping giant called the church in moral regeneration, need to be awakened to revive or raise the banner of good moral society. It means therefore the church must do a thorough introspection before it points finger out there. The aim here is to find a way of empowering pastors the church, and myself to be vigilant in this regard. To find instance where the church has indeed uphold morality and how did it do it, where it has been too lenient to encourage, scrapping totally immorality in our churches.

Moral decay is a threat to the entire humanity, moral decay affects economy, for example if the majority of labour force are infected by HIV/AIDS, if people for example exercise low moral behaviours, obviously possibility and chances of been

infected is very high. Moral decay cause breaking down of families increases crime and corruption, and it erodes the spirit of patriotism. The objective of this thesis is to seek ways and means of eradicate, if not contain immorality and to instil the spirit of moral regeneration in homes, schools, churches, and entire society.

Trying to engage all stakeholders in addressing this cancer, but the church should lead this process. The church should lead it because politicians will not shape it precisely because they have no spirituality. The church is the custodian of morality and the shaper of spirituality.

The church has moral standards, ethical and social obligation to play in the rebuilding of South Africa. The story of Mr Moeketsane challenges and call upon the church and pastors to revisit the good practices of the past by individual, families, schools, church and society, and compare them with the present behaviour or morals, and try to find out what was right and wrong. My wish is to see a society that reflects men as men and boys as boys, women as women, girls as girls in their behaviour, conduct and character. The society must reflect maturity and growth. And of course to uphold the figure of a woman, mother as an icon worthy to be respected, loved and cared for.

I'm quite aware that morality is a broad concept. But in this thesis I would narrow myself to three-concept (i.e.) sexual immorality, marital relationship and corruption. In the next section I will deal with methodology of pastoral care that will help me explore this issue.

1.5 METHODOLOGY

1. Liberation theology is the better approach in dealing with the issue of moral regeneration, because this chapter deals with conscious issues, as we as belief systems of people in a given community. This chapter also deals with

perspectives, of people in a given community. This chapter also deals with perspectives, perceptions and attitudes contained in relationship of human beings. People are trapped in their wives, especially on sexuality, marital relationship and corruption. Therefore they need to be liberated from their prejudices. Therefore, people need to be liberated from these things in order to have a new look in life.

2. I will engage myself with the bible as a source in order to write ecclesiastically on this topic.
3. I have raised some questions that I am going to use in interviewing the initiation school elders: -
 - I) Briefly give the background of initiation school in your culture?
 - II) What significance does initiation have to both boys and girls?
 - III) What moral issues do you deal with in the initiation?
 - IV) Are there contradictions or commonalities between initiation and the church, (here I'm talking Protestant not Catholicism)?
 - V) What it is that the church can learn from initiation?
4. Bibliography on morality from different authors.

1.6 SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS

CHAPTER 1

I will also deal with my personal background, seeking to heal myself with this as I'm journeying through it. I will also unpack fully concepts in my topic such as morality, regeneration, society and the church. Lastly, because morality is the broader concept I'm confining myself with present issues such as sexual immorality, marital relationships and corruption.

CHAPTER 2

Liberation theology is the better approach in thesis, because this chapter deals with conscious issues, as well as belief systems of people in a given community. This chapter also deals with perspectives, perceptions and attitudes. Therefore, people, need to be liberated from these things in order to have a new look in life.

CHAPTER 3

I will be unfolding the state of affairs in our country South Africa. Most of case studies or stories will be from the greater Zeerust municipality. A society of a Methodist church will be my location.

CHAPTER 4

The church and African culture bare caught up in the crisis of morality. Therefore in this chapter we need to hear the church and African understanding on morality. Try to articulate the church's theology on morality.

CHAPTER 5

Empowerment of pastors as agents of transformation and moral regeneration. To look in to the role of church and pastors facing moral decay today. What can we do as pastors and the church? Theological input in the initiation school.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

2.1 LIBERATION THEOLOGY

Liberation theology came into being after the calling of people's cry from their communities. A cry that registered their oppression, discriminations, a sense of being an outcasts sometimes in your own country. Liberation theology is about all members of the community. It is not only about the poor, but the oppressor; it is not only about the oppressed but also about the oppressor; it is not only about the abuse but also the abuser; it is not only about the powerless and voiceless, but also the powerful and vocal etc. liberation theology seeks to correct all the injustices of the system and structures for the benefit of all.

Theologians in this field would use the good news, in the context of injustices to become the voice of the voiceless. The church becomes friendly and place of refuge to those who needs shelter. Therefore, I will be engaging Liberation theologians in this chapter particularly James H Cone's Methodology.

This chapter seeks to acknowledge that people who live immorally are entangled in their immoral behaviour without realising it. They are trapped in this moral behaviour in such a way that it has become a pattern of their daily lives. The issues of sexual immorality, marriage unfaithfulness and corruption are the order of the day. I do acknowledge also the system and structures to the certain extent are oppressive. The church also is trapped in His course; some denominations are not reactive and voiceless. The church needs to engage itself with African traditionalist,

to tap from them. To check with traditionalists how to approach and addressing morality from their perspectives.

Let me start by defining the ‘poor’. The word ‘poor’ used in this chapter refers to both perpetrators and a victim or people affected by moral decay as the result of people behaving immorally.

Emilio Castro address the issue of identification by placing it on the church as a liberation path

“ Let the church discover and identify itself with groups of people that suffer because of the unjust situations and who have no one. Here is the modern way of the cross, the way of Christian responsibility” (Castro -1979:66).

There is no truth than what Emilio has said, there are people out there who suffer because of the inhuman and unjust situations inherited. For instance, there are some customs and norms, which are oppressive of human race, and because they are communal, people are unable to rise beyond them. In order to understand liberation theology and the problems of victims of moral decay we need to be able to hear their stories and relate to these stories. James H. Cone’s methodology is engaged a new way of doing theology, in this chapter.

The exodus story in the Bible the revolutionary act in the Old Testament, which demonstrated God’s purpose for humankind. God showed thereby that He was the Lord of history that His will for man is not to be thwarted by the other human wills. When Pharaoh said to Moses and Aaron “The Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked” (Ex 9:27). He was saying that he even recognized the righteousness of God in contrast to the wickedness of humankind. The history of Israel is a history of God’s election of special, oppressed people to share in his

creative involvement in the world on behalf of human. In the Old Testament, Israel often referred to herself as the Assembly of God's old people. They are called into the covenant in which Yahweh promises to be their God and they His people Israel task is to be a partner in God's revolutionary activity and thus to be an example, among the nation, God reveals that this concern is not for the strong, but for the weak, not for the enslaver, but for the slave and not for the morals but for the immoral.

In the New Testament, the coming of God in Christ means that the kingdom of God expected in the Old Testament is now realized in Jesus of Nazareth. The day of the Lord has come in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. This day is no longer a future but present in the man Jesus. With him also comes new person, which the New Testament calls the church. The church, consist of people who have been seized by the Holy Spirit and the zeal to live as if all depend on God. The church has no will of its own, only God's will; it has no duty of its own, only God's duty. Its existence is grounded in God.

To speak of the God of Christianity is to speak of Him who defined Himself according to the liberation of the oppressed. Christian theology, then pursuing its church, is that discipline which analyses the meaning of God's liberation in the light of Jesus Christ, showing that all actions that made for the freedom of mankind are indeed the actions of God. And this means that the church has no responsibility other than God's responsibility of healing that leads to wholistic salvation.

Theology, as the function of the Christian church, must serve the needs of the church (i.e) the people or the body of Christ. A church that is unable to express its need, a church, which is voiceless, a church that is not listened to. It is that responsibility of the church to do everything in liberating the oppressed. Some are

emotionally, culturally and socially oppressed. The true gospel must be proclaimed in order to bring hope to the hopeless, destitute and oppressed.

The church needs to follow its founder, whom Joseph A Johnson titled him 'Jesus, the Liberator'. If indeed, all of us see Jesus as the Liberator, then we are freed from principalities and powers of the earth. We are not bonded by any circumstances or situations. This church, because it is free, it must free people from any yoke. Paul speaks of the doctrine of the cross saying "to some this message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (1 Corinthians 1:18-24).

Jesus, the Liberator, is the power of God, the wisdom of God, and the love of God. Paul had a first hand experience of these qualities (i.e.) wisdom, power, and love. He could never quiet understand this new wisdom, this new power, and this new love which he had experienced in Jesus, the Liberator on the road to Damascus. It was a queer kind of wisdom and love that had chosen him, one who had been a prosecutor of the church and now called to be a messenger of the crucified-risen Lord. He could never understand this kind of act that Jesus, God's only son, to die on the cross for the salvation of humankind.

If Jesus, the Liberator could die for the ungodly, if he could sacrifice his life for us. It means that the church has an obligation to pull its resources for others. The church needs to show wisdom, power and love to the needy. The church by its wisdom, must interpret on behalf of the oppressed, issues that confront people. The church with its power vested upon it by Jesus, need to demonstrate that power fairly, justly and show mercy in exercising authority. The church as the custodian of love, must truly and without compromise lead by examples. Christ, died for all of

us, Jews and Greeks, churched and unchurchd, circumcised and un-circumcised, rich and poor and irrespective of status.

The liberation received from Jesus is not limited. It means that everyone who truly believes that 'Jesus is the liberator', has been emancipated by him completely. Nothing on earth or under the sun has power over us. Our behaviours, values, norms, customs, and culture even our personalities cannot enslave us again because we have received true freedom from Jesus, the Liberator. The church, which is the body of Christ, becomes a vessel of this process of regeneration; because of its spirituality and capacity it has from the true liberator. The strength of the church to speak on behalf of the poor comes from the Liberator. Hence the church becomes a voice of the voiceless.

2.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF LIBERATION THEOLOGY

Circumstances, communities and people influence most theologies. People, who live in difficult circumstances and communities, try to find the biblical meaning around their situation. A particular community try to make a theological meaning of why they themselves live in a abject poverty, for instance, from other communities which live peacefully in an affluent economic situation. As the church journey with the poor, it seeks to address the issue of injustices experienced by the poor for example, the pronouncement made on the Quadrennial Session of the General Conference in 1964 of the African Methodist Episcopal Church trying to respond against segregation and racism in the Christian church and the world: “ We are unreservedly welcome into our fellowship without regard to race, nationality or social distinction all who still share the faith of Jesus Christ as Redeemers and Lord” (Minutes of AME Church, 1993:250).

This pronouncement above, clearly tell us that the AME church had problems within itself. Problems of race, nationality and social status affected AME in such a way that the church had to speak on behalf of the oppressed. Hence, people and circumstances in the community they live as I have alluded before normally influence liberation theology. Speculative Christology divorced from the gospel of the Savior and the salvation he bought does not influence liberation theology. The early Christians were not seeking abstract definitions concerning the person of Jesus.

The language of the early Christians and our black father in faith was experimental, functional and confessional. He is basically, interested in Jesus as the Redeemer, Revealer and Liberator. Jesus whom St. Paul had experienced and geared that experience into function after he had confessed not only verbally, but by practice and by living out that he become a missionary to people he oppressed. Any organization that fight for freedom, contents itself with liberation strategies.

For instance the formation of the Free African Society, organized in 1787, continued the first serious attempt to liberate the oppressed black people in the United States of America. It was organized for the purpose of liberating their souls, minds and bodies from the oppressive effects of chattel slavery. Every living black creature around the globe experienced or is experiencing oppression in one way or the other. And they are forced by circumstances to come together and organize themselves to strife for their Liberation. In South Africa, when majority of our people embarked on a struggle against apartheid, they all used any means to fight the regime of the time. Some methods were justified by circumstances, and other were not. But, the common enemy was clearly identified-apartheid. My suspicion is that there was no time to reflect on the methods used. We experienced neck lacing

of both the innocent and (impimpis), spies, we experienced the housebreaking in order to bring out a suspect to be killed, properties of people were no longer respected. Let alone the person was treated less than a human especially the so-called spies and whites in our communities. Failure to see God's image in other people when they wronged others.

This experience made South Africans to loose its concept of Ubuntu while fighting a good course. The course was right but some methods were wrong. As the result thereof we are now rebuilding the process, which was dear to the community (i.e.) the loss of Ubuntu, hence moral regeneration. During the apartheid struggle, the church was at the forefront, championing the course, and it can still do it today to liberate people from prejudices of immoral behaviour to moral.

God's work of salvation in Jesus Christ is human liberation. Jesus becomes the point of departure for oppressed people. The challenge is to analyse the meaning of liberation that comes through Jesus Christ. The Christological implications are implicit in the prophetic tradition.

Jesus clearly set out his mission to the prophetic tradition. Jesus clearly set out his mission to the poor when he said: " the spirit of God is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has send me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, too release the oppressed, to proclaim the law of the Lord's favour" (Luke 4:18-19).

With the above quotation in mind, let us analyse the people of Zeerust, people are self imprisoned, people are imprisoned by norms and cultures of their communities, and people experience prison by abject poverty. This situation makes them to have the attitude of the survival of the fittest, everybody engaging his/her own method for

survival. We also lost the concept of caring for one another-African concept, which fed the poor.

The struggle for liberation addresses the ‘now’ and the ‘not yet’ of the gospel. God’s sovereignty is breaking in on oppression, tearing down the oppressive cruel structures that destroy human dignity. The church is that the community that participates in Christ’s liberating work in history; it can never endorse unjust law for the sake of order. It is the responsibility of the church to say ‘no’ to structures of oppression.

Cone and Wilmore define characteristics of the church as follows:

- a) The church proclaim the reality of divine liberation
- b) The church actively shares in the liberation struggle. The church lives on the basis of the gospel and makes the gospel message as social, economic and political reality.
- c) The church can not be in isolation from the concrete realities of human suffering it must share the suffering of oppressed people, bear the reproach of its enemies and struggle to bring about a new order” (Cone and Wilmore 1993:253).

The church needs to find the providential hand of Almighty God. The hand that can pull down all structures and cultures that dehumanise and enslave. The church need to establish upon South Africa and continent, new structure and cultures, and societies founded upon justice, wherein individuals are able to encourage to realize their full potential as unique and authentic person to the end; and that we all hear the words of the prophet saying “shall beat our swords into plowshares, and our spears into pruning hooks and study war no more” (1993:256).

Freedom is not a gift, a risk that must be taken. No words can describe liberation. Liberation is a process to be located and understood only in an oppressed community struggle to freedom. And so moral decay is a community issue that we need to struggle with. Another characteristics of liberation theology is that it sets an agenda for the mission of the Christian church. I emphasized Christian's church deliberately because I assume that this church finds its mandate from Christ, who associated himself with issues that disturbed ordinary people of his time, especially the marginalised, oppressed, downtrodden, voiceless, homeless, unemployed those who are in the peripheries of the society. This is the environment in which Jesus Christ ministry was centred.

There can be no comprehension of the gospel, apart from God solidarity with the liberation struggle of the poor. The freedom of the victims on the earth is the eschatological sign of God's intention to redeem the whole of creation. People who live immoral life are mostly poor people. They are enslaved because they are mentally poor, lack of mental capacity, but also socially disadvantaged because they live contrary to the expectations of the society. As such they are imprisoned by their personal behaviour as opposed by community. The societal structures forces them to do things they would humanly not do, e.g. prostitution, stealing etc.

The church of Jesus Christ is that community that can read the signs of the time, seeing God's struggle in the struggle of those living immorally in a given community. As ambassadors of Jesus Christ, Christians have no choice but to join the movement of liberation on the side of the poor, fighting against the structures of injustice, prejudices and perceptions. Cone had this to say: "Theology is the church applying critical self evaluation of what it says and does on behalf of the one who defines the church's identity - namely, Jesus Christ" (1986:viii).

Christian theology is language about God's liberation of the weak, as defined by scripture in relation to our contemporary situation. Christian theology is inseparably connected with an oppressed community. Cone argues that: "If God is the God of the poor who is liberating them from bondage, how can we speak correctly about this God unless our language arises out of the community where God's presence is found?"(1986:9). The poor for me in this context are those who are forced to pursue low immoral life-style, those who become victims as a result of moral decay be it at households, work situation, school situations and in the community.

Those who are to be part of programmes of moral regeneration must pursue a high standard of good behaviour. People who are in public positions, celebrities, sports personalities, people of the cloth, need by all costs to be seen as people who through their behaviour, people can indeed revive morality in our communities.

The language of liberation must reflect the experiences of the poor. As we speak on their behalf we need to be with them in devastating positions. To say that one's speech is a theology of liberation does not in itself mean that it represent the oppressed. There are many theologies of liberation, not all of which represent the weak and the helpless. Cone sight a wonderful example of what I 'm trying to articulate. He says:" The difference between liberation theology in the Christian perspective, is found in whether the language about freedom is derived from one's participation in the oppressed people struggle. If one's language about freedom is derived from one's involvement in an oppressed people's struggle for freedom, then it is Christian language"(1986:86).

All what Cone is saying here is that, a true Christian liberation theology comes from God. It means the church has captured God's mission about the weak and helpless. It means, the question of spirituality is vital for the church to lead this process of moral regeneration, precisely because it has spirituality unlike politicians. The church would be speaking a language that is accountable to the God encountered in the oppressed community, and not some abstract God in a theological textbook. This is how liberation work ought to be, working among the poor, liberating them and uplifting them from structures of oppression.

2.3 CONCLUSION:

This chapter has demonstrated how God intervened in the past on situations which were hostile, oppressive and discriminatory to people. How theologians became active to the course of the poor. I have tried to put the word 'poor' into perspective for the sake of this paper the role that the church had played need to play it now in addressing the moral regeneration. It is the responsibility of the church to correct the mindset of the people, who are trapped by prejudices of the entire community. The poor in this case are victims of moral decay, perpetrators of moral decay and the spectators who do nothing to address this issue.

Prejudices of behaving immorally as if is acceptable, that of spouse cheating one another as if it is acceptable, that of people earning good salaries but defrauding the state with pensioners' monies. People need to be liberated from their attitudes. I find the church as the vessel of liberation.

Having dealt with methodology in the above chapter, the following chapter will deal with moral regeneration, checking factors that influence moral decay. I will be

handling three factors even though there are many factors and that will be marital relationships, corruption and sexual immorality.

The following chapter endeavours to unpack the title or theme. Defining Moral regeneration, unpacking the concept, unfolding the affairs in South Africa. The Zeerust town in the Northwest will be my context. A society of Methodist church will be my location.

CHAPTER THREE

MORAL REGENERATION

3.1 WHAT IS MORAL REGENERATION:

Moral regeneration is the initiative by the Deputy President of South Africa in the new dispensation. The deputy President's concern is the moral decay of South Africans. For him (Deputy President) saw the scarcity of morality and how can the regeneration of morality be observed. The sense of respect is not visible, unfaithfulness to marriages is the order of the day the misuse of democracy is the cry of all South Africans. Some South Africans overlook the fact that democracy is coupled with responsibilities.

This is the initiative of a politician, and I need this concept to be pursuing by the church not politicians, because politicians have no spirituality than the church. In this chapter I will only highlight three factors even though they are many (i.e.) Marital relationship, corruption and sexual immorality. Culture plays an important role in reviving morality, hence the approach here is culturally.

3.2 WHY MORAL REGENERATION:

Moral regeneration can be affected by many factors, such as culture. Jose B. Chipenda in explaining what culture is says "Culture in literally speaking means cultivation. It is the state of being cultivated. Culture is what we are, what we have, what we believe, what we long for. Culture is for people what agriculture is for land.

When we are born we are ascribed to the culture of our race and ethnic group” (1997:14). The environment surrounding the accumulated and us experience of those who preceded us shapes our culture. Their victories and defeats, their gains and losses, to a great extent conditioned us. The food we eat and share with our visitors, the smell of our bodies and our dwelling places are essential parts of our culture. Culture influences the way we choose to dress ourselves, and wish to be seen in public. Culture is what we consider to be our hope and despair, joy and suffering, source of love and hatred, what gives us satisfaction or anxiety.

Culture is what we do in our leisure time, the art and the music we produce and enjoy, our dreams and aspirations. How we understand reality and how we perceive the idea of the holy. Culture is the frames were we place the context of our pre-existence, our lives, the unavoidable death of our body and life after death. Culture is both tangible and intangible. It is what we keep for consumption and we communicate for expansion and perpetuation. We are all products of our culture in which cradle we are born. Every living creature has a culture. There are no people without one.

As we grow from one culture to another we untap the amazing similarities and striking differences. Essential human needs are the same, but the way each society organizes itself to meet them differ from place to place. For instance the simple gesture of greetings when we meet people. In some cultures people bow their heads, while others shake their hands still others embrace or even kiss each other. In some countries adults and young people treat each other as equal. In others there are regulations that determine the relationships between the sexes and age groups.

Today all over the world towns are becoming bigger. People are learning to fight to get jobs, find better shelter and food. Development is good, but sometimes it can destroy social structure. As the result morality can be affected.

Development can affect relationships between people, among men, women and children. When development takes place, it must always be coupled with human development, for the sake of value maintenance in the community. To make ends meet, women are joining the workforce. The side effect of cultural change is spreading widely in all continents. Due to daily stresses spouses no longer have enough time for themselves and their children. At home arguments occur more often than before and divorce occurs more frequently. In some countries teenage suicide is already noticeable. Competition is pulling many young people into drugs, alcohol and premarital sexual behaviour to ease the pressure of life. Children and spouses, who find no love at home, look for human warmth elsewhere. They take risks. They go out and rely solely on peer groups for advices, because of loose life children are not groomed in good values.

The church can influence the decay of morality if is not claiming its responsibility as the church of Christ. As we come to the beginning of the twenty first centuries, the church will be confronted with unforeseen problems everyday. There is the need to be realistic, to rediscover our vocation and humbly submit ourselves and our inadequate talents to him who manifest His power in human weakness. It is time to shift gears as we move to a new era. We (the church) should be prepared to welcome this challenges, for they will offer the new opportunities for mission and evangelism. The hour of truth is coming.

The church in each context should seek God's guidance and try to develop in each place of mission moral - prone teachings, in order to revive the dignity of our people

everywhere. If the church is not going to look seriously the life style of people are pursuing in their communities, then the church would have failed in its mandate.

South Africa is already threatened with divisions. Those who have and those who have not. Those who control political and economic machinery as opposed to those who are marginalised. Those who can speak and others who are silent. Those who work for the transformation of their societies and others who keep the status quo. Guidance is needed and the church is in a good position to provide leadership. We should remind ourselves about Jesus Christ teachings implied when he told His disciples “you are the salt of the earth; you the light of the world” (Mt. 5:13-14). These people, most of them live because of the circumstances they found themselves in. Those who exploit those who do not have because of frustrations they result in stealing other people’s properties, the haves become so greedy to the extend of defrauding their companies. This is the responsibility of the church to their members.

One of the aspect that needs to be considered for moral regeneration is ritual. Malidome Patrice Some sees human rituals as the issue that needs to be taken seriously. If we miss our rituals, the importance for living good lives is limited, especially for those people who have rituals in their community. Malidome sights three kinds of rituals (i.e.) communal, family and individual rituals.

- Communal ritual > it is performed only by grown up members. It is performed for village’s needs, for the cleansing of the community.

- Family rituals > Happed or performed under the family head who is responsible. Only members who are initiated are allowed to be part of this ritual due to their responsibilities in the family.

- Finally, individual rituals, which is just important as family in and communal rituals. An individual undergoes this ritual in order to be introduced in the community.
- These rituals are dependent even though they look separate. In Africa, indigenous people are robbed their own traditional powers by the introduction of industrial and machine power. There is a lot of noise caused by machines in Africa, rather than spirit noise of the gods. Thus the two worlds of the traditional and industrial are diametrically opposed. Malidome further articulates his concern by saying “The indigenous world, in trying to emulate nature exposes a walk with life slowly, quiet day-today kind of existence. The modern world, in the other hand, steams through life like a locomotive, controlled by a certain sense of careless work and destruction.”(Malidome, 1982:92).

It is true that people do not want to loose sight to that fact; some will manipulate rituals to legitimise their actions. For instance, people will say ‘ the spirit told me to do it’. Rituals help us not to loose focus, but to dig deep for strength and wisdom to withstand evil spirits. Malidome says there is nothing wrong in Africa’s development, be it technological, political or social. But development must include human development. What he has observed is that machines in the city from ancestry cannot disconnect true African’s. Their lifestyles can be affected somehow, but their being remains the same. He acknowledges why African’s leave their villages for cities because they seek better lives for their households but they can remain Africans if they wish so, even in the noisy industrial cities.

3.3 PAIN AND RITUALS

Pain therefore, is our body complaining about an intruder. “A body in pain is a soul in longing.” To shut down the pain is to override the call of the soul. When this happens it is a repressive measures against oneself, which has sombre consequences. We do not always allow ourselves to work through the pain.

More often that not, we think that pain is a signal that we must stop, rather than find its source. Our souls do not like stagnation. Our souls aspire towards growth, which is toward remembering all that we have forgotten due to our trip to this place, the earth. It is possible to say that pain is good primarily because it is a call to growth. The Dagara elders would say ‘YES,’ they believe that a person who has suffered is a person who has heard pain.

The person hears the pain as a creative action, connecting that person with his/her highest self, which prescribes alternative to spiritual death. So pain at least teaches us something. It is connection, emotion and call to rebuild. It teaches that one must return to a mode of living that began with life itself. When an initiated member of the community registers communication through pain, it is a signal that the soul is in need of some communication with its spiritual counterpart. Pain in our community is like a wake up call. Pain of being cheated, pain of being molested sexually by an elder to a six month old baby, and a pain in children’s hearts when parents divorce. The visibility of this pain makes the church to rise and lead the moral regeneration. This pain can make people and community to loose focus, and begin to behave quite strangely against good moral standards.

In conclusion therefore, this means that the world in progress with its all consuming tendencies is an essentialist that feeds on anything that lives, turning the human

beings into an indentured servant fed with things material, yet starved for everything else. In rituals our souls communicates things to us that the body translate as need, or want, or absence. So we enter into ritual in order to respond to the call of the soul. So illness, perhaps, is the sign language of the soul in need of attention. Our soul is part of us that picks up on situations well ahead of our conscious awareness of them.

3.4 STATE OF AFFAIRS

We cannot speak of morality with exclusions of individual's self-interest. The two seem to be merging although some philosophers see themselves as capable of diverging, and obviously it leaves one with different set of questions such as the following: - how sharp and how frequent are the conflicts between morality and self-interest? Do such conflicts admit of any uniform theoretical resolution? In particular, do considerations of reason or rationality consistently favour one side or the other, or the case instead, that neither morality nor self - interest is always rationally dominant? The answers that emanate from these questions will depend on one's more detailed concept of the relation between the moral point of view and that of the individual agent.

Again to say that considerations of morality and self-interest do not always coincide, is still to leave many of the most important questions about that relation open. Scheffer in respond to the above concern had this to say: "Some people regard the two points of view as mutually antagonistic. They see the moral point of view as insisting on a life of austerity and self denial, while the individuals point of view recommends a life of personal fulfilment achieved through the development, and exercise of a wide range of talents and capacities" (Scheffer, 1992: 3-4). Scheffer in his book tries to compromise in these points of views, he uses a term 'potential congruence.' The church can influence the decay of morality if is not claiming its

responsibility as the church of Christ. As the twenty first century unfolds, the church will be confronted with unforeseen problems everyday. There is the need to be realistic, to rediscover our vocation, and humbly submit ourselves, and inadequate talents to him who manifest his power in human weakness. It is time to shift gears as we move to a new era.

The church should be prepared to welcome the challenges for they will offer a new challenges for mission and evangelism. It is Kairos time. The church in each context should seek God's guidance and try to develop in each place of mission moral prone teachings, in order to revive the dignity of our people everywhere, especially in South Africa. The life of a human being is not merely the expression of laws over which they exercise no control. Meaning our lives are surrounded by many laws, but these laws cannot determine our destinies. They are able to reflect upon their situation, determine their goals and formulate rules for their attainment of those goals. Of course, we retain the capacity to violate the very laws we give ourselves. The language of praise and blame, the reinforcement of reward and punishment, serve to strengthen conformity with those rules by which human being in society choose to describe their behaviour. Customs were not merely habitual way of acting, but ways approved by the group.

The rich has a prescriptive force not simply describing behaviour in the community, but prescribing how it should be. It means customs are designed by people in order to determine a rule of life for a particular society, which may be influential to other society. For instance, in a Tswana customs a boy cannot graduate from boyish behaviour until he has undergone an initiation ceremony, either in a bush or mountain, and so are Xhosa's. Though in Sesotho, this would depend on the clan in which you belong and the geographical settings in terms of rituals that are followed. Sometimes the possibility however, is that a customary instructions may itself be

questionable, or unwise, and in this case that customary instructions warrants re-examinations by members of the community, and possible reform, which leads to a distinction between customary and reflective morality. Customary morality refers to those standards and act rules found in ancestral habits.

Meaning the individuals accept and act according to those norms. At the extreme Robert B. Ashmore would say: “Customary morality tolerates no critical reflection or the challenge of the socially accepted patterns of behaviour. One is expected to act according to the way things are done”(Ashmore 1987: 131). The group mentality governs the way you act and behave. Ashmore continues to reflect about morality. “Reflective morality appeals to the reason or judgement of the individual. This essence of reflective of morality is knowing reasons for or against customary instructions, leading to specification of criteria of judging various ways of acting” (1987:201).

Ashmore is totally right here, because as a theologian, particularly a practical theologian, it is imperative to engage oneself with issues that affect one’s ministry. Try to find out the commonalities in some of customary moralities and Biblical teachings. Therefore reflective morality affords a researcher to try getting the balance between the two. In other words, this seeks a justification of customary instructions, it may no longer consider sufficient to conform to community practices without the engagement. Those practices must be examined critically. Oral tradition has affected the passing on of good values from one generation to the other. That is why most of customary behavioural practices and norms of most African people, were not written down. The reason is that these were not said or discussed or engaged before. We are caught up with good or bad things from our African people, which we cannot explain so that tomorrow they may be transferred to the next generations.

Reflective morality insists upon reasons for observing customary morals and upon acting from those reasons. The engagement would delete the assumption that customs are unjustifiable. Reflection may confirm them, and they may themselves be the production of previous reflection. This philosophy helps us to find answers. The generation of today unlike the past one have always had the way of asking questions “Why,” they are always eager to find reasons of our actions, and by so doing they are in a journey from customary to a reflective morality.

Ashmore helps us understand, the change of this by saying, “the country has changed, life-style has changed and so people’s behaviour would automatically change.” (1989:137).

What about the church teachings, surely the teachings and worship must change in order to be in the same level with changes? Desires and values cannot be simultaneously satisfied. When conflict and novelty interrupt the flow of activity, we must pause and think about what has produced the blockage.

3.5 FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE MORAL DECAY

3.5.1 MARITAL RELATIONSHIPS

I’m serving the society in which majority of families are dysfunctional or separated due to employment policies (i.e.) a father works away from home and visit occasionally or vice versa. One of the issues that we struggle for in the post apartheid regime was migratory laws designed by the former regime. This policy allowed fathers and young men to work in the mines for eleven months of the year without

coming back home either for weekends or month ends contract. They would be away from their families for the upbringing and nurturing of their children. This policy destroyed the ego of the Black rural person. Today they are surprised when people behave like animals. If for instance, a white person by no choice gets transfer due to his work conditions, that company would make sure that he or she relocates with his or her household.

The reason being that the family that stays together articulates clearly good behaviour and obviously, such families would have enormous impact morally in the society at large. Today, people who are in power are the same people who stood firmly against that migratory labour practice. But men and women in working environment today, majority of them have left their children behind, to live either by themselves or with grandparents and aunts. When are they going to teach, and support their children to articulate well accepted good moral behaviour in the society, while they are distant away from their families and only join them sometimes over the weekends?

My experience in these dysfunctional and separated families is that, high risk of HIV/AIDS and infidelity of partners is perpetuated, because the teen and youth are left with grandparents, aunts or to themselves. These children practise loose type of life freely, hence they are exposed to rapes and early premarital sexual behaviours. Husbands and wives stay apart, temptations and lust may be the order of the day. This is not only the secular world issue but the church is caught up by migratory practices. Ever since the introduction of demarcation of the country into provinces, indeed this is a serious problem.

The Bantustan has resurfaced under the pretext of province. Some religious ministers, pastors and preachers of the word particularly in the MCSA, do leave their families behind, without a necessary arrangement prior to the transfer of the minister by the

church. If the spouse works in the professional jobs, some churches too, are so inconsiderate in transferring a minister. They (hierarchy) are not affected by transfers, because they are always in the better position to relocate with their families, because of good incentives they have. Ever since I respond to God's call in 1986, I have not enjoyed staying with my family until a period between 1998-2000, and presently my wife travels 90kms over the weekends to join me at Zeerust society. Does this not increase in moral scandals that we read and see daily in the media? We need to understand that this kind of life, can lead someone to temptation, I am not generalizing nor am I condoning scandalous act committed by colleagues.

Let us explore this further. How can the church advise the state about the morals, while it does the same? Another example is that, a minister in Zeerust alleged of having affairs with women of his own congregation, who would always invite him for meals. His family is far away from Limpopo province. His family joins him only during the school holidays, because his wife is a teacher. As I am writing this dissertation, his church is considering to suspend him indefinitely without a stipend, pending the outcome of the investigations. How do you serve the people who are suspicious about your behaviour living in the suspicious society/ even if you behave well?, but because of majority of men are in the mines, and women are left behind without their own husbands. A minister who serves congregation full of women becomes a suspect all the time. The church needs to articulate and advocate good morals, by putting support mechanisms of its employees, particularly when it considers moving or transferring a minister.

I'm curious, if we allow social circumstances to do away with the traditional institution of marriage, what will we replace it with? What more effective and efficient arrangement could we find to serve the level of commitment, loyalty, support, sense of community, child's guidance love to moral orientated society,

necessary to meet the basic needs of a human spirit, needs such as love, a sense of belonging and importance, security and mutual respect? Myles has this in his book '*understanding love*', *marriage still a Great Idea* says: "over the past six thousands years no civilian or culture has produced a better concept for orderly social development than that of traditional institution of marriage. Every society and culture has recognised an instinctive desire and need for a normal arrangement for the healthy development of families" (Myles 2002: 51).

I share the same sentiments with Myles here because it is my conviction that no matter how vested a person may become in science, technology, systems and knowledge, he/she can never improve on the foundation precepts of marriage as the spring board of social development. We live in the disposable society that has largely lost any real sense of permanence. Permanence is shaky it is bombarded by books, magazines, movies and television soapies with images of wives cheating on their husbands, and husbands cheating on their wives, pornography, sex movies etc are contributing to immorality.

Unmarried men and women hop onto bed with each other at the drop of a hat, and just on quickly hop out to find their next partners. People today shop for relationships the way they shop for clothes. They try something on for the size, and if it does not fit they simply try something else. When they find something that suits them they wear it for a while until it fades or go out of style, human loyalty no longer meaning anything. Then they throw it out or hang it up in the back of their closet and rush out to replace it. Stability of good marital relationship is been attacked by these immoral practices in the society. The permanence of marital relationship is under severe attack by these daily practices both in magazines and public broadcaster. Where is the prophetic voice, and where is the intervention of the church in situation such as these? Is it because the church condones this?

Another immoral behaviour occurred in Zeerust where one member the preacher of the Word in one of my society, prides himself to have two families. He has a legal marriage and ‘vat en sit’ relationship (A relationship that is not permitted by social structures and norms. A relationship, which parents disapprove, but forced by two people without consent of parents). Both community and church elders of my society commonly knew this relationship. When this matter was brought to my attention, it had already some strings attached that ‘a minister is a young man and cannot preside over the issue, let elders handle this matter. The closure and the recommendation of the commission was that “ it is the norm of this community, if a man is financially viable is allowed to have as many wives as he can, provided he can support them properly”.

The issue of permanence in the marital relationship is being eroded by community norms, which allow extra marital affairs to take place as a norm. What happens if a woman is financially viable? She is not allowed to have few men around her that will be blasphemy. It is the research, which was made in the Luo traditional marriages as a rite of passage, and how this institution can be incorporated in the church. The Luo people, on whom this thought was derived, are the ones who live in Tarimo district, Mara region in the Northern part of Tanzania.

It was observed that marriage “ is the focus of existence” for African people. This is what Mbiti says:“ it is the point where all members of a given community meet: the departed, the living and those yet to be born. All the dimensions of time meet here, and the drama in which everyone becomes an actor or actress and not just a spectator”. (Mbiti 1969:33). It is the light of centrality of this practice, androcentrism and rituals associated with it are examined. The term androcentrism is used here simply to refer to a male centred worldview. This is seen in instances where women

are not permitted to define themselves or their roles but simply discover that they have been defined and categorized by men. So they became the silent other:“ Women are therefore, seen as “no-men, those who have neither the status nor the people”(Ndeda 2004:2).

It has been understood that women are custodians of culture and cultural practices or religion in Africa as they are usually in control of shrines and cultic centers. This does not necessarily suggest that equality prevails in African culture. Nevertheless, according to Oduyoye it is observable that there are women who serve as high priests of shrines and as healers. Oduyoye further argues that “Even more obvious is the fact that more women than men are clients of the divinities of the cults. In the African instituted churches, women are most visible in the structure of authority. However, even here traditional taboos still exclude women, including women founders of the churches, from sacramental roles.”(Oduyoye 1992:169). Although there is a clear resistance that came from the African men, it has become evidently clear that the voice of the African women has been silent or not audible enough.

It is through the efforts of feminists like Ruether who argues “the oppression of women is the oldest form of oppression in human history. Most cultures have used the fact that the woman is a child bearer, as a means to the man and to deprive her of the leadership possibilities and of course cultural and self-development. According to Ruether the oppression of the woman is and can be seen as falling into distinct cultural stages, corresponding to tribal societies and classical civilization, while the liberation of woman awaits the flowering of that modern civilization which has overcome the dichotomised reality principle of classical cultures”(Ruether 1972:151).

It would sound heretic to say that the church needs to account for the fall of moral fibre. The church needs to take marriage very seriously, because marriage is the deepest and most intimate of all human relationships, yet it is under attack. This is another issue that has affected moral fabric of our society.

3.5.2 CORRUPTION

The other issue to tackle is corruption. One need to understand what this means. The understanding of affirmative action program refers to positive measures beyond neutral non-discriminatory and merit-hiring employment practices. It is an aggressive program intended to identify and remedy unfair discrimination practiced against many people who are qualified for a job. Among the most controversial aspects of affirmative action is preferential and quota-hiring system. Preferential hiring is an employment practice planned to give special consideration to people from groups that traditionally have been victimized by racism, sexism, or other forms of discrimination.

Quota-hiring is the policy hiring and employing people in direct proportion to their numbers in society or in community. According to affirmative action the two work together. Today, courts of justice are increasingly requiring companies and unions to provide apprentice and re-apprentice training hire, promote, and train minorities and women in specified job categories until a better remedial goals are reached.

Affirmative action is for me to a certain extent, one of the tools in place to further corruption in working conditions. This wonderful action program in some instances have succeeded and failed decimally. It is the reverse of racial discrimination - the unfair treatment of minority members (usually whites). For instance Derik Botha a

member of my white congregation. Married to Fiona with two daughters- Mildred and Maureen. Derick has worked in the department of finance for eight years. He has Masters degree in Auditing and Accounting with Potchefstroom University.

A preacher of the Word and very fluent in Tswana language. He could not be promoted probably because of his colour and background, after having served this department for many years. Instead, somebody with less qualifications was appointed to his position with only standard ten and political background as his experience. One of the reasons given to him was equity. As he was disappointed, he contested this equity through his counsel. I am writing this thesis Derik being at home, no longer working for thirteen months now. Life have changed in Derik's house, he consulted with me as a pastor, to say Fiona is trying other means of putting bread on the table by prostitution. What is sadder is that Mildred and Maureen are in high school, Mildred in grade 12, Maureen in grade 11. What would be the reaction of these girls, should they find out that their mother prostitutes for them to have a better education? Derick is not for the idea, but he has no choice. Life is not bearable and enjoyable any longer.

Fiona suggested to her husband that if he is not allowing her to prostitute then they could divorce after 20years of marriage. This is the result corruption in some of the families that are affected by this issue. [All name are fictitious permission not granted]. One would ignorably say affirmative action is moral, yet it has an element of immoral, particularly when allowed against other people of different colour. This is a need to correct some flaws caused by affirmative action campaign, to consider the general guideline initiated by Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) of 1972, which read thus:“ firms must issue a written equal employment policy and affirmative action commitment. They must appoint a top official with

responsibility and authority to direct and implement their program and to publicize their policy and affirmative action commitment. In addition, firms must survey current female and minority employment by department and classification.

Where under representation of these group is evident, firms must develop goals and timetables to improve in each area of under representation. They then must develop specific programs to achieve these goals, establish an internal audit system to monitor them, and evaluate progress in each aspect of the community programs to combat discrimination in working environment.”(1992:301-302)

The above guideline is the way forward, but the question to ask is, how many firms, companies, NGO’S etc that have put this into practice? Who elects this high decision making officer into that position? South Africa emphasizes on women empowerment. Management positions are indeed being reserved for women. The question is, are they competent, professional, skilled enough and not oppressive to their insubordinate? Or is it just a general blanket policy? Let us guard against people losing jobs because of sex, colour, or language. It is the pastoral responsibility of the church to be prophetic about immoral practices within working environment, which intend affects some families in the society.

3.5.3 SEXUAL IMMORALITY

Another issue that needs to be addressed that affects moral decay is sexual immorality. This is what Ashmore has to say about the research made in United States, he says:” Almost, two decades ago, the United State abuzz with talk of the ‘new morality’ and the sexual revolution: Almost everywhere people were discussing single bars, casual sex, one night stand, open marriage, unwed motherhood, creative divorce, cohabitation, group sex, teen sex and sexual preference. Traditional sexual

morality was breaking or had already broken down”(1992:70). To traditionalists, the changes were at best disturbing or at worst alarming. They worried about the future of their children, family and society.

They saw a moral decline within the society. To those caught up in the revolution on the other hand, the changes were liberating. It would allow them to practice unusual behaviour. It would allow them to express the sexual orientation whether accepted nor unaccepted. What they saw around were options, new kind of freedom, new manners of expression and fulfilment. Others did not take the new morality for granted. Some probably agree totally with traditionalist, despite the pressure one might feel from one’s peers. Some probably accept parts of the new morality but not others. Perhaps some believe in non-marital sex, but feel that the people involved should love each other. Perhaps you find nothing wrong with premarital sex but draw the line at adultery.

Perhaps you accept total freedom when it comes to heterosexual, but believe that the homosexuality is immoral. Such differences show that the victory of the sexual revolution was not complete. These are the new issues that are affecting us. The HIV/AIDS issue seems to be affecting both sexual behaviour of heterosexual and homosexuals. The large number of teenage pregnancies is also causing doubts about the new morality. Life has changed completely. Jeffrey Colen and Vincent Barry say that debate about sexual morality is not over, but a continuation. They present before us the two extreme views (i.e.) tradition and the libertarian.

This statement has influenced the decision of the Vatican 1976, which says “Declaration of certainty concerning sexual ethics”. Roman Catholic church believes that the natural purpose of sex is reproduction. This concept has been a practice of the churches, up until late twentieth century. Traditionalist emphasize what they take to

be an important characteristics of human being - the ability to engage fully in human love, which includes genuine caring, sincerity, respect, commitment and fidelity. These means to engage in sex without love or engage in sex and not open to the possibility of procreation, it is to engage in sex that violates our essential nature and dignity.

Since we violate our essential nature and dignity, it overlook our human good, to engage in sex without love or sex not open to procreation is to engage in wrongful sex. The author emphasize that be as it may, does not say unmarried sex with love and without contraception is moral in the church's view.

The libertarian view is that the sex is an activity like any other football, say, or conversation, or reading - and what concludes whether any sexual act is moral or immoral is no different from what concludes whether any other act is moral or immoral. As long as the act involve no dishonesty, exploitation, or force, and as long as it does not violates and obligations to other, it is moral.

Premarital sex as an example, many factors can make it immoral. If for instance Thabiso tells Kedibone that he loves her and wants to take her home to meet his parents, and take her to bed with him as a result. Thabiso acts immorally if he does not mean what he tells her. Again if Kedibone have a venereal disease and does not warn Thabiso timeously, then she act immorally. But if Thabiso tries to force Kedibone into performing sexual act she dislikes, then Thabiso act immorally. But if the two engage in sexual intercourse for anything more than a one night stand, and if neither resorts to any sorts, or breaks any promise and if neither violates any obligation to a third person, then neither does anything wrong (Fictitious name for the sake of confidentiality).

Here is an act of confidence to both people involved in an act of moral decay. No question of love, commitment and respect. As long as both people have mutual understanding and agreement it seems to be fine with the libertarians.

This view embraces both adults and children, both heterosexual and homosexuals and even adulterous. Although the marriage involves the promise of fidelity they (Libertarians) say husbands and wives are perfectly free to release one another from their marriage vows, just as we are all free to release one another from any other promise. Libertarians say if a married couple agrees that both members would be happier if they could have extra marital affairs, then they are morally free to do so, provided of course that they not keep their marriage a secret from sexual partners who do not wish to have an affair with married people.

They emphasize the ‘Why’ part of it. Why should not sex be treated like any other activity? I disagree with this view because the sense of love, respect and commitment does not feature here. When God in the book of Genesis says: ”Therefore a man shall leave his mother and father and be bonded to his wife and the two shall be one” (Gen 2:24). I agree with the writer, this is not considered in this view. It is like treating people less than human, this view has a capacity of spreading venereal diseases and HIV/AIDS, capable of perpetuating a society without mentors. In fact this view is the vessel of moral decay, has penetrated our culture to such an extent that 60 years will have sexual intercourse with a 3 year old child, where young boys rape their grandmothers and where mothers date young boys, and the homosexuality, been freely practiced in the communities without conscience.

Sex play an important role in our lives, especially to young people and to treat it as an activity, we will be ignoring its importance to personal growth and fulfilment, but also God’s words toward sex. Our young generation misuse sex and it is destroying

our culture. We need to ask ourselves few questions: does our sex life contribute to our sense of worth and dignity? Is it consistent with our most important goals in life? Does it reflect the kind of person we most want to be? And does it enhance our lives as much as it might, does it help us build the kind of relationship we most value? These are the questions that need response from libertarian.

Sexual morality is vital in our context today, particularly when being viewed from traditionalism. It holds the family's fidelity, responsibility and accountability, meaning if most people come from these families, we are sure of anchored moral backgrounds. Good families make up good society. I find difficult to pursue libertarianism view. Look at what is happening right now the lesbians and gay rights movement. We have homosexuals demanding the right to teach in elementary schools, homosexual couples demanding the right to adopt children and homosexual marriage be blessed in the church. What kind of generation is to be born from this society? This

Libertarian is indeed eroding the African concept of familiness, and it also erodes the child's ego that is to grow and live with other children who come from normal family life.

Most of people today resorted into libertarianism practice, particularly middle age man in their marriages. Although some do it without the blessing of their wives. An interesting factor is that, husbands who cheat their wives do not want to be cheated by their wives. Jesus would say: "So in everything, do to others that you would have them do to you, for sums up the law and the prophets" (Mt 7:12). We cannot let our children grow believing that homosexuals are just another life-style. We live in a disposable society that has largely lost any real sense of permanence.

If we do we will be encouraging another fashion, created by people caught up by excitement of their freedom. Socially and biblically is in human, and cannot allowed in our society. I am aware that am conservative and will hold to these views even though it will affect how I will work therapeutically with above people. Having dealt with different perspectives of how people view moral decay. There is a plan- moral regeneration that has its own views too. I have eluded three factors of moral decay even though there are many. The next chapter will deal with practicalities from both institutions of the church and African theology.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CHURCH AND AFRICAN THEOLOGY ON MORALITY

4.1 INTRODUCTION:

For both the church and African theology to understand the role need to be played, they need to understand the philosophical and psychological definitions of religion. Wayne gives this wonderful background. He attempts to define values or morals. This is what he has to sight from other scholars about supreme values. Henry Nelson and Regina Wieman in their search for a normative psychology of religion build their definition on the central importance of a supreme loyalty on value. They interpreted sin, conversation, and religious growth upon the never-ending assent of the spirit of human kind towards the apex of value, which are lastingly supreme.

Anton Boisen spoke of the nature of a person's spiritual struggle as the search of the approval of "those whose approval is most worthwhile"(Olen 1991:147). Meaning, the opinion leader can set a treat for the entire community. Allport say "personality is perceived as being of supreme value" meaning that one's personality tells more of who a person is. He defines religion as follows: " A man's religion is the obvious bid he makes to bid his own personality by supreme context in which he/she rightly belongs". (1988:22). Allport is correct in the way he share the above idea because, he challenges human race not to forget its origin and background. To know oneself is to know your roots in its totality.

The supreme value of personality is in itself an expression of religious concern or style. This was the hallmark of the ethical teachings of Jesus. Jesus said: “The Sabbath is made for man and not man for the Sabbath”. (Matt.12: 10). He (Jesus) reflected his attitude to people, in the way he manifested tenderness to those were facing destruction, and in the way he martial led his aggression towards those who exploited human life and avoided their own selves in the process. They thought that they did God favour that is, been religious.

4.2 UNIQUENESS OF INDIVIDUALITY OF RELIGION AND PERSONALITY

This is what Catell had to say about personality: “That which enable us to predict what (man) will do in a given situation.”(Catell 1988:94) Meaning our personalities can be seen clearly when one is in a particular situation - judged by circumstances. Just as personality is defined in terms of individuality of the uniqueness of the person, and so is the religion defined by Whitehead in terms of solitude ness man’s solidarity. He (Whitehead) says, “Religion is what the individual does with his/her own solitude”. (Whitehead 1989:111). Meaning that the religion of the individuals can be seen in his/her context or circumstances and or places. E.g. symbolizes the loneliness of Christ on the cross, Buda under a tree, Mohamed brooding in the desert.

Berdyaeer emphasizes his concept by saying: “Only when man is alone... he becomes aware of his personality, of his originality, of his singularity and uniqueness, of his distinctness from everyone and everything else. A man may feel himself definitely more alone in the midst of co-religionist

than in the midst of totally different beliefs and persuasions,”(Berdyer1988: 101)

4.3 THE COMMUNAL DEFINITIONS OF RELIGION AND PERSONALITY:

Berdyer continues to say: “Religion implies a relationship; it may be defined as an attempt to overcome solitude, to release the ego from its seclusion, to achieve community and intimacy, but only God is capable of overcoming”.(1998:161). An individual comes from a family that means religion cannot be separated from community. An individual comes from a family, which forms parts of the community.

Sullivan identifies personality with man’s need for relationship and says, “that personality is relational. Apart from the interaction that goes between man and man, personality does not exist. A contemporary psychologist of personality, define a person in terms of the interactions of persons with each other” (1988: 167). Some psychologist of personality has this conviction that personality becomes what it is by reason of the dynamic confrontation between persons. Meaning interpersonal relationships has an influence in one personality and is in island-being created by other persons.

The whole discussion of personality and religion as individual over against community, points to a basic polarity that exists between the individual and his/her community. The two are inseparable. Personality and religion are more often defined in terms of this reciprocity.

4.4 ETHICAL DEFINITIONS OF RELIGION AND PERSONALITY:

Martin Buber's philosophy connects well here, when embarked on the religious quest and the quest for the meaning of personality. He says the I-thou relationship is characterized by loving, encountering and participating. He says a person is not an It, but is either I or Thou in encounter. The moving dynamics of this encounter is 'Love'. As Berdyaer say Love transforms the ego into a personality". (1988:169) Hence 'Brunner' would make such an ethical distinction that the individual truly becomes a person by responsible love for others in the community.

4.5 AFRICAN UNDERSTANDING ON MORALITY

For any person to understand what Africans means about the moral behaviour they need to understand how Africans live in their communities. The concept of family in Africa includes relationships, which extend far beyond the nuclear family of father, mother and their children. The whole clan is the family and most Africans still think themselves in the context of this extended relationship. This concept served as a springboard for the teaching and observation of moral behaviour. One clan could easily advocate its moral behaviour, which in turn affects the life-style of the people in that particular society. And as a result the whole community will behave commonly, supporting and caring one another. The immoral behaviour will be easily detected prematurely and done with easily.

The question of relationship problem was controllable because a society was too vigilant on these issues. During this period dysfunctional, separation and divorce were something that was there but treated so quietly. If a particular family experience marriage difficulties, other members of this family or clan become involved in trying to counsel or help resolve problem in an amicable way. If one spouse is the source of problem, elders of his/her family would advise them her/him on how to keep relationship

While democratisation of Africa is a need, there are also mistakes made by the colonists from Europe in embarking on countries in Africa. If by development one implies an overall process of individual and collective improvement in all spheres of human performance and endeavour, then what occurred in Africa since the 1960's cannot be termed development. The question of what went wrong must be squarely faced if the mistake of the past must be avoided. When South Africa embarked on the process of democratic dispensation, it concentrated on political and economic emancipation coupled with responsibilities. To some, freedom in South Africa meant disrespect of humanity, loss of culture, tradition and destruction of God's image in others.

Fortunately in the process of reconstruction of political, economic and social development, the present government saw the need of addressing morality. This is where the church needs to rise and become a true church of today and tomorrow. It should no longer be church owing God, but church owed him, a church which leaders humble themselves before the Lord and are empowered to transform the church into a vibrant instrument of God's kingdom. A church, which prepares its members to walk humbly with God, love mercy and act justly.

An indigenous church, Christ centric, socially conscious and politically responsible. A church that challenges youth that knows no division and respect and learn people's cultures. A church that enquires and look forward as well as backwards. A church of the Master. A church of the indigenous people. A church that interprets the truth in terms of the truth. A church of all good women and men. A church of the living God. A church that is alive in the context of its people.

Today there is much talk about bankruptcy of morals in African society, which is part and parcel of the church. This is unfortunately evident to the elite's, the secularised, the urbanized, the christianised, and generally all those who can be said to have entered the modern sector. It is also evident in the emerging subculture of violence in our shantytowns, and townships and also villages. Generalization is dangerous but what needs to be said must be said because the hour has and we must seek restoration to a morality that will ensure our health in our common life as Africans.

As people of Africa, we are familiar with the concept of corporate responsibility. For the wrong doings of the individuals in our midst affect us all because we belong to each other. An African proverb states that: "When one defecates they all have defecated" meaning any behaviour done by someone, reflect how the community is like. Mugambi reminds us about the Kikuyu of Kenya that: "If a person was convicted of theft or killing, a heavy fine (or live stock) was imposed to compensate the victim. The culprit's whole extended family contributed to the fine, thereby expressing a public opinion against the offence because they all suffered loss due to one person in the midst"(Mugambi 1997:116-117).

I partially agree with the above quotation because it is one of the examples of the community involvement in fighting the decay of morality. The whole family, including the extended family would therefore by all means exercise the good moral standards at all costs, as the results the community at large would not be affected. The disadvantage though of this practice in the Kikuyu of Kenya is that some of the innocent people will be punished on things they did not do. I had a pleasure and opportunity checking this with the Kenyan friend in my society and this is what he said: “If people could have being part of that community in Kenya one would be amazed how free and respectful Kenyan’s are because of Kikuyu practice. I grew up in that context where a human being is treated like person irrespective of age, sex or whether a person of foreigner or not. This to us has been our measuring stick of my people on morality and values”(A Kenyan brother’s comment). As Christians we uphold that expression in the bible ‘We are the body of Christ’ and as such we participate in the suffering when any part of the church is suffering.

But we also suffer shame as individuals, when the church is accused rightly, in failing to execute its stands on matters of general morality. Our individual conscience pricks us but for many conscience has become dulled by conduct that has become second nature to us. Mugambi does acknowledge that there is indeed moral decay everywhere but he further says: “African society has not always been morally bankrupt. We must not buy the lie that Africans are grossly morally depraved people. We even cry foul to those who condescendingly have described African culture as retarded and evil. The African framework of morality is sharp and resorting what is there is not a matter of taking a step backwards,

rather it is a matter of taking stock of the crisis we are in and setting to work to surmount it” (1997:117).

God in his sovereign Will and Wisdom created human beings for each other. The state of individuals whose community has banished the abject state of poverty one finds him or herself in daily, seem to endorse community life as the ideal. The heart of morality is community consciousness. Self-centered individuals might exist side by side, but they cannot build up a cohesive society. The societal ideas of good life, peace, unity, harmony and good will can only be nurtured by a society whose individuals not only cherish but also promote community-sanctioned moral values.

African society in general has believed that the moral rules that govern the community’s total life, including interpersonal relationships, common action and individual conduct are ordained by God and have stood the test of succeeding generations. The moral value such as discipline, diligence, honesty, sense of justice and temperance person’s integrity. These are values that should make up a community that governs more by community accepted rules rather than imposed rules that can only be enforce by a police force. While there is a need for us to focus on the present and the future, in our quest for more rigid society we must allow the past to give us some ideas. Importantly so, Leakey found among the Kikuyu of the preceding generation what was generally true of past generations, he says :“Believing in God, was the fundamental basis of Kikuyu. Law and order depend more upon religious beliefs than upon police activities, or the judicial authority of the Kiama (council of elders)” (Vol 1 p 16-17 1997:118).

This is also true in the Tswana people that their way of life was rooted in the living God, who according to them, God was aloof from them, not easy to reach, not easy to communicate with, hence the ancestral belief. They believe that God is such a powerful Being, Omnipotent and Omniscience. Therefore they were not worthy to come before Him and pray Him directly. They would rather pray to Him through those fallen heroes and heroines in the faith (ancestors) with the understanding that these ancestors are nearer to Him than them (the living). But the interesting part is that though they pray to Him through ancestral spirit they would always conclude their prayers by saying: (Ka mora wa gago, Moreswedi mokgorong) meaning through your Son who died for us on the cross.

Joseph Healy, one of the missionaries in the East Africa articulated in his own way kind of moral framework. Healy found in the 'fifth gospel' of the African Christian values that: “ “Missionaries did not bring Christianity, faith religion and truth in Africa, because Christ is already present in the African people, working in his mysterious ways. Values such as communal, personal relationships, sharing, patience, joint responsibilities, and serve prophetically question Western culture which is increasingly blinded by materialism and individualism” (Healy, 1997: 119).

This is clear evidence that moral decay is everywhere, here in greater Zeerust municipality borders, in the North West Province, in South Africa, on the continent of Africa and globally. For me part of the process of moral reconstruction is the need for the church to do self-introspection of her historical, structural, theological and cultural contribution to the moral state of affairs in South Africa today. The church is still divinely

mandated with moral authority, should in fact continue giving leadership in a more forthright manner.

The Western culture has indeed impacted on our way of life, which we used to live as Africans. A Tswana old man, who is the initiator in Gopane village here in Zeerust expressed his sad feelings by saying: “Religious rites and traditions are no longer observed by the whole community.

Moral rules are broken with impunity and there is now an untidy mess of disturbing influences, rules and sanctions, whose net result is only that a Tswana does not know what he may not, ought or ought not to do or believe, but having broken original morality of his people”(Rapherere’s comments, true name permission given).

In my own study research into the Tswana traditional morality, I came across pioneer converts into Christianity who regretted having abandoned moral guidance of their children. They found themselves incompetent to teach Christian morality or because they assumed the reading of bible was enough. Others said the traditional morality, which they understood better, was condemned as evil. A retired disgruntled church minister of the Lutheran church of South Africa (ELCSA) said that missionaries insisted on loyalty to whatever they taught and disregarded the knowledge the mission boys might have contributed in their training of evangelism. He further sighted that it was not surprising that for a large section of the church, the only immorality condemned from the pulpit were our African dancing, smoking and fornication.

4.6 RESEARCH STUDY ON INITIATION:

I have an opportunity to engage two elderly men, who normally take young boys for initiation. The two are both members of the Methodist society here in Zeerust. They both are active members and leaders in the church committees. Mr Mngqibisa a church leader in the Maphephane society, (a real name, permission granted). As I interviewed him, he was 81yrs old, strong and very gentle, from Xhosa initiation. The other one is Mr Raphala (fictitious name, permission not granted) from

Tswana initiation, he is 65yrs old, from Moshana village.

I have formulated five (5) questions, which will cover all areas on initiation. Here are their responses in these questions: -

I) Briefly give the background of initiation school in your culture?

Answer: They both alluded that they found it happening in their different respective cultures. They were both informed that, this tradition derive from the bible. They have indicated some of the Old Testament scriptures, which have given support of their initiation. They are quiet sceptical about a place where the young Jewish boys in the bible were circumcised. But Xhosa's and Tswana's chose a mountain in the vicinity. A mountain symbolizes a refuge or shelter. They alluded that those early wars, Africans would seek

refugee at the mountaintop. A place where they will go and reflect on the war, or famine if it has stricken the nation. A place to plan a future with other men of the village including a chief. Men would not discuss amongst themselves and village issues in the village or community. They would prefer to climb the mountain. We chose mountain because is breezy and sometimes cool for our spirit to be enjoined with God's spirit.

Theological expression would be a spiritual retreat. A moment of God speaking to us, a moment of reflection. When we need rain, we go up to the mountains.

II) What significance does it have in both boys and girls?

Answer: Mr Raphala said we are simply competing with the media. Media bombarded our children with frightening information, sometimes at the early age of their lives. For instance sex movies, pornography even magazines inform our children in the Western way. Media expose children to things that they are not yet ready for.

So it is imperative for Africans to inform our children in our culture. Media, indeed has even occupied a parent's mind so much that, we are unable to relate with our own children. The significance of initiation is to afford us the opportunity to be with our children away from media influence. Spent a fruitful time with them. The intention is to pass-on or hand tradition so cherished and respected by our forefathers, in order that we may not loose them. Westernisation erodes our

culture, and our children need a base where they can hold-on. It creates a space where interaction, a nurturing of Ego, and the father figure is identified, observed and encouraged if is the boy, and so is the mother to girls. This is what a family is all about. Sharing! Imparting knowledge to generations to come. This is what we need to learn, have time with children. Whites do take their children to places that can help expose them to knowledge.

III) What moral issues do you address in the initiation?

Answer: They both felt that we are been disturbed and disrespected by both media's and people' views, that a so-called 50 year old man slept or raped a child of three months. Moral issues are the things that are addressed here. We emphasize Ubuntu/ botho/ humanity at length and depth. We teach them personality, respect, love, and community expectations from people. We teach them about the manhood been the end result of one's personality. We live with and among people in the given community, which have its own expectations, standards and values. Therefore every person is expected to acknowledge such expectations thought about by the opinion leaders of the time.

The argument from both elders is that a man who rapes a young child is not a man irrespective of age. According to those elders, one can be a married man with children, a husband or even a grandfather, as long as you are not from the mountain, you are still a boy who can do these unacceptable immoral behaviour, such as rape.

IV) Is there contradiction or commonality between initiation and the church?

Answer: We don't think there is contradiction, they said. Contradiction is brought about by how people misinterpret initiation schools. The ignorance of people who do not have insight of initiation schools. Sometimes it is brought by being misinformed. They said, many people think that initiation is about the cutting of the foreskin only, yet it is not. We have alluded in your question above, that we teach Ubuntu. We prepare these young boys to face life armed with knowledge, which has been handed over from generation to generation. 'Mfundisi', they said; we can tell if a man comes from the mountain or not, by his behaviour conduct and the way he speaks with others.

We believe that there is commonalities in the sense that, all what we do in the mountain, is what the church does, although we cannot disclose some, is exactly what the church does. The church teaches and preaches Ubuntu from the biblical point of view and so with us. Love for one another, respect, personalities etc are common issues that both institutions endeavour to address. We admit that, methodologies may differ but we have common goal. One can ask what exactly is happening, you see they can only disclose issues to people who do have a mountain experience.

V) What is it that the church can benefit from initiation?

Answer: Nothing except knowledge. If the church is well informed, they will support this tradition and culture. The church would cease from criticizing us. The church needs to recognize that its members are African, who comes from somewhere. Church members have their African history before they were called Christians. They were people before becoming Christians. We ask the church to participate in our culture, so that we may support one another in the fight against moral decay of our societies. Yes, we acknowledge with regret to hear and see some of the boys coming from initiation being sick and others dying. The reason is the economic factor and unemployment. This causes people to do anything in order to get money. Those who do not have income have commercialized this. The interview reflects the possibility of interaction between theologians and initiation elders. The purpose of this possibility is to untap the hidden knowledge from initiation schools. I say hidden because, what the church advocates is known, and what they (initiation elders) do, some is not hidden. Except the emphasis on tradition and culture. Yes, some cultures seem to be good, but they may be oppressive to after group of the society (i.e.) women.

JB Ngubane had this to say in the editors abstraction, a book called 'the unquestionable Right to be free', authors quote JB Ngubane saying: "Africans accepted Christianity not as a replacement of African religion, but as a new perspective to be added to a stock of historically

accumulated perspectives. The Zion churches in particular, never allowed African religion to be Christianised rather they Africanise Christianity”(Ngubane 1986:71).

This is the challenge and the call to the church today, how it should do theology but also and perhaps most importantly with the issues of African ness / Ubuntu. Basically the church needs to be indigenous and African in its theology. I make a distinction between the concept indigenisation and Africanization. I see the church as indigenised when it has at its top-level sons and daughters of the soil, in full control irrespective of colour or race. In this sense, the Dutch Reformed church in South Africa can be said it is indigenised. For its leadership is Afrikaners. For the same reasons, the Ethiopian churches are indigenous because they are fully controlled by African themselves. This would help the church to fully understand and respond to the needs of its people.

But they may not be considered fully Africanised, for Africanization implies taking into consideration the culture of the people of Africa, their way of thinking, their beliefs and their entire worldview when creating the structures and forms of the church. Africanization involves dynamic originality and tireless creativity on the part of the leaders, especially the founders. Zionist Church for instance, had and still has as whole leaders of these calibres e.g. Isaiah Shembe, Ignatius Lekganyane and George Khambule to mention but few. A church should take the route of independent churches, which through their leaders, tried to make a creative synthesis of traditional and Christian doctrines. Creatively formulating a truly African Christian community. They represent the radical indigenisation and Africanization of Christianity.

This synthesis of tradition and Christian belief will even help one another to stop speculating and criticizing one another. But to join hands and seek common theology that would help to readdress moral decay that may not necessarily be addressed only biblically but also culturally. I am aware that some practices of independent churches are questionable, but it is proper to engage ourselves with independent churches so that a mutual learning should bring forth answers that could help eradicate immorality in our communities, local churches and among pastors to outgrow perceptions.

4.7 THE CHURCH'S UNDERSTANDING ON MORALITY:

Notwithstanding what have been articulated in the preceding section. A number of writings, forums, seminars and synods in the church have enlarged their view on morality. Are beginning to tackle issues head on that make politicians to be concern for instance, and begin to charge that they (theologians) are meddling too much in the politics and should confine themselves in the pulpit. Morality has to do with the whole of life, corporate and personal, political, economical, cultural and spiritual. The church has divine mandate to address issues that affect the well being of all in South Africa.

The distressed and endangered, literally run to the church for refuge especially when they are running away from dictatorial and autocratic governments, abject poverty and many other forms of marginalizations, force them to see the church as an alternative society. Aaron Gana sees the church as the suited agent for moral recovery in Africa, and this is what he had to say: “The challenge before the church as we approach the

twenty first century is the necessity to harness its immense moral and political force in the promotion of justice. In the African context, this dictates direct confrontation with the African ruling classes and their international allies”(Gana, 1997:123).

Gana here try to prick the church in order to refocus its responsibility and mission to the coming age. He says ‘For the church to survive in its mammoth task before it, is to be more prophetic and practical in its character’. One of the major moral issues in the search for and promotion of justice concerns impunity. Impunity is defined as: “The means by which persons accused of crimes against humanity escape being charged, tried and punished for criminal acts committed” (1997:123).

Impunity is a growing, moral problem in South Africa, because the long arm of the law seems to be descending heavily on the poor and powerless of this country. While big crimes committed by mafias would walk free and have the license to intimidate. The church must exercise her moral authority to fight impunity or she maintains silence and be seen to collaborate perhaps inadvertently. The third party principle of arbitration so familiar in African community is an open choice for the church in South Africa. We know of scandalous behaviour of members of parliament on arms deals. For instance a case known to us is over; a person concern is freed due to lack of evidence to nail him. As I am writing this thesis now we are inundated on television screen, newspapers and radio news about allegations meted against the Deputy President of South Africa about arms deal. At the moment it is hide and seek issue, one wonders what will be the outcome.

The former transport minister of this country was alleged too about bribery. I suspect many similar cases are still to come. It seems to me that it permissible for the elite to commit white-collar crimes and get away with it so easily. While the ordinary South Africans cannot. Is this corruption referred to earlier?

The scorpions tried to uproot these irregularities with the support of both justice system and government. Recently, the President of the country proposed a review on scorpions with the possibility of merging the two i.e. (scorpions and South African Police Services). He motivated his proposal so politically and convincingly. But the question is why now? Is it because the scorpions have put its foot on the wrong soil, by following up immensely and intensively a pending case against the alleged Deputy President? One need to ask, if it was an ordinary civil servant, what would have happened by now with him or her? One of the greatest challenges facing the church today in view of their need for moral reconstruction is the issue of morality within the church.

The church's credibility to point a finger is often questioned. People within and outside the church are sceptical about the ability of the church to spearhead moral reform, when the church does not practice what it preaches. There is no overlooking on the shortcoming on the church, and the only option open for her is to be transformed, to be truly the church of Jesus Christ, which St. Paul talks about a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless" (Eph 5: 25-27). The church has mammoth task to perform in African communities and country as a whole.

The church can only reconstruct a morality that is both African and Christian. As I have indicated earlier on contemporary African community is lamenting a moral world fallen apart and there is need to rekindle memory of the many good moral and cultural values that guided and guarded traditional African communities. African values are based on a deep religious outlook, which has been greatly enriched by the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is the responsibility of the church to fulfil all the specifics of basic morality, which are informed by biblical principles and traditional African values.

Mugambi has echoed seriously some specific recommendations arising from ecumenical consultation and printed in a publication significantly entitled 'Cast away fear' and here are the recommendations:

- I) African moral view and morality must be related to the church moral teachings. The moral teachings of the church must make sense of the African to have real effect.
- II) The church must accept that it has been part of the problem in the growing moral crisis in Africa, and empower African Christians to establish what they consider to be genuine, relevant and acceptable living for them.
- III) African morality is generally person-centred, community centred, humane and practical as opposed to the more rigid, dogmatic, codified and absolutist Western type. The church in Africa must adopt an approach in its moral teaching, which can best be appreciated by Africans.

- IV) African morality must be based on at least “love principle” and live affirming morality taught by Jesus Christ, but not on the more negative world of denying and absolutist affirmation, which have characterized Western Christianity for a very long time.

- V) African morality must be liberating, life enhancing, people centred and humane without being irresponsible or less binding on all members of the church. Such morality is in a way inconsistent with the gospel of Jesus Christ upon which all Christian morality should be based.

- VI) African people themselves must be allowed to formulate, promote and practice morality in their authentic way and according to their interpretation of the gospel of Christ” (Mugambi, 1997:125-126).

These recommendations if taken seriously with consideration, they will indeed pave in a morally accepted community. African people themselves will begin to have a new look in the bible, and find out what does the bible say about moral behaviour and values. The bible will begin to make a lot of sense to people particularly in the peripheries of our country, and begin to be proud of being African even in the context of the church. The sincere expression of African Christianity would adapt youth instinct, and guide the youth and also harness youth energy to benefit the community. It would further integrate women in more participatory roles throughout the church hierarchy and heal the wounds the church has inflicted on women.

In a morally chaotic world, Christians need somehow to be different. If churches are to play meaningful role in such a chaotic world, they must first reclaim their calling to be distinctive, morally formative societies. Lewis S Mudge, in his book “the church as Moral Community’ identifies one reason that make the church failing in reclaiming its distinctive moral theology. He says, “ Ethics must be understood ecclesiology, and ecclesiology must be understood ethically” (Mudge, 1998:19). What Mudge is saying here is, theologians and ethicist have tried decimally to separate the two concepts. Meaning we need not try to separate the two worlds, as Christians we need to uphold not only Christian principles but also recognize that we are also ethical people.

From the beginning, Christians have assumed that professing faith has moral implications and serious significance. They have drawn on the rich moral implications of the Hebrew scriptures, i.e. Torah, prophets and wisdom literature. They have taken seriously the Ten Commandments passages such as Micah 6:8, which reads as follows: -“He has showed you, or man, what is good. And what has the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God” DSB. The summary of the law in Deuteronomy depicts it so well “Hear O Israel, The Lord our God, is one, love the lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength”. (Dent 6:4-5). This shows that the church over the centuries has produce exceptionally rich tradition of ethical reflection and moral guidance. A recent article in the Sowetan newspaper.

A critical article in the Sowetan newspaper, dated 3rd November 2003, a lobbied “protest” Communion held during gay bishop’s consecration”, on ethical and moral issue that can possibly divide the Anglican community

by consecrating a gay bishop. Anglicans are divided in this issue and their division emanate from ethical and moral perspective. Issues such as this have now begin to affect recognition or acceptance of particular communions within ecumenical fellowships. Mudge says: “When the Luthern World Federation and the world Alliance of reformed churches both declare that the violation of the integrity of the faith which jeopardizes their relation as communions to the world bodies in question, the relationship between ecclesiology and ethics takes a new turn”. (1998:20).

This quotation above tries to highlight that the church should not become spiritually stereotype must also engage itself in matters of ethics. The core existence of the church is to allow people particularly to exercise a more balance life-style. In their theological and moral depth, congregation need to distinguish themselves from the world of pragmatic, cost-benefit values. Yet they need to live concretely and visibly in this world with a determinate membership, location, structure, practices and beliefs.

A natured or formed moral awareness needs to be part of what the congregation is, in co-operating all that has shaped its being from the beginning. The entire church much as its emphasis is on the social gospel, there is also a need not to emphasize less the spirituality. And this for me is a mistake the church made in South Africa during apartheid era. The emphasis was liberation and Black theologies without merging the two with spirituality. If they did, they did it sparingly. The church need to understand this new formation of generating moral capacities, in order to direct attention away from purely rule-based models of ethical reasoning but towards nurturing models of moral upbringing. Moral formation in

the church is important because it seeks to generate communities in touch with the world and all its problems yet shaped in a daily talking and retelling of the Christians story. Such formation makes generation after generation of disciples of good morals that can be passed on.

The church needs to be sacramental in its approach. The sacrament of the baptism Lord's Supper is fundamental to all kind of formation. The nurturing of children and others becomes sacramental in the context of the promises for apprehending made of baptism. Care for the earth is given profound meaning in the Lord's Supper. The management of this plate as human household takes on new sense within a theology of stewardship.

One of the moral bases of the church teaching should be repentance. This was one of the demands by Jesus on those who wished to participate in the reign of God. The Greek word *metanoia* conveys a concept that goes beyond the scope of Greek meaning 'change of mind'. The author Rudolf Schcckenburg in his book 'The moral teaching of the New Testament' write the following meaning of conversion or repentance: he says" a) is the total attitude of the man, involving all his power; b) quiet often a conversation in belief, or at least a new and deeper understanding of god and his holy will; c) finally, an answer to the call of God's grace, a grasping of the opportunity of salvation offered by Him" (Scheckenburg, 1965:26). The writer is right by emphasizing repentance's as a new orientation for the future constitution, especially when one represents something new for days to come. Therefore turning away from sins means grabbing the whole attitude in life, one's moral automatically will be affected and the one who has repeated is ready to affect other for the better life for all.

The goal of religious moral conversion is God. But even in this endeavour to cut oneself off from all one's sins and find one's way back to God it is easy to astray. Therefore repentance must be expressed in the whole conduct and especially in works of loving instance. To give weight in the argument, for me John the Baptist's preaching was directly related to the prophetic call to repentance. It was aimed at the moral reformation of the Jewish nation, the nation was not to invite its descent from Abraham, but only through repentance. They could escape the threatening judgement of God's wrath and become the eschatological community of salvation.

His baptism was a baptism of repentance, in which a convert acknowledge his/her sins. But was expected also to bring forth the fruits truth of repentance; these fruits of repentance are identified as faithful observation of the moral commandments of God" work of neighbourly love. Therefore if the church emphasis would be repentance and the fruits of repentance, surely the resurfaced of good behaviour or morals will affect our way of life. A loose sexuality, a disrespect of marital relationships and the corruption in the country will be a thing of the past. And moral regeneration would have been achieved culturally, ethically and biblically.

In conclusion, the African church needs to recognize areas of debate and dialogue between the church and ATR. In this way the church will be able to empower women and not only to speak for themselves and manage their 'woman affair', to be fully present in decisions and operations that affect the whole church, including the forming of its

theology. Feminist theology in the like of Oduyoye, Kanyoro and others argue that, African Christianity taps from African Tradition Religion.

ATR has male as well as female understanding Of God, and Western patriarchy had therefore impacted the one sided male view of God that prevails in the African Christianity. Therefore we must not be tempted to belief that all African cultures are acceptable. Yes, some are acceptable and some are debatable by feminist theology. In this chapter I brought two institutions that helped reshape moral regeneration. Both institutions, that is African and churches are indeed need one another. In the next chapter, we will be dealing with proposals or way forward, based on pastors and the church as agents/custodians of morality.

4.8 WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE BY THE CHURCH:

The church compromises categories of all people found in any community (i.e.) Children, young people, young couples, women, man, senior citizen, single parents, people with disabilities, the strangers in our midst etc. A good purposeful programme of the church ought to meet the physical, moral and spiritual needs of all the above groups, starting with children. Any church, which does not have any attractive, educative programme for children and youth, is doomed to failure and has no future. The Bible teaches us, and experience confirms that, if you teach a child how to live, he/she will learn it by heart and keep it for the rest of his or her life.

The church as an institution is challenged by what is happening in its vicinity. Current changes in the country and in Africa as a whole have

already affected the lives of those who come to worship in the church every Sunday. Liturgy through song sung and sermons preached should reflect those changes. It is time for the church to learn from past generations, by reading books written by and about those preceded us, direct contact with those present through interview, special seminars, workshop etc. Theological creativeness of each and every generation is equally desirable and necessary, for the work of the church does not develop in vacuum. If the church cannot become not only vocal but practical and lead by examples, of the reconstruction of morality by church is a necessity.

The unity of the church is a God-given gift. It came to us through Jesus who in his prayer asked that all might be one, so that the world may believe (Jn17: 21). The challenge of South Africa is for us to search and seek ways in which the church instead of being a vessel to divide people may become a unifying force. We have to move away from identifying each church with its origin, belief, doctrine and method of worship. These perceptions delay us from doing what needs to be done. For instance, ecumenical work locally needs to be reinforced to avoid duplication of projects by local churches. The beauty and importance of ecumenism is that it capacitates the church to work tirelessly together, for the well being of our children and grandchildren, and for the church of the future. Ecumenically we become united to fight against immorality, homosexuality, corruption and unemployment, and teach community its responsibilities, and to stand firm on the church of Christ ministry.

Regardless of changes taking place in our country, we subscribe to the theology of God who is always present in the world and calls us to work with Him to transform situations. God of Abraham and Sarah, who was

with Moses and Miriam is always with us too. The revelation of God through His son varies according to individuals and people's needs. Here in South Africa many of our grandparents saw Jesus as a teacher who provided the needs skills to survive in the contemporary society. Our task at hand is to devise ways of equipping present and future generations, with the eyes to see God our Lord and Redeemer through areas of their greatest needs. Whether we accept it or not the mission frontier is always where the felt needs of the people are met in the name of Jesus.

In Acts of the Apostles, when Peter and John went to the temple at three (3) o'clock in the afternoon, they met at the beautiful gate a man who had been lame all his life. When he saw them going in he begged them for money. Peter and John look straight at him and saw the greatest need of the lame man. He expected to receive money from them, but Peter understood that the root course of begging was the inability to work. Deeply touched Peter said to the lame "I have no money at all but I give you what I have. In the name of Jesus of Nasazareth get up and walk" (Act 3:1-6).

Can we in the name of Jesus Christ tackle some of the root course of immorality in our country and eliminate their bad effect? Yes we need to look beyond moral decay in our context. The root course of moral decline sometimes is caused by poverty. The church must fight poverty. Young ladies who prostitute do this in order to get bread on the table everyday. So before the church condemns prostitution let it check first what could be the root cause of prostitution in our local communities.

Two years ago, a member of my congregation lost her husband through car accident, and to date she has not received payouts from her husband

employer. She was assisted to give her husband a descent funeral by his employer, and ever since the funeral, she moves from one office to another, applying for her late husband monies. Her first daughter, who was then a first year student in, Potchefstroom University, when this accident occurred had difficulties to cope with university fees in order to complete her studies.

She resorted to the so-called immoral activities, after her mother was unable to afford university fees. Kedibone (fictitious name) decided means to complete her studies. She indulged in immoral activities-prostitution to get monies for her studies.

In April this year, when graduating she was HIV positive and as I write this thesis she is in the terminal stage, I believe that by the time you read this story I would have berried her. Hence, there is a need for the church to bring hope even to those people who are stricken, and say to them it is the same God who provided manna in the desert for Israelite to eat, and He can still do it even today. He can still provide manna in the form of medical aid for HIV/AIDS

It is essential that African Christians should be in a position to express in a vital way what Christ mean to them, to do so in and through a cultural medium that makes original thinking possible. As Dickson says: "Faith can be meaningful only when Christ is encountered as speaking and authentically, when he is heard in the African languages, when culture shapes the human voice that answers the voice Christ" (Dickson, 1984:5).

Dickson challenges African Christians to start taking their culture seriously. They should read and understand the Bible in the African eye.

Christ must begin to make sense in our culture, prone out westernisation in the bible. We need to see Christ doing things not in a western way but in an African way; If Christ can live in Zeerust today he will do like Bahurutshe people do because he would see himself as Mohurutshe. African culture needs to engage Christianity, and try to find out some commonalities and differences. We should hear God speaking to us in our own context. We should see Christ embracing and affirming Africa and its resources. African renaissance should happen simultaneously both in the community and in the church. By this I mean we should Africanise our way of worship. In other words, liturgy should be organized or composed in such a way that it becomes meaningful to the indigenous people. After all it is not a sin to do so. But with the same breath, we need to guard against those cultures and traditions that are contradictory to the word of God. Cultures and traditions for instance which are oppressive to both women and children. Cultures that say woman need to be treated as objects, less than a human cannot be tolerated. The bible disagrees with this teaching because the bible says we are all created in the image and likeness of God. Yes, some cultures seem to be okay, though some are oppressive to women.

The church needs to interact with initiation schools and initiators before it becomes judgmental. The interaction is about finding the fact. To find out whether there is no other possibility of the church becoming part of the initiation theologically, ethically and morally. In the well discipline and organized community for instance, a community elders with parents concern negotiate initiation. In one of my local Xhosa speaking society am informed that a community elder who initiates, visits families of the boys whom he thinks are of age (from 19 years). He does this timeously for the families to prepare themselves financially, because there is money

involved after graduation from initiation. The boys are taught morals and values of how to respect themselves and others. It would sound heretic to say that the church needs to account for the fall of moral fibre in Africa.

The Rituals that were performed in African Cultural Religion (ACR) had a purpose of the people existence in the community. In addressing the fall of morality Kanyoro argues that: “many Africans maintain that African traditional morality ensured the integrity of the society and individuals when people lament crumbling morals of today they complain at two levels. The first concerns observable over action such as corruption, neglect of children and the aged The second is about the loss of a holistic religious cosmology” (Kanyoro, 2002:75).

The insensitivity of both the men and the church to the dehumanisation of women in cultures and religion has diverse effect on women. Women are held responsible for the wrongs of the community and yet they remain deprived of power to bring about change.

It is against this background that woman pose new challenges to religious and cultures. Feminist theology challenges to surrender exclusive claims to truth. According to Kanyoro feminism speaks of new contexts where the divine needs to be localized, so as to rid religious and cultures of pervasive androcentrism. African male theologians were sharp in pointing out the problems that inter-religious issue raised for Africa, yet they were silent on how women are treated in African cultures. The bottom line is that Christians cannot think about the gospel apart from its engagement with culture in which that gospel is communicated. Kanyoro highlighted that unless: “The church changes and opts to hold gospel and culture in tension with one another, The woman and men of Africa will continue to

have crises of identity. Many African women will continue to die from sexual violence. Mothers will continue to take their daughters to their grandmothers to perform clitoridectomy. Young men will be married to old men,” (Kanyoro, 2002:109).

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS AND WAY FORWARD:

5.1 PASTORS AS AGENTS OF MORAL REGENERATION:

Pastors are agents of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Pastors are Christ representatives both in the church and outside the church. Pastors are the interpreters of the word, they are to make sure that indeed the Word becomes flesh and live among people. Pastors are to preach and practice what they preach. In other words they are in a sensitive and vulnerable situation in the sense that people or nation look at them to lead the way. Pastors are ambassadors of Christ. Ambassador has no his/her agenda. The agenda comes from the one who has appointed him/her, they share the policies of the one who have sent them. Therefore they need to make the gospel real to the people at all times. They are to carry and uphold the attitude Jesus Christ had towards sexuality, marital relationship and corruption. From Jesus a good and successful marital relationship is influenced by one's attitude towards the dignity of women.

Jesus has never undertaken to make changes in their legal status, which in the Old Testament and Judaism was far from being one of equality of rights. But this actual behaviour bears witness to high esteem and serious evaluation of their religious aspirations. They experience Jesus' love for sinners and prostitutes, as their Savoir (Luke 7:36-50; John 53:8-11; Matt. 21:31), which was totally incomprehensible from the point of view of the

Pharisees. Again, when it seems necessary for this work as Messiah, Jesus even overlook the boundaries of Jewish customs and outlook his dealings with women. For instance he spoke to the Samaritan woman at Jacobs Well, though to do so was considered unseemly for a man and particularly a rabbi, (John 4:27). He allowed himself to be touched by a woman with an issue of blood, though that made him ritually unclean (Mk 5:27-34). Jesus did a lot to champion the course of women. He praised the temple treasury (Mk 12:41-44).

On the way of the Cross-he instructed the grieving women (Luke 23:27-31). The only conclusion to be drawn from all these are that Jesus did not differentiate in his preaching between man and woman. Women were to hear the word of God, experience the Messianic salvation and participate in the holy kingdom of God in complete equality with men. And so are pastors to women today. They are to champion the course of the women across the spectrum. They are to become mouth peace of the women who are marginalized by their virtue of their geographical setting. Pastors need to realize that women empowerment in rural areas is to capacitate the church. By this I mean majority of women in rural areas are left behind by their spouses to nurture children, take care of crops and livestock. If these women can be empowered or capacitated with skills, then the church has good leaders to lead both community and the church.

Dignity of women was the core of Jesus teaching about marriage and family life-style. By this attitude Jesus saved women from being thought of as merely as sexual beings, honouring them as human beings, person and children of God. Originally, God's decree on marriage was that is indissoluble. Already in the Sermon on the Mount there are sharp words against the adultery and also against all divorce. But he also took up a

definite position on these question in a discussion recorded by (Mk 10:2-12 Mt 19:3-9). Jesus answer to this question was simple; Moses commandment was given only because of the “hardness of heart” of the Jews. And Jesus made announcement in God’s name, quoting the Old Testament scriptures saying: “Therefore, what God has joint together, let no man put asunder” (Gen 2: 24). Jesus emphasized most strongly the moral responsibility of married people and in the conditions then existing, especially that of the husband and restored marriage to what it should be according to the will of God at the creation. The source and the centre of a holy and happy family life in which the married couple and children serve God with equal dignity and mutual love.

It is the responsibilities of the pastors therefore, to initiate family day where they encourage couples to share their frustrations and joy in the families. To forge to assist where necessary and even introduce family therapy mission groups within the local church. If people can seriously take and implement that understanding of what repentance is. Rudolf Schnaeburg is right when he says: - “Repentance is the total altitude of a man, involving all his powers”(1992:107). The economic pressure in our marriages that forces spouses to live separately due to work conditions will never impact in our marital relationships badly. In fact these pressures will impact positively. Men and women working distances away from each other will become a bonus in such relationships provided the understanding of repentance is well articulated. Good marital relationship can be observed if pastors can play their role teaching seriously about marriage principles, and live by these principles.

Families would go under such transition of one spouse leaving for greener pastures far from his or her family. The situation Jesus Christ

faced then is no different from the situation in which I' m experiencing today. Jesus dealt with many women in his time without ruling out the fact that men were also there. But the bulk of his ministry surrounded women may be because of compassion he had for them. It is no different in mine, in the sense that in my entire society of Zeerust eighty percent of my congregation are women and young people. Ten percent of men who are presently part of this ministry are semi-committed Christians and the other remaining percentage is in big cities due to work environment.

So pastors who are called to serve in the peripheries of South Africa are likely to have similar situation, where majority of congregation are women. Reason being most men have gone to mining areas, factories and industrial influences communities, and women are left behind to nurture their children, take care of livestock and pursuing farming. I wonder if these men belong to the urban church or not? The challenge therefore facing the pastoral intervention is the necessity. For instance when boys are taken away from these women or mothers. Some of them (women) cannot handle the absence of their boys for initiation. Implementation of strategic theological plan in a manner that would be more pastoral to the entire community is a necessity.

We cannot deny the fact that initiation is not practiced in our communities. It is happening and now it is the time to make it ecclesiastically acceptable. Western missionaries and theologians saw this as barbaric, uncultured and unchristian. Now is the time for both spiritualists and theologians to balance their ministries in the societies. Now is the time to Africanize the church in trying to merge the two syllabus (i.e.) that of initiation school and confirmation class in our churches, they both emphasise good acceptance of moral standards. The

initiated and uninitiated people with similar academic qualifications are quite different people. Someone who comes from the mountain would easily identify that difference, but he who has no mountainous experience would never notice the difference. Their personality, conduct and character differ.

This requires of us pastors to move away from stereotyped mentality and to engage ourselves with people we are ministering. A need for a pastoral counselling for women left alone, lonely and worried about their boys in the mountain is the call to all of us. The call to change perception of initiation is vital because pastors would become liaison officers between initiation elders and parents back home. Imagine the depression and trauma parents endure, sometimes three months or six months, without knowing the progress of their boys in the mountain.

Experience taught me that pastoral care intervention is not only needed during initiation period but is also a responsibility of pastors to take marriage and families seriously. Jesus had teachings on marriages and families. Pastors are to take newly married couples and experienced couples to try to teach on marriage and families and to encourage those that are on the rocks.

But most importantly we need to deal with the issue of scandalous situation where pastors historically have contributed in causing problems in congregant's marriages and families by having extra marital affairs with the vulnerable spouses. It is immoral, unpleasant to God and we need to articulate chastity of all times as pastors. At the end of our ministry we will have pride, worth and respect by all. We need to carry a flag of chastity, so that we may rebuke, without people pointing fingers at

us. I have said in the beginning of this thesis, politicians cannot lead moral regeneration precisely because they have no spirituality to do it, only the church.

The call of the discipleship is a need in today's life. Jesus called loudly 'follow me' (Mk 1:16-20). After hearing the call at once they left their nets and followed him. The word 'following' means literally 'going after someone'. Such discipleship was immediately comprehensible to Jesus contemporaries and for the teacher of the law. Disciples always look upon their rabbi not only as a learned man, passing on the oral teaching to them and explaining it for them, but also as a master giving them training in the law.

Our teaching, preaching and character should reflect that of a master who calls disciples to learn from him/her. Our congregants should learn from us. We need to lay the foundations of living community. Our congregants should and become disciples, where a personal relationship between the congregation and the pastor as the teacher of the law who, because of his or her strict observance of the law, and his/her piety would generally be highly respected. The issue of corruption will be minimized or deleted completely and quickly. Jesus was held to be rabbi, even if he was not academically trained rabbi (John 7:15) and also publicly acted like one in his conversation, in his lessons and controversial discussions. But disciples under Jesus meant something very different, high, unique, and in keeping the dignity of the calling and the work which he called. This is something difficult for most of us as pastors.

We are sometimes unable to hold on to the understanding of Jesus discipleship, that of different, higher and unique. The dignity of the one who calls and the dignity of the work we are to perform seem to be separable; yet before God this is inseparable. In most cases we compromise the gospel in the situation we find ourselves in. Pastors need to advocate the gospel of Jesus in thick and thin situations. As St. Paul's put in his second epistle to Timothy, chapter 4:2 : "Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of the season; correct, rebuke and encourage with great patience and careful instruction". (DSB 1987:1040). Pastors need to be good examples in the community they live. Pastors need to holistically represent Christ. We must indeed become the salt of the world and the light of the world.

5.2 THE CHURCH AS THE CUSTODIAN OF MORALITY:

Larry L Rasmussen, in his book *'Moral fragments & Moral community: A proposal of church in society'* describes the church as "the faith community called to serve as moral community in the society" (1993:138). Larry says before we were Christians we were the people of the way. The details of the reference are lost in the midst of history, but no entirely so, He Himself was known as "The way" (John 14:5-7). The early Christians insisted that the way of God was to be embodied in a way of life by the people of God. For instance Jesus taught his people, nothing so much as the command to love indeed, they had been loved by the compassionate and righteous one, who while they were yet slaves, made a way where there was none. They have these convictions in their hearts as Larry quotes it: "The ancient of days had created them as people in an act of gracious justice and liberations were to define them as the people of the holy one. The moral life itself, for Israel and for Jesus, was to witness

to this way in a particular pattern of community living; in the instruction and training requested for this (discipleship); in the continuous remembering, retelling and sacramental re-enacting of the formative events by the people of the way themselves. A way of life was to be learned and lived, and it was to be learned and lived together, as the community's own way."(1993:139), How much more can one agree with Larry.

If indeed we see ourselves as the people of the way, we need to lead the way. The world needs to find direction from us the church. Of course, people of the way, normally know where they come from and where they are going. The church character, conduct and attitude need to impact government of the time not government to impact the people of the way. Hence, in South Africa, as the proud South African theologian, it disturbs me tremendously when the church always crawling behind politicians 'decisions and proposals'.

Politicians seem to me to have become people of the way instead of following the church. We (the church) have forgotten Jesus words to his disciples; follow me! The government seems to be calling the church to follow, not the church calling the government what to do in order to live in a moral society. Let them articulate, teach and preach morality to its people. Let the members of the church become custodians of good morals even in their working environment during the week. Let them become vessels of good morality in their homes, families and in their marital relationships. Those defrauders of governments monies, be taught from the churches how to behave in the secular world by the church, because some of them belong to the church Let the church speak prophetically against corruption committed by all, the church should not take sides in

dealing with some of the issues particularly those issues that require theological reflections. If we do this without compromising the gospel of Jesus, we would indeed become people of the way, carrying high a flag of morality.

South Africa is understood globally as the rainbow people of God. It has diversities of people, culture, languages, backgrounds and creeds. For moral regeneration campaign to succeed, the church in South Africa needs to take culture at the top of its agenda in the society. What people need and want, especially in the thinner traditions, it is not a sectarian solution to the church problem. Rather guidance in how to live authentically both within the church reshaping of the moral imagination and among the corrosive pressure political life and of the market, among the mislead of many alternative life-style.

A way needs to be found to integrate personal moral issues with question of social ethics and the public well being. Mudge says: “It has not been made clear at the level of congregational life of what a moral strategy for life both inside and outside the household of God would look like. Many persons of faith simply do not recognize public moral engagement as a vocation for themselves. Conversely, many of the most morally effective Christians in the world’s struggles have difficulty relating their moral and political convictions to the faith they are being taught in the church” (1998:79).

Before there can be strategy for formation, there needs to be description of how formation can happen in multi cultural situations. When members of the congregation and Christian life in the world are experienced as

incompatible. People feel a sense of worth, if he/she finds his or her culture being revered by others. Remember culture is what people is, one cannot separate culture, from a person. People and culture are inseparable. Respect one's culture, you would have given the person a total life.

A congregational transformation of ways of viewing the world, capable of giving spiritual sanctuary to others, can only take place through some kind of renewal of the moral imagination. And along with that, and enablement of the capacity to discern what is going on in human community. As Paul wrote: "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by renewal of your minds, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect" (1 Corinthians 12:2).

The words refer to precisely such an imaginative transformation of orientation in the face of the forms of imagination in wordily power. Proving what is the will, of God means more than testing one's experience for evidence that God's will is being enacted there. The church needs to capture the transformation process. If the church can deal thoroughly and honesty with the issue of transformation, things will easily be dealt with. Transformation would help the journey to understand its people and to read signs of the time. The church would for instance deny not the culture of the people it serves initiation, but rather seek a way of participating in the initiation pastoral and theological views without prejudices.

As the Deputy President of South Africa once said: - "the church is the most powerful tool to disseminate information. The church does not need

to plan to organize rallies like politicians do in order to gather people in one place”. But the church is the organization that is well organized every Sunday to inform, to teach, to rebuke, to discuss and even to engage people. And so God has advantaged us, (the church) to do miraculously on issues that affect our morality. The change of the heart policy’ by the church can really lead on the change of heart and attitude policy.

The church exists today among people who are hopeless. We need to redefine ourselves in order to bring hope to hopeless. May we see ourselves as the church of the people? We need to become liberation theologians to those who still feel oppressed by the system. It is essential not just for the sake of the future life of the church, but also for the world. The liberation of the church and liberation of the society is bond up together. John DE Cruchy quotes Clodovius Boff during youth African contribution on economical debate.

DE Cruchy says; “A church of liberation must also be liberated within: a church which seek to fight for just society, in which there is sharing in the economy, in culture and in power, must have within it a structure of communion and participation in which the voice of the least is heard and participate freely, express his/ her feelings freely without fear or intimidation” (DE Cruchy, 1991:229). This for me is the church which Jesus need. Both church leaders and laity need to be liberated before they could liberate the world out there.

It is precisely this commitment and character of the church under the liberating word in Jesus Christ, which open up not only the possibility but also the necessity for the church. Jose Miguez Bonino expressed this beautifully by saying: - “The greater the church identification with Jesus

Christ the more the church will be driven to an identification with the common people; the more the church is identified with the people, the more it be in a position to reflect the identity of its Lord. Identity pushes towards identification, and identification is the matrix of authentic identity”(Bonino, 1991:230). In short he says that the church ‘s identity is Jesus Christ’. Its character, mission and vision must be Christ -centred. Christ set standards of how a person should behave morally at all times without compromising his/her worth.

South Africa has always been a home of variety of people with the different cultures. There are many cultural diversities and even dissimilarities among African societies. It would be misleading to overlook such cultural differences, but it would, however be equally not true to recognize the common values and, at times, uniformity that exists within the diversity. There is common African ness, which must not be lost out of sight. My assumption is that God of the Scriptures is present in African cultures, and that this revelation is to be taken seriously by the African church. This means the impact of the church ministry to its people depends on the seriousness of the church on people’s cultures.

The great value attached to the community in African life, illuminates in a practical way, the meaning of solidarity of the people of God in the Old Testament, the church as the body of Christ and an ethic of corporate existence. Missionary theology on the other hand, emphasized individual and peripheral ethical issues such as polygamy, drunkenness and sex.

Hear me well I’m not saying it should not emphasize them, but it sound one-sided, it did not address social evil manifested, for example, through the colonialism, capitalism and racial discrimination. The church must be

concerned with such evils in our present, postcolonial society in order to restore community based on good morals in African communities.

Africans today are caught up by individualism and capitalism. A high degree of sharing and mutual responsibility is gone. African ethos that says persons are not only obliged to do good they are also required not to do harm to others, nor refrain from doing what would stop harm being done to others been eroded by colonialism, individualism, and capitalism. Hence a high sense of greed, selfishness, personal gain, corruption, marital relationship been affected and sexuality. The understanding of (Acts 2:44-47) has been already there in African people, sharing equal resources.

The church should be an incarnating community, which means that Jesus came to bring salvation into the very heart of human history. Our salvation is the totally in our nature and in the grossness of our earthly existence. The church should take people holistically in their spiritual, social, economical and political dimensions. The Bible upholds the sanctity of the body: “Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God’s temple and God will destroy him; for God’s temple is sacred, and you are that temple” (1 Cor. 3:16-17).

5.3 CONCLUSION:

We need to become a true African Church that takes its people seriously. By Seriousness I mean, consider the whole being of a person. For us to advocate and revive morality in the society is to revive good practices of

cultures in our midst. To recognize a person of what he/she is, is to recognize also his/her background.

Secondly, we need to recognize Jesus as the model of morals, in whom all of us must look at. Learn from Him and implement our discipleship gathered from him. We must not only teach, but also live by examples. Moral regeneration is indeed in the hands of the church. This can open more areas of continuing research.

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