Church and society: the value of Perichoresis in understanding Ubuntu with special reference to John Zizioulas

by

JELE SAMUEL MANGANYI

In fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

PHILOSOPHIAE DOCTOR

In the Department of Dogmatics and Christian Ethics

FACULTY OF THEOLOGY

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Johan Buitendag

November 2012

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my heartfelt, profound gratitude to the following people for various kinds of assistance and encouragement I received during the course of this study:

- To Prof Dr J. Buitendag, the promoter of this thesis for his loving care, advice and encouragement. I say thank you for your support as my mentor, teacher and friend. You made me walk the journey to being a disciple of Christ. May God richly bless you.
- To Dr C. Steyn for his insights and the time we spent on correcting the document. Thanks also to Ms. S. Duncan for her availability and willingness to assist me with editing my work and providing valuable advice. I am humbled by her spirit of Ubuntu.
- To Mr. M. Ralephata for his support and critical analysis; to Mr. W. Mathebula, Mr. M. Vongo and Mr. L. M. Mangquku for your time spent reading and editing the material.
- To those who helped me through their computer skills, like Miss N. Lallo, N Qayiso and G. Mfolo.
- Many thanks to Cornerstone Christian Institute who laid a good foundation for my academic endeavour.
- To my fellow workers in the Assemblies of God, Gauteng office, for your understanding and encouragements.
- To Pastor T. Zuma who believed in me more than I did, thank you and may God bless you.
- To the following churches, Soshanguve South Assembly of God (AOG), Sivana AOG, Soshanguve Central AOG and Orlando AOG, for your support and power of your prayers which helped me tremendously along the way.
- To my late parents who will not be able to read this thesis.
- To my dear wife Alice who has been a pillar of strength to me throughout the years, your love and confidence in me has been a great source of inspiration.
- To Nyiko, Junior and Smangaliso, be inspired.
- To God be the glory.

COPYRIGHT NOTICE

I declare that the thesis *Church and society: the value of Perichoresis in understanding Ubuntu with special reference to John Zizioulas,* which I hereby submit for the degree Philosophiae Doctor at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not been submitted by me before for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution.

JELE S. MANGANYI (25403592)

30 November 2012

ABSTRACT

The African Initiated Churches (AICs) are the custodians of the African Traditional Religion (ATR). In the South African census, the AICs are classified as Christian. Africans claim that long before the Christian faith came through missionaries there was some form of worship of God by Africans. This means Africans practiced ATR outside Christianity and after Christianity came through missionaries, they started practising it as *Christians*. One of the reasons given for the Africans moving out of the missionary churches to start their own was a search for an African identity. There was a hunger for a place where the African culture could be accommodated. One of the features of African culture is the worship of ancestors. The question of monotheism encountering polytheism does arise in this kind of discussion.

The doctrine of the Trinity is uniquely Christian. There is a historical background concerning the teaching and the foundation thereof. As the AICs responded to a situation, so did the Early Church Fathers who faced question of monotheism encountering polytheism. There was a need to redefine Jewish monotheism within the Christian faith in reference to the event of Jesus Christ. The Church Fathers struggled to defend and grappled with the Christian faith with reference to the scriptures in the light of Jesus Christ. They took the gospel from the Jewish setting into the Greek setting. Their efforts benefited the church throughout history. One may say the writings and the teachings of the early church stood the test of time. One may also say the writings and the teachings were based on the solid foundation being of Jesus Christ and the authority of the scriptures.

Juxtaposition is the approach employed in this thesis. Two traditions are being critically assessed based on the notion of Perichoresis by the Cappadocian Church Fathers and the notion of Ubuntu in the ATR.

Chapter one deals with the theological background with specific focus on the African church and contextualisation. Chapter two, deals with the debate concerning the position and nature of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. It also investigates the origin of the Nicene Creed. Chapter three investigates the terminology within the doctrine of the Trinity, while Chapter four explores the term ecumenical and communion with reference to Ubuntu. Chapter five

analyses the work of Zizioulas, and the conclusion attempts to find an appropriate approach for the African church.

Therefore the study concludes that the reference for Ubuntu should be found in the relationship with God through Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit and not in the veneration and worship of the ancestors.

The benefits of the relationship with God through Jesus supersede all other relationship with any deity in the now and the future.

Umuntu ngo munthu nga bantu

Mothu ke mothu ka batho

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1:   SETTING THE STAGE

1.1   Preliminaries

The Cappadocian Fathers came to the notion of Perichoresis in the process of their theological reflection and debate in response to the questions on the nature and position of Jesus Christ as well as his relation to God the Father. The focus of the questions that were imposed on the church opened up an opportunity for the development of Christian doctrines. The Christian faith is a belief in the Triune God who was not discovered, but who revealed Himself as such. The revelation is based on certain historical events that were recorded. Pannenberg (1968:21) enunciated this question; 'does Christology have primarily to do with the Jesus of that past time or with the Jesus proclaimed today'? In other words the question deals with Jesus of faith and of history; Jesus who was proclaimed at the Nicene Council and the one that was on the cross. In answering this question Pannenberg (1968:21) said 'the Jesus proclaimed today is none other than the one who lived at that time in Palestine and was crucified under Pilate'. The Christian community has the understanding that Jesus is the final and the best revelation of the Triune God. Jesus is God who came in a human form, yet He remained divine. The Christian community holds the conviction that Jesus is God; therefore the Church recognises His Lordship and His divinity. Some events were preserved in historical documents and also in biblical records that are based on Jesus Christ. The New Testament became a Christian document which focused on what Jesus had done. The apostles and the Church Fathers taught Christian doctrine with Jesus and His words their point of reference.

People respond to the various issues and challenges of life from different angles and perspectives. The first apostolic sermon of Peter according to Acts 2 on the Day of Pentecost was a response towards what had been said concerning the disciples' behaviour. So much had happened and the Jesus-event was so full of testimonies which could be utilised that their knowledge of the Scriptures became a point of reference. As human beings respond to the realities of life and attempt to make sense of, and find meaning in life, history is made. Within those processes of interacting with the realities of life, concepts, ideas, opinions and words were being constructed. Most theological reflections and ensuing doctrines were

attempts to respond to a problem, an event or a prevailing heresy. The context of the problems and of those who were called to respond played a major role. The manner in which the Church Fathers perceived the identity of God influenced their cultic practices and their reflections on their faith. In an African context, the question that arises is "to what extent could the Church Fathers' understanding of God enhance African Traditional Religion (ATR)?"

The preaching of the gospel resulted in a ripple effect from Palestine to Europe, and then to Africa. By the time the gospel landed in Southern Africa it probably contained far less of Palestine and more of Europe. Geographically, Africa is closer to the Middle East where Christianity has its roots. African culture has far more in common with Middle Eastern culture than with European culture. Christianity was however, introduced to Africa by missionaries from the West, not from the Middle-East. It is well known that long before the Europeans arrived in Africa, forms of worship and veneration of a deity existed. It is not clear when, how or where African Traditional Religion began but Christianity penetrated the realm of these traditional belief systems. Owing to the nature of African oral tradition, it has become vital to record precise information about the spread of Christianity. The collected information was neither preserved nor presented in an orderly fashion, resulting in the absence of any standard by which to evaluate its development.

What was the rationale behind the need for Christianity? There were people worshipping long before the coming of Jesus Christ was prophesied. Each nation had an object of worship. Many cultic sites such as altars and temples are as old as the history of the human race. These were the centres of sacrificial offerings and ceremonies. It is argued that human beings had been searching for something beyond themselves throughout their history. Pannenberg (1970:10) says, 'man is dependant not just on particular conditions of his surroundings but, beyond that, on something that escapes him as often as he reaches for fulfilment'. They sought in nature and in other places for something or someone beyond themselves. Pannenberg (1970:10) saw the search as a chronic need which is an infinite dependence, and 'presupposes something outside … that is beyond every experience of the world'. Worship by means of offerings and sacrifices were enacted as a form of search for something divine, until God revealed Himself. God is the goal in which alone human striving

can find rest and his or her destiny be fulfilled' (Pannenberg, 1970:13). God intended to take human beings from where they were to where He is; and used what people were already practicing to disclose Himself. In this He accommodated human beings and entered into a relationship with His creation.

The African notion of Ubuntu is a focus on African life as experienced within the community of both the living and the dead. O'Donovan (2000:11) observes that 'most African people have strong cultural values of community and the sharing of life'. African life is lived on a religious level. Mbiti (1969:1) pointed out that 'Africans are notoriously religious'. African Traditional Religion (ATR) is based on the strong foundation of community, with both the living and the dead. Any form of worship had to take cognisance of that foundation.

That the African Initiated Churches (AICs) were formed as a result of the search for a unique African identity and African culture is the popular assumption among many African theologians such as Maluleke (1994). African identity and culture are stored up in ATR. The notion of Ubuntu and communion in ATR is based on the foundation that African life is lived within a community. The study will reveal how Africans within ATR relate within themselves and with the ancestors. African Christians continue their veneration and worship of ancestors while still upholding a Christian identity.

It seems as if Western missionaries had replicated their work in Africa. If this assumption is correct, then promoting African Christianity was secondary to westernising churches in Africa. When one reads church history books like that of Hofmeyr & Pillay (1994:25) statements like 'in the years to come the Lutheran Church was strengthened through German- and Scandinavian - and later American Lutheran Mission Society' have some implications. Africans had experienced Lutheran churches and the Church of England for instance along with the culture of the countries where the missionaries came from. The implication can therefore be that the churches were more Western than African.

Scholars like Balcomb (1996:14) say that 'Africa was evangelised during the time of colonialism and slavery. It was the time when a dark continent was enlightened, while slavery was going on as a practice in Africa'. Evangelisation and colonisation had the potential to cause tension and to influence theological reflection in Africa. The African

context of Christianity was formed by the experiences of colonisation and evangelisation. These two terms by definition have potential to create tension. Colonisation implies oppression and domination of humans by other humans. While evangelisation suggests God's liberation using human agents from the powers of darkness. The tension also is apparent when one becomes the agent of both colonisation and evangelisation. This context seems to have been the setting where Africans had to do their theology.

The encounter between Africans and Europeans was an encounter between their respective cultures. The tension between the two deeply affected their way of worship. Christianity in South Africa developed along racial lines. Within the mainline churches formed by missionaries there were branches for whites and branches for blacks. Some blacks, however, formed their own churches and as the number of these African-initiated churches began to multiply, scholars began to come to their senses and be more cognisant of the reality at hand.

African believers began to plant churches which accommodated African culture. They were searching for an African identity. They sought for a church for Africans run by Africans, not one made in Western Europe. However, in the process the worship of the ancestors became part and parcel of African religion in the name of African culture. African Christianity seemed to have encountered what may be termed Africanisation and contextualisation which had a major effect on Africans' understanding of the nature and character of God and the manner in which they worshipped Him. It seems the process of Africanisation and contextualisation may have consciously or unconsciously ignore Jesus Christ who came to reveal who God is and to reconcile humankind to Him.

The first Christians were Jews but as the church moved from Jerusalem into the Hellenized world, Hebrew concepts had to be adapted to a Greek context (Pryor, 2005). How was it possible for the early Christians to move from their Jewish setting into a Greek world without diluting or compromising the truth of the gospel? It has been said that Rome might kill one's body but false doctrine would kill one's soul. How was it possible that Christianity from a background of Judaism and monotheism could relate to a world full of various gods as well as Greek and other philosophies but still maintain monotheistic worship? This research shall attempt to present a perspective of how the Jewish affirmation of

monotheism was adopted as a starting point for Christianity, and how it was then modified by the affirmation that Jesus is Lord.

Ogbonnaya (1994:23) in his book entitled, *On Communitarian Divinity: an African Interpretation of the Trinity,* argues that 'the categories of monotheism and polytheism are insufficient when used to clarify African thought about the divinity'. He proposes that the best approach is 'the divine as community'. What is the meaning of this phrase? He answers, 'Divine communalism is the position that the Divine is a community of gods who are fundamentally related to one another and ontologically equal while at the same time distinct from one another by their personhood and function' (Ogbonnaya, 1994:23). Ogbonnaya explains that this divine community of the gods must never be misinterpreted and misunderstood as monotheism or polytheism. He presents Tertullian (c 160—c225) as his point of reference.

Ngoetjane (2002:1) is of the opinion that the concepts of *Modimo* (that is, God in Sesotho) are not the same as the concepts of the Christian God. Not only are the concepts not identical, but there is also no relation or continuity between *Modimo* and the Christian God. Ngoetjane's (2002:7) work is an attempt at '*de-Hellenizing* the concept of *Modimo'*. Within the African context where culture is influential, the questions to be addressed are: How should one approach the doctrine of the Trinity? How true is it that the concepts of the Christian God differ from those of the African God? If the concepts differ, what causes them to differ when the object of worship is the same? How did the Church Fathers manage to adapt the Hebrew concepts into a Greek context, and utilise the categories of Greek thinking without violating the unity of God or diminishing His plurality?

Many theologians accept that the doctrine of the Trinity is one of the most complex and 'hard to comprehend' notions in Systematic Theology. Grenz (1994:70) and McGrath (2001:319) are aware of the difficulty of doing so but add that it is the doctrine that needs sincere discussion. For Erickson (2006) the said doctrine is what defines the Christian faith: 'Among the religions of the world, the Christian faith is unique in making the claim that God is one and yet there are three who are God' (Erickson, 2006:347). These theologians accept that this doctrine is at the heart of the Christian faith. Throughout the Church, its members have come to accept and to proclaim that they worship one God, yet in three persons, the

Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. The focus of this research is an attempt to understand the relationship of the three Persons within the Godhead, and the manner in which that relationship influences Christians within the Church in Africa.

1.1.1   Research Problem

To what extent can the Cappadocian and the African Church Fathers' understanding of the *Perichoresis* and *Ubuntu* benefit the church in Africa? As stated above the focus shall be an attempt to understand the relationship of the three persons within the Godhead. Viewed from Zizioulas's understanding of the Cappadocian Church Fathers, the African church can approach the doctrine of Trinity from the African context's perspective. Or putting it differently: what is the semantic field that the Perichoresis and the communion or *Ubuntu* ('a person is a person because of other persons') of the African Traditional Churches (ATCs) has in common and to what extent can the ATCs' concept of God be enriched by the Cappadocian Fathers' insights?

1.1.2   Research Statement

The research firstly proposes to identify and evaluate existing studies on the oneness of God, and how He relates within Himself and with the entire creation from the perspective of the Cappadocian Church Fathers, with specific reference to John D. Zizioulas.

Subsequently, the research will answer the question: What are the categories of thinking employed within ATCs as compared with categories employed by the Cappadocian Church Fathers in search of the doctrine of God in the light of Christian monotheism? What is necessary in order to discover the meaning of the oneness of God and how He relates within Himself, with Himself and with humanity?

To find answers an investigation and analysis of accepted models, concepts and definitions of God within the ATR will be undertaken. These will not violate the oneness of God but will benefit the development of the Christian faith in Africa. In a critical analysis of this theological position, the research will attempt to formulate a theological approach to the communion of God within the Trinity in the light of Zizioulas' understanding of community so that it may benefit the African Church.

1.1.3 Challenges

a. To discover and analyse what role authority played in the worship and veneration of the ancestors in the foundation and reflection about God in the ATR.

b. To identify the source of authority employed by the Cappadocian Church Fathers to justify their veneration and worship of the Lord Jesus alongside God the Father.

c. To critically observe how the employment of different sources of authority in theological reflection has influenced the outcome of theological conclusions both of the Cappadocian Church Fathers and of African Theology.

d. To investigate the motivational factors and reasons for defending and preserving the positions and arguments in the ATR and the faith of the Cappadocian Church Fathers.

e. To establish to what extent the doctrine of the Trinity relates to religious experiences, especially regarding the unity of the body of Christ (the universal Church of God) of the Cappadocian Church Fathers as understood by Zizioulas.

1.1.4 Hypotheses

a. The veneration and the worship of ancestors is on the same level as idolatry – i. e. the worship of other gods and to continue this practice within the Christian faith violates the intrinsic oneness or unity of God.

b. The nature of the sources employed as references and authority for theological reflection has the potential to influence the outcome of theological judgments and conclusions, especially outside the authority of the Scriptures.

c. The understanding of the Trinity as explained in the interpretation of the Cappadocian Church Fathers by Zizioulas, can benefit African churches in their worship of God and enrich the way they relate to one another, based on the African concept of Ubuntu.

d. In view of the inconsistencies and incoherence between Christian doctrine and the African Christian experience or practices there is a need to revisit the sources of these inconsistencies for ATR to benefit the African Church.

1.1.5   Theoretical Framework

Where is African theology today? What is the relationship between African Theology and African Traditional Religion? What is God's revelation in ATR, and how can it contribute towards teaching regarding the Trinity and the oneness or unity of God? This research will attempt to critically analyse and evaluate the African contribution about understanding God, and to explore how the knowledge of God can influence Africans understanding of the Christian faith. There is no time or space at present to correct the misconceptions and misinterpretations of others regarding African Traditional Religions. Instead, one should enquire: how do African theologians preserve and defend the Christian doctrine about God? This self-critical analysis will be undertaken in the light of Zizioulas' work.

The person becomes a Christian and who possesses the background of an African culture needs to gain knowledge of who God is without needing to go first to Western perceptions and ideologies as a prerequisite. There are wrong concepts and perceptions in both the West and in Africa. Africans must be able to preserve and defend the Christian faith from any invasive concepts and perceptions, but in terms of an African perspective. Africans need to be in a position to identify and analyse the advantages and the disadvantages of doing this. The question about the choice of Eastern Church Fathers for juxtaposition with the African view will be answered in the course of this research.

Ubuntu (Zulu), or *botho* (Sesotho), is an African term for personhood. In isiZulu they say *umuntu ngo munthu nga bantu* while in Sesotho the expression is *mothu ke mothu ka batho*: the literal translation is 'a person (human being) is a person because of other persons (human beings)'. This term seems to be close to the English saying that 'no man (person) is an island'. The term may be further explained as 'human beings become, because of other human beings'. One cannot reach his/her destiny and fulfilment without others. In *African Religion and Philosophy*, Mbiti (1969) relates this idea that one cannot be without his/her community. Whatever an African desires to accomplish, cannot be done outside the context of his/her community. How can the African church and the doctrine of the communion of

the Trinity benefit from this African concept of *Ubuntu*? In other words, how can the community of faith relate to the concept of *Ubuntu* based on the communion of the Trinity?

The work of Zizioulas on the Cappadocian Church Fathers and their understanding of personhood within the Trinity, not the substance of the three persons, are very essential. The Western Church Fathers dealt with the substance of God while the Eastern Church Fathers, especially the Cappadocian Fathers, considered the personhood of God. These theologians, both Eastern and Western, were responding to the problems facing the Early Church, especially in respect to who God is. The first Christians were Jews who maintained Jewish monotheism, yet bringing Jesus into that system of worship. Christianity then influenced the Greek-Roman world with its background of polytheism and philosophy. This research will critically analyse how the Cappadocian fathers maintained and preserved Jewish monotheism in the Greek-Roman setting with reference to Zizioulas, a well-known Orthodox theologian. His books, *Being as Communion* and *Communion and Otherness* contain primarily his understanding and interpretation of the Cappadocian Fathers.

1.1.6 The importance of this research

Very few African theologians have written on the doctrine of the Trinity. The result is that there is little African work on the topic of the Trinity. This study is an attempt to discover the relationship between the Cappadocian Fathers and the African context, and what could be an appropriate approach to it. The approach is to try to juxtapose the two traditions with the aim of enhancing mutual understanding, especially in the ATCs.

1.1.7 Research Methodology

The study is a qualitative literature study. After discussion of the Church Fathers and their theological reflection in two sections, Zizioulas will be used as a point of reference in interpreting them with reference to the African Church. The key question is: To what extent can Zizioulas' interpretation benefit the worship of one God within the African context?

The approach to the literature review is to categorise the literature according to the topics discussed which are set in both the Christianity of the Early Church's and that of the ATR. An attempt to juxtapose African literature and that of the Early Church Fathers will be made based on the discussion of the doctrine of the Trinity and further enquiring how each group

dealt with the other in their theological response and whether there is any common ground or consensus.

The literature is classified into five categories; i. e.

> a. Discussion of the Jewish and Christian systems of monotheism and the role of their Scriptures.
>
> b. Consideration of the veneration and worship of ancestors within African Christianity and its implications.
>
> c. Some sources examining how the Early Church Fathers resolved the tension between Hellenic Christianity and its roots.
>
> d. Assessing the Trinity from an African perspective.
>
> e. Testing the truth by searching for the nature of Christian Doctrine? This is where the work of Zizioulas will be applied.

Comparative, cross-cultural and cross-national studies of the way in which African Theology endeavours to converse with the writings of the said Church Fathers will be taken note of.

1.1.8 Delimitation

The study will concentrate on how the belief in one God, based on Judaism, influenced the Christian faith. It will consider how the Early Church came to venerate and worship Jesus alongside God. It will then subsequently attempt to evaluate how the Church Fathers came to resolve the tension between the oneness of God and the divinity of Jesus Christ. The study will endeavour to investigate how God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit relate intrinsically. It will then examine whether the manner in which the Traditional African Church relates to God, reflects the same relationship its members have with the ancestors.

The research will not examine other attributes of God except those related to the Trinity and communion. Only the Cappadocian Church Fathers will be researched, for reasons mentioned above. Some comments will be made on Athanasius of Alexandria and Origen. The Cappadocian Fathers responded as they did because some theologians had misunderstood what the earlier Fathers had reflected on. A consideration of Athanasius

should assist the discussion of the status and nature of Jesus Christ which led to the Nicene Creed: a document which is critical for it leads towards the Constantinopolitan Creed. At the Constantinople Synod (381 AD) the Cappadocian Fathers played a significant role.

Regarding African Christianity the research will evaluate African Traditional Religion and compare that with the position of the Cappadocian Church Fathers and then to analyse the implications of African beliefs for the Christian faith. Material of the last two decades is specifically taken into account not only to make the research current, but because there has been an intensification in Cappadocian theology since the 1980's. Of course any historical references will take theological reflections from earlier periods into account.

1.1.9 Definition of Terms

a. African Theology

This is part of a syncretistic theology by Africans for Africans, based on African culture. They use material and resources which are based on ATR within the Christian faith.

b. African Traditional Religion (ATR)

It is a religion that is based on the worship and veneration of the ancestors. Western missionaries regarded this religion as a major challenge to Christianity. Africa was regarded as a dark continent especially for that reason.

c. African Christianity

This is the Christianity practiced by Africans in Africa. Within this version of Christianity the majority of adherents follow ATR, but this does not exclude the Pentecostals/Charismatic's, Evangelicals, and others.

d. African Traditional Churches (ATCs)

The Churches that were established by Africans were for Africans. It should be noted that the institution called the church was absent in many parts of Africa until the arrival of Western missionaries. The African Initiated Churches (AICs) represent the greatest number of these churches.

e. Worship

Respect, reverence paid to a divine being; reverence offered to a divine being or supernatural power and *also***:** an act of expressing such reverence - a form of religious practice with its creeds and rituals.

f. Veneration

With regard to reverential respect or with admiring deference, to honour (as an icon or a relic) with a ritual act of devotion. In this thesis these two last mentioned concepts (worship and veneration) will be mentioned together, for the following reasons: Firstly, there are those who argue that there is no ancestral worship within ATRs but only that the ancestors are being venerated. Secondly, in the service or act of veneration of the ancestors, however, there are rituals that are similar to the worship of God that was practiced during Old Testament times. This leads subsequently to the conviction that Africans worship their ancestors.

g. African Initiated Churches (AICs)

In South Africa, the history of the AICs goes back to 1884 when Rev. Nehemiah Tile, the first person to break away from the Methodist Church, formed a black independent church called Thembu National Church. Many such churches were formed afterwards as a reaction to missionary churches which were deemed to be destroying the African culture and heritage. For the sake of preserving culture, they brought in ATR, as a way of Africanizing Christianity

1.1.10   Composition

Chapter one will deal with Jewish and Christian monotheism. Judaism is extremely important to Christianity because the latter was based on the Jewish Scriptures. Islam on the other hand, believes in one God, but with neither the Son nor the Holy Spirit. Therefore one may ask how the oneness of the God of the Old Testament relates to the God of the Qur'an. The comparison between Christian monotheism and Islam monotheism is outside the scope of this paper, yet it is worth noting that the Qur'an does not have Old Testament and New Testament. The chapter will explore the oneness of the God of Israel and how the first Christian Church came to worship and to venerate Jesus Christ alongside God. A critical analysis will be offered on how the first church which was originally Jewish came to venerate

Jesus and still maintained monotheism. There is a link between the *Shema* (Deuteronomy 6:4-6) of the Old Testament and the Nicene Creed. The primordial is the pillar of Judaism and the latter the pillar of Christianity.

Chapter two will investigate the way in which the Church Fathers defended and preserved Christian doctrine in the face of Greek philosophers' false teachings concerning pagan gods. It will also analyse how the early Eastern Church Fathers utilised the Aristotelian categories of thinking as they wrestled with the oneness of God and the divinity of the Son and the Holy Spirit. It will consider how they tried to resolve this tension and arrived at their conclusion regarding the Trinity. Much of the focus will be placed on what led to the Constantinopolitan Creed being based on the Nicene Creed, and on the role that was played by the Cappadocian Fathers. The chapter will deal in detail with the communion in the Trinity and the Perichoresis, a discussion which will link up with the work of John D. Zizioulas.

Chapter three investigates African Theology, and the worship and veneration of ancestors within the Christian faith. The chapter will evaluate African knowledge about God, and the way in which that knowledge relates to the worship and veneration of the ancestors in the light of Christian monotheism. The chapter will also investigate the tools and materials found in African Theology, which utilises ATR as a point of departure and emphasis. African Theology and ATR are based on the worship or veneration of the ancestors within the Christian faith. The following issues are addressed: What are the tools and materials within ATR that are appropriate for the benefit and development of the Christian doctrine of God? How are they justified? How does Christianity relate to ATR?

Incarnation is the means by which God enters into a redemptive relationship with humanity. God has given Jesus Christ to the world, who suffered for all sinners. Jesus became the mediator between human beings and God the Father. He was the point of contact where human beings and God are able to meet. After the resurrection Jesus occupied the highest position, next to the Father, far above all principalities and powers. Jesus as a mediator between God and man went on high to occupy that position on behalf of all humanity. How does African Theology understand the position of Jesus Christ within the oneness of God? Is the veneration of the saints the same as that of the ancestors? Does the absence of an altar

or temple dedicated to a supreme being mean anything towards the development of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity?

Chapter four explores the notion *of Perichoresis* by the Cappadocian Fathers and juxtaposes it with the notion of *Communion* in ATR. In comparing these traditions, one may find distinct similarities and/or dissimilarities.

- In juxtaposing the African Traditional Religion with Cappadocian Fathers are there any similarities (points of departure) and events that have influential impact of influence on one another?
- Are the discussions on the Trinity by the Cappadocian Fathers and ATR based on the same understanding of the composition of the Godhead?
- What are the gains from African Theological discussions which can be appropriated by the Christian faith in comparison with the Cappadocian Fathers?
- How does a horizontal approach to theology (African) relate to a more vertical approach (Cappadocian Fathers)?

The oneness of the church shall be measured against the oneness of God, with reference to the notion of perichoresis and communion. This chapter would search for an African understanding of the concept of *Ubuntu* and communion. How can this doctrine be approached in order to be able to use the resources of ATR and yet still maintain Christian monotheism? Can the concept of *Ubuntu* in the light of ATR relate to the concept of communion as revealed by Zizioulas with reference to the Cappadocian Church Fathers?

Zizioulas's perspective on the Cappadocian Church Fathers is the initial subject of Chapter five. The chapter further considers his understanding of how philosophy influenced the Cappadocian Fathers, especially with regard of how to deal with the personhood within the Trinity. How far can Zizioulas's understanding be of help to believers on such issues as unity and ministering to God and to one another?

Once all the said materials and tools have been tested within the light of the Christian faith, the Conclusion (sixth chapter) will attempt to answer whether and if so, to what extent the Cappadocian Church Fathers and the African church's understanding of Trinity within the African perspective can be mutually enriching.

1.1.11 Personal Testimony

My Christian background is Evangelical and Pentecostal in outlook. I was not born into a Christian family but my mother became a Christian two years after my birth. I became a Christian because my mother kept on praying for my salvation because I was a very troublesome child. I was expelled from high school twice. If specific changes did not occur in my life I probably would not have the grace to write this research paper or even worse. I gave my life to Jesus at a tent meeting at the age of 19 (my mother passed away while I was busy with this research). My grandfather and his father (from my father's side) were traditional healers or *sangomas*. My grandmother (from my mother's side) was also a traditional healer. My uncle (from my mother's side) was likewise a traditional healer. I saw and attended many of their celebrations, rituals and ceremonies. I accompanied my uncle many times to the forest where he used to dig herbs or *muti*. I know from experience how uncomfortable these visits were during thunderstorms and lightning.

My opinion is that most of the approaches adopted by traditional healers or *sangomas* deal with spiritual issues. There is a connection between the bones and the spirits of the ancestors which enable the traditional healers to communicate certain instructions to their clients. It is my conviction that one cannot worship God and Jesus Christ, being inspired by the Holy Spirit, yet still consults with traditional healers. There is nothing wrong with the herbs in themselves, as long as one knows and masters how they function. But to obtain them from a traditional healer where the spirits of the ancestors are at work is very problematic when one is a Christian. I still stand by the Scripture that commands 'you shall have no other gods besides me' (Exodus 20:3). In Africa, Christians worship God and the ancestors at the same time but justify this practice in the name of culture. We should examine how we contextualise theology and what limits there are to the contextualising process.

This research is also a personal journey to test some of my convictions and my opinions about who God is. God cannot be Westernised and He cannot be Africanised either. He remains as He is, for He was God long before the West and Africa came into being. God was in Christ Jesus reconciling the world unto Him. Hence the world moves towards Him. I have a context, which exerts an influence on how I view life, but I believe that God is from above

and is above all. It is within this understanding that I take this journey in search of an understanding of the God of the Christian faith, that I may continue to worship Him in a manner that is acceptable and pleasing to Him. What led the Church Fathers to the Doctrine of the Trinity as they sought to do justice to the witness of Scripture, can still lead an African to do the same. For 'the Doctrine of the Trinity is concerned with who God is, what He is like, how He works and how He is to be approached' (Erickson 2006:347).

1.2   Contextualisation

The term contextualisation may be recent but some theologians like Ukpong (1987) suggest that this concept has been developing since the history of God's revelation in Jesus Christ, if not for longer than that. Von Allmen (1975:37) writes that 'All theologies, the first theology in Christian history including Pauline theology, are the result of contextualisation'. Ukpong (1987) holds the view that regardless of the newness of the term 'contextualisation' the attempt to relate the gospel message to people's contexts which this term designates is as old as the evangelisation history itself. It seems that the term has to do with the gospel moving from one context to another and especially concerning the issue of culture. Jesus told his disciples that they shall be His witnesses from Jerusalem, to all Judea, to Samaria and to the ends of the world (Acts 1:8). Jerusalem it was within the Jewish culture, while the ends of the world signify the world stage outside Jewish setting. Ferguson (2003) and Tenney (1996) give evidence that though there were Jews in most of the known world of that time, Jerusalem and Judea were still regarded as belonging to the Jews specifically, so the church in Jerusalem and around Judea could be regarded as Jewish. The apostles preached Christ to their fellow countrymen of the same nationality. On the day of Pentecost Peter addressed the crowd as 'fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem' (Acts 2:14). The people responded by saying to the apostles; 'brothers, what shall we do' (Acts 2:37). But when the apostles and all of Jesus' followers moved out of Jerusalem and Judea to Samaria and to the ends of the world, they encountered a different world.

In that world they received remarks like 'what is this babbler trying to say' (Acts 17:18). The people in Athens felt that Christians were advocating a foreign god. It was a polytheistic world full of other gods. Tenney (1996:65) reveals that Christianity did not embark on its expansion in a 'religious nothingness in which it found people blank waiting for something to

believe'. Rather the new faith in Christ had to battle against well-established religious beliefs that had been in existence for centuries. It was a Hellenised world. The question is how did the Church Fathers make the gospel relevant, taking it from the Jewish setting to a Greek setting and employing Greek categories of thinking? As Von Allmen (1975:37) reminds us 'Paul himself was a Judean Christian, but the churches he founded were pagan Christian churches'. A similar process of contextualisation in Africa began when the missionaries and the people of Africa encountered one another. The historical events have a way of influencing people to ask certain questions and the way those questions are asked, influence the way of responding. Despite learning from missionary schools and learning how to read the Bible, Africans felt a need to start their own churches. Many Africans had a need to justify their practices and to set the record straight. It is worth noting that contextualisation can be observed within the missionary evangelising of Africa, the developing of African Theologies as well as the Church in Africa

1.2.1   Missionary work in Africa

A picture is painted by Nkomazana (2001) of how Western missionaries and the Bangwato encountered each other around 1862. In an African village of the 19th century there were two very important people, the chief who owned the land on behalf of the ancestors and the 'ngaka' (traditional healer). It is hard to translate the word *ngaka* but in the past it was common to use the word *'witchdoctor'*. In time people started to move away from *witchdoctor* to *traditional healer*, or *medicine man* or *-woman*. According to Nkomazana (2001:96) 'this ngaka is/was regarded as a doctor in sickness, a priest in religious matters, a lawyer in legal issues and a policeman in the detection and prevention of crime. This was one who could motivate as well as give powers and produce rain'.

Here Nkomazana (2001) is presenting a scenario where a missionary had to minister in another culture and had to go further and enter into that culture. According to Grunlan and Mayers (1988:22) 'when an individual leaves his or her own culture with its familiar customs, traditions, social patterns, and way of life the individual quickly begins to feel like a fish out of water and must either begin to adjust to the new culture or to tossed and buffeted by it until he or she finally succumbs to exhaustion and succumbs'. When there was an epidemic of smallpox in 1862, the chief gave the missionaries permission to vaccinate the Ngwato

community. Nkomazana (2001) relates that the people preferred to consult their *ngaka*. Nkomazana's (2001) interpretation of the Ngwato's behaviour and attitude is that the *ngaka*'s practice was regarded to be closer to spirituality than the missionary's approach. But after the chief's son was healed through the missionary their attitude towards the Europeans changed, and they started to regard the missionary as a *ngaka*. However, the problem was that they expected him to use the bones (*ditaola)* as a means to diagnose the illness and the spiritual cause thereof.

What is the usual response for an individual encountering and entering another culture? Grunlan and Mayers (1988:22) give two possibilities that one, may respond 'with empathy, acceptance and identification, which will result in adjustment and success', or 'with culture shock and ultimate failure'. Nkomazana (2001:98) argues that 'the mistake made by some of the London Missionary Society (LMS) missionaries was their attempt to introduce Western medical practices of treating physical sickness in isolation'. For the Western mind physical sickness must be approached scientifically and clinically. But in the African mind there are other forces out there, good or bad involved as well. Western medical practice has nothing to do with worship or religious rituals. In Africa the physical cannot be isolated from the spiritual. Nkomazana (2001) also reveals that the Ngwato community, though they were worshipping the same God as the Western missionaries, used a different approach. The Ngwato were using (*muti*) herbs (nature) while the missionaries were using a 'book' (the Bible).

There was a lot of misunderstanding and mistrust between Africans and the missionaries. There was also what has already been mentioned here called culture shock. Grunlan and Mayers (1988:23) mention the three stages of culture shock. Grulan and Mayers (1988:23) say the first one is 'fascination, or tourist stage, which comes when the person first enters the new culture. The tourist, or short-term visitor, usually never goes beyond this stage before leaving the host culture'. At this place the missionary stayed and interacted intensely with the Bangwato people. That means the stage went beyond the fascination or tourist stage to the second one called the rejection. Grunlan and Mayers (1988:23) say that the experience is when the 'fun and fascination of the new culture begin to fade, and the new comer meets head-on the difficulties involved in living in the new culture'.

The chiefs and the *dingaka* (plural for *ngaka*) perceived that missionaries had come to challenge their authority and position. The missionaries were seen by most Africans as promoting Western culture at the expense of African culture. Nkomazana (2001:102) argues that 'some missionary work was seen as instruments of oppression in some circles'. In affirmation of Nkomazana (2001), Goba (1998:19) says that 'one has to understand the negative impact of the colonial system in Africa'. The missionaries and their activities coincided with the process of colonisation. The country that colonised some parts of Africa such as South Africa was the same country that sent missionaries to evangelise Africans. This caused people like Maluleke (1994:50) to ask 'what happened to Christ whom the missionaries brought to Africa when missionaries joined forces with colonialism, racism and capitalists'.

At this stage a situation had developed where an African culture had to defend itself against the European culture. According to Grunlan and Mayers (1988:23),

> *when there are no breakthroughs, where the two parties find each other the missionary shall blame the new culture and 'begin to reject the new culture. This rejection may take several forms such as stereotyping members of the new culture making derogatory and joking remarks about the people, dissociating oneself as much as possible from members of the new culture, and associating as much as possible with members of one's own culture.*

Some missionaries discouraging the wearing of traditional attire was seen as agents of the European powers employed to oppose Africans. According to Chidester (1992:37) missionaries, 'influenced by the Industrial Revolution as well as the evangelical revival, (missionaries) promoted a particular blend of Christian Civilisation that identified signs of salvation in certain types of moral discipline and productive labour'. Many people's names were changed because they were regarded as pagan so they had to have Christian names, just like Daniel and his friends in Babylon. Chidester (1992) further points out that there was a perception among missionary circles that Africa had no religion, because it was perceived as a dark continent. These acts and views were regarded as using 'the gospel to declare the superiority of Western value systems, using this claim to justify European conquest and

exploitation of Africa' (Goba 1998:19). Already a picture was painted and the context began to unfold concerning the encounter between Western missionaries and African people. One should also bear in mind that during that time the trading of slaves was still active in Africa and elsewhere, as scholars such as Chidester (1992) rightly states.

Theologians such as Turaki (1999:10) recognise that the late 1950s was the beginning of the work by African theologians, 'the primary focus of African scholarship was to address the question of Western ethnocentrism in its approach to the study of African Traditional Religion and cultures on the one hand and the quest for African Theology and identity on the other'. At this stage there were also some studies that were done by European scholars' missionaries and historians that seemed like a move to try and understand Africans. Grunlan and Mayers (1988:24) say 'the third stage recovery, begins as the person starts to learn the language or dialect of the new culture and some of the "rules" of the new culture'. There was a feeling of a need to move away from ethnocentrism to an approach called cultural relativism. According to Grunlan and Mayers (1988:24) 'ethnocentrism is a way of viewing the world in terms of one's own culture. While cultural relativism is a way of viewing the world in terms of the relevant culture, that is a way of viewing relevant, that is, in terms of the culture in which one finds oneself'.

From the above discussion it is evident that missionaries were not only perceived as turning Africans away from their culture, but they were also understood to be undermining African culture as being arrogant in comparing it to their so-called superior culture. A piece of evidence quoted from Chidester (1992:37) saying that, 'the mission station itself became a ritual space for a particular kind of European, Christian worldview in Africa'. It is because at the mission station European clothing, square houses, irrigation, fenced gardens, hammers, saws, and ploughs, all became ritual artefacts of that Christian worldview. Secondly, they were also regarded as part, or agents, of the colonisers. Nevertheless, Africans became Christians which Goba (1998:19) finds an irony, that 'despite the painful experience of the system of colonisation and apartheid, African Christians continued to embrace Christianity even at the cost of undermining their own religious experience'. Yet Africans who became Christians did not stay long in missionary churches, they went out in search of an African

identity. It seems that when Africans coming from a certain style of worship, became Christians the European style of worship may have been too strange for them.

1.2.2 African identity

Africans lost their land and the power to determine their political destiny but it seems that the one thing they were not ready to lose, was their power to determine their own spiritual identity. Maimela (1991:6) concluded that 'it was against this background of both culture and religious domination that African resistance groups, during the struggle for independence, began to promote the philosophy of Negritude, African culture and African socialism'. There was a certain form of worship before the arrival of Western missionaries but that was not a Christian form of worship. Africans became Christians in the missionary churches and when they left those churches to start their own, they continued calling themselves Christians. The study will draw some conclusions based on the answers from the questions asked in this regard. Was Christianity seen as a means to turn towards God or a means to find an African way of worship? When Africans moved out of the missionary churches in search of an African identity, was that a move to something new or were they going back to where the missionaries found them? If they were going back by forming their own churches, the challenge was to find their point of origin. The problem is how to measure and to discover where they were before the missionaries found them because no written accounts existed. And if going back to their African roots is achieved by bringing along the church, what kind of church is it going to be? What was the African understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ? What if there were great misunderstandings between the first Africans who became Christians and the missionaries? Maimela (1991:7) says it was all about the resistance against domination. He declares that 'it is this kind of resistance to Western culture and religious imperialism that led to the breakaway of the so-called African Independent Churches from the white denominations in the 19th century'.

Grunlan and Mayers (1988:29) points out that in church planting, the ethnocentric missionary will naturally want to do things the way they are done at home. In other words the missionaries mostly due to ethnocentrism failed to plant a biblical, indigenous church and not to transplant the church of their own culture. So the Africans left to start their own churches (the African Independent Churches are also known as the African Initiated

Churches). The possibility is that they preferred a space away from Europeans to a place where they can be comfortable singing their own songs and be as loud as they can be, dance to their own sounds without offending anyone. They needed a space where they could wear what they wished and be accepted no matter what their names were. That space was found in the African Initiated Churches (AICs). If that is the case then the Africans were searching for a place where their culture could be accommodated. Moila (1991:37) believes that 'Western Christianity had failed to meet the African aspirations'. He continues to say that it created a serious vacuum in their lives. Moila (1991:37) claims that Western Christianity 'has taken from Africans a religion which was functional and useful in their lives'.

Within a background where people were forced to change their names and attire in the name of Christianity, how does one begin to define the Christian faith? The African context is drawn by historical events where they encountered Western missionaries, then began to move out, not away from Christianity though, but from the European influence to find their own identity in worship. According to Mugambi (2005:516), to be a Christian 'is to accept Jesus Christ and his teachings as preserved in Christian Scriptures and maintained by the church of one's choice'. The acceptance of Jesus Christ is like getting into a relationship with Him. When a person becomes a follower of Jesus Christ does she/he lose his/her African identity? African theologians like Maluleke (1994) and Mtetwa (1998) feel that misunderstandings may have occurred when missionaries overemphasised their Western civilisation more than the evangelising mission. It is already mentioned how the process of evangelising coincided with that of civilising Africans and Africa. In the search for a distinct African identity, to what extent does the relationship with Jesus Christ exercise influence upon this quest, or is the search conveyed independent of this relationship? It seems that Africans were not responding negatively to the process of evangelising but the negative response was rather towards the Europeanisation of Africans. Mugambi (2005:521) asserts that 'becoming a Christian has nothing to do with adopting Western or any other culture'. He further maintains that conversion is not acculturation and that conversion does not demand a wholesale denunciation or rejection of one's cultural and religious heritage.

Within the African context African theologians began to discuss their cultural- and religious heritage. These two concepts (religious and cultural heritage) had already set the stage for

theology in Africa. What does it mean not to reject one's cultural and religious heritage? Mugambi (2005:516) explains that the term culture in its widest usage is the totality of people's way of life. This statement is supported by Maluleke (1994:54) saying that culture entails everything about human beings. Dickson (1984:29) claims that 'African culture and religion are bound up together'. He also said 'religion informs the African's life in its totality' (Dickson 1984:29). It also depends on the emphasis within the Christian community, if the emphasis is about human life alone without an emphasis on the relationship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ, problems may arise. Mugambi (2005:516) further argues that 'Christianity is not a culture but Christian faith can be expressed and communicated only through cultural media'. Moila (1991:33) argues that it is his 'contention that though God is not bound by any human culture God chooses to operate within or in terms of a given culture'. If this argument is true it means that even the Western missionaries were used by God within the context of their culture. But Moila's (1991:33) point is that then 'missionaries were mistaken to think that their Western culture is the only way through which Christianity can be expressed'.

Nengwekhulu (1990:1) adds with the following observation that 'culture is a human product and therefore it is profoundly human in character. Since it is a human product, it can never be separated from its maker'. That means that as human beings interacting with the realities of life, trying to make sense of their situation as they discover and create, culture becomes active. Within this definition human beings are supposed to be the masters of their culture, becoming the authority on their own creation. But since human beings produced culture, culture is also active in moulding and shaping its creators (Berger 1990:10). Most Africans are accustomed to saying 'according to my culture', or 'in my culture'. In this way culture becomes the authority. According to Seoka (1997:1) 'the subject of Christianity and culture should be approached from the context of culture if it is to make sense'. It seems that Seoka may have come closer to resolving the real reason for the search for an African identity. One has to realise according to Seoka (1997:2) that 'Africans believe that there is a divine order and design power beyond human comprehension, yet perceivable through the mystery of all creation'. This divine order cannot be separated from everyday life. To an African nothing happens by chance, one does not pick up a R50 note on the street by chance. The ancestors gave it to him/her. When one gets promotion at work credit is given to the ancestors and a

function must be prepared in their honour for the opportunity. It seems that Africans in the missionary churches were missing their ancestors. One may conclude that they were missing that close connection with the spiritual world. They wanted to relate to something beyond European names and attire and the AICs gave them that opportunity.

This section is setting the scene to discover the African context. Already there are two issues that have emerged from the discussion above: 1. what was the attitude of Western missionaries towards Africans? And 2. What was the converted Africans' perception of the work of the missionaries? If missionaries gave too much of their culture to Africans, then it means that an African's response could be based on that culture. If the Africans perceived that what was given to them was the relationship with Jesus Christ, then the response would be based on the nature of that relationship. This study will subsequently investigate some roots of the questions that faced the Early Church.

1.3   God's Revelation: The development of the Christian God

Von Harnack (1904:1) points out that 'the network of the synagogues furnished the Christian propaganda with centres and causes for its development'. Dunn (1991:117) is more specific by saying that '[i]t is important to remind ourselves that these first Christians were all Jews and loyal Jews, for that reason they did not see themselves as a new religion'. Living in the era of the second temple Judaism, they recognised Jesus as the One who came from God to fulfil the Scriptures. Therefore they saw themselves as 'the climax of Judaism, as the renewal of Eschatological Judaism for which the prophets had looked'. Being twelve Apostles according to Dunn (1991) was symbolically similar to the concept of the twelve tribes of Israel. Even though Judas, the one who sold out Jesus died, they saw a necessity to replace Him to make up number twelve.

Dunn (1991) points out the significance of the number twelve referring to what Paul mentions in I Corinthians 15:5 about, 'The Twelve'. The first Jewish Christians considered the Last Supper to be a meal and to be a symbol of the new agreement in an eschatological sense for the fulfilment of the prophetic hope. For these Jewish Christians, the synagogue was to be converted into a centre of worship as Von Harnack (1904) mentioned, while Dunn (1991:117) agrees with many others that this first group of believers in Jerusalem continues

to observe the Torah, apparently without questions. One piece of evidence is when Peter refused to touch the unclean food or to eat with Gentiles. Another example was when he questioned his proposed fellowship with the uncircumcised at Cornelius's household. This first Jewish/Christian community had pertinent thoughts about Israel in their focus. In this regard Dunn (1991:118) displays the evidence in their question to Jesus 'will you at the time restore the Kingdom to Israel'? (Acts 1:21-22). According to Dunn (1991), the community had at first no sense of mission to the Gentiles. He said they only thought of Gentiles coming to Jerusalem rather than them going to evangelise to the world outside Judaism. Two things are evident here, the first being that the first Jewish community in Jerusalem followed the Torah and the second, that they regarded themselves as a continuation and fulfilment of what was prophesied. According to Dunn (1991:119), the new movement of Jesus' 'followers saw itself as part of the second temple of Judaism and remained very much within that matrix'. Therefore there was no urgency or motivation for mission to the Gentiles.

During this era, Jews were found in all the Roman cities. Von Harnack (1904:4) reveals that 'in Africa, along the coast-line, from the proconsular provinces to Mauritania, Jews were numerous; even in Rome; Jews continued to increase in great numbers'. Von Harnack's (1904:10) information is, 'if the Jews in Egypt amount to about a million, those in Syria were still more numerous'. He continued to say,

> *if Judaism was actually vigorous throughout the empire as to embrace about seven per cent, of the total population under Augustus, one begins to realise its great influence and social importance. The infiltration of the Jews within the Roman world became a platform when the church began to venture into the Gentile world to preach Christ, but the question that was not answered was how do Gentiles become Christians on the same level with the Jews.* [1]

Already there were two groups of Gentiles mentioned in the New Testament. As noted by Dunn (1991:124) that 'to speak of Gentiles entering the new Jewish sect in increasing

---

[1]This was mentioned because there was a process in Judaism how the Gentiles should follow before they can be accommodated, like to be circumcised.

numbers at once raises the next question – circumcision'. Cornelius was a Gentile who was classified as one who feared God within the Jewish religion of the New Testament. Dunn (1991:124) says of him that 'he adopted a Jewish way of life to a considerable degree'. That may also mean that according to Judaism, he was close but not there yet. Judaism did create a centre of attention for many Gentiles and they were part of the local synagogues. The next part of the Gentiles who joined Judaism was called proselytes, meaning the Gentiles who were circumcised. Judaism had some limitations which were firmly observed. The salvation of Cornelius and his household meant compromising some of the boundaries of Judaism. At the same time, Christianity was crossing the parameters of Judaism in an unprecedented way. According to Dunn (1991:130) 'circumcision had to do only with the issue of how a Gentile might enter the covenant people'.

When the Gentiles became Christians without joining Judaism, the church had to review some of its teachings. Questions were asked concerning the works of the Law or the Grace of God through our Lord Jesus Christ. On Paul's understanding concerning grace and the works of the Law, Dunn (1991:137) says 'it is clear that Paul was not against the Law as such - far less against "good works"'. What Paul aimed his arguments at was the Law understood and practiced in such a way as to limit the grace of God, to prevent Gentiles as Gentiles enjoying it in full measure. So Christianity took the God of Judaism, who recognised no other God but Himself alone, and introduced Him into the world of polytheism. Again it was a nation that had laws and commandments that forbade intermingling and mixing with other nations which meant a challenge in evangelising other nations. Von Harnack (1904:11) makes an observation that 'it is surprising that a religion which raised to stout a wall of partition between itself and all other religions, and which in practice and prospects alike, was bound up so closely with its nation, should have possessed a missionary impulse of such vigour and attained so large a measure of success'.

The temple was one of the recognised pillars of Judaism. Then came a time where the temple of Jerusalem was destroyed. Many Jews left Palestine, going to 'the ends of the world'. The fall of the temple was not the end of Judaism as Von Harnack (1904:13) testifies: 'The destruction of the temple by the Romans really destroyed nothing; it may be viewed as an incident organic to the history of Jewish religion'.

Von Harnack (1904:21) observes certain conditions that 'enabled the expansion of the church in Pagan-Roman world'. He mentions 'the exceptional facilities, growth, and security of international traffic, the admirable roads, the blending of different nationalities, the interchange of wares and ideas, the personal intercourse, the ubiquitous merchant and soldier - one may add, the ubiquitous professor, who was to be encountered from Antioch to Cadiz, from Alexandria to Bordeaux'. Another observation by Von Harnack (1904:22) was 'the religious policy of Rome which furthered the interchange of religions by its toleration'. Von Harnack (1904:54) noticed that 'while the transition to the Gentiles mission was gradual, it was carried out with irresistible force. Credit is given to Judaism which had already prepared the way for the Gentile Mission'.

The church in Antioch became the first church of the Gentiles which was built by the natives of Cyprus and Crete. The church was known as the first Gentile church because the members of this church were neither God-fearing nor Proselytes. Von Harnack (1904:60) states that 'it was a church which consisted, for the most part, of uncircumcised persons'. They took a risk of becoming Christians before they became Jews or Proselytes. They were not called believers, or people of the Way but were given the name 'Christian' which was coined by their heathen opponents. It is significant to understand that the name 'Christian' was the title given to Gentile Christians and neither at first nor for a long while to come were Jewish Christians designated by this name.

It was observed earlier concerning the works of the Law and Grace through our Lord Jesus Christ. Von Harnack (1904:60) noticed that 'the Gentile Christian churches of Syria and Cilicia did not observe the Law, and yet were conscious of being the people of God in the fullest sense of the term'. In relation to the Law, Dunn (1991:137) says Paul did 'expect the Law to be fulfilled by believers'. This is the reason that Jesus came, in order that the just requirements of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit (Romans 8:4). Dunn (1991:138) also notes that 'walking according to the Spirit is obviously posed in contrast to the typical Old Testament of walking in the Law/Statutes/Ordinances of God, which in Paul's eyes had become an expression of covenantal nomism'. In the understanding of Paul by Dunn (1991) 'Paul was not against the Law, for Paul the Law was spiritual which had to be observed and obey the human beings

who are of flesh that was weak to obey'. It seems Von Harnack (1904:61) is in agreement with Dunn (1991) on the interpretation of Paul for he says 'to Paul no part of the Law had been depreciated in value by any noiseless, disintegrating influence of time or circumstances, on the contrary, the Law remained valid and operative in all its provisions'.

When Christianity entered the ends of the World, it challenged certain boundaries and made it imperative that certain Jewish boundaries needed new definition or modification in order to accommodate the born again pagan Christians who did not need to be Jews through circumcision before they could be Christians. Jesus took the sins of the world upon himself so that the punishment of sin that was demanded by the Law might be upon him. Even though Jesus received certain respect within the Jewish Christian community, the Gentile Christian church took that respect to a higher level. Von Harnack (1904:61) testifies that the 'new religious level was the level of the Spirit and regeneration, of grace and faith, of peace and liberty, where below and behind it lay everything old, including all the earlier revelations pertaining to the state of sin'. The Gentile church was taught to have fellowship with Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. The church was taught to focus on Jesus who is the author and finisher of the Christian faith. Von Harnack (1904:64) could say that 'historically, Paul the Pharisee dethroned the people and the religion of Israel; he tore the gospel from its Jewish soil and rooted it in the soil of humanity'. In the power of the Holy Spirit, worship was no longer in Jerusalem or on a certain mountain within the nation of Israel, but the Holy Spirit became the new worshiping space for true worshippers. God was taken out of the Holy of Holies in Jerusalem into the hearts of human beings. Though there were persecutions and hardships for those who took the gospel to the Gentiles, the Word of God moved from faith to faith.

Von Harnack (1904) uses the historical event of Abraham when God told him to move out of his country, away from his family and to become a father of many nations. The first Christian church which was of Jewish background was attached to Jerusalem. The temple was regarded as the centre of the world because it was the centre of worship - as a result of the temple in Jerusalem which was the place where heaven and earth met. Jesus told his disciples to not move away from Jerusalem until they receive the power from on high. Von Harnack (1904:74) noted that 'the religion of Jesus has never been able to root itself in

Jewish or upon Semitic soil'. One can simply say that Christianity became a world religion without being kept in a particular culture or locality. In the words of Von Harnack (1904:74) 'Christianity, almost immediately after it appeared, was dislodged from the nation to which it belonged, and thus from the very outset it was forced to learn how to distinguish between the Kernel and the Husk'.

As the church moved out of Jerusalem to all Judea and from Samaria to the ends of the world, it became a universal religion by taking God of Judaism to the ends of the world. In so doing, Von Harnack (1904:81) notes that the Gentile church stripped Judaism of everything she took away from its sacred book, herself but a transformation of Judaism; she cut off all connections with the parent religion. How did Jesus see himself in relation to God?

Jesus was born in a Jewish family and was raised and taught as a Jew. He grew up like any other Jewish boy of the first century in Palestine. Dunn's (1991:164) approach to how Jesus saw himself in relation to God is to ask the question: How 'did Jesus function in the Jewish worship of the time? ' In other words, did Jesus worship, confess, and pray to the one God? Dunn's (1991) reference from the Scriptures points to the preaching of Jesus Christ concerning the Kingdom of God. When he taught His disciples about prayer, Jesus was clear that it is the name of the Father that should be sanctified and that God's kingdom should come. Having said that, Dunn (1991:164) argues that 'there is no implication that Jesus saw himself in any sense as a rival to God, or looked for anyone else to be such. Thus Dunn (1991) is of the view that Jesus did not preach himself but God the Father.

From the information given in Mark 11:17, Jesus regarded the temple as the House of Prayer. Dunn (1991:164) points out that 'Jesus regularly attended the Sabbath worship in the synagogue which was also known as the House of Prayer'. It is taken for granted that as a Jew, Jesus prayed to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob even though before Abraham was, I am. (John 5:58). Concerning sacrificial offerings, Dunn (1991:164) does not have the assurance of 'whether Jesus ever offered up a sin offering or guilt offering on his own behalf'.

Jesus was also seen during His time as a Jew who was to be the Messiah. According to Dunn (1991:166) 'there is concrete evidence on the identification of Jesus as the Messiah, that is

as the royal Messiah, son of David, which was a topic of speculation at the time of Jesus from the Scripture. For example Isaiah 11:1-2 and Ezekiel 34:23-24 gives Israel an assurance concerning a prophet that shall come, one who will be from the house of David. When people received bread from Jesus, they wanted Him to be their King because they identifiedHim with Moses who gave Israel bread from heaven.

As reported above, it seems as if it was the people of the time of Jesus who regarded Jesus to be their Messiah. The question is whether Jesus was aware of that role expectation or whether He identified himself as the Messiah? According to Dunn's (1991:168) understanding 'the Messiah as popularly understood was not a suitable vehicle for Jesus' self-understanding. In other words, Jesus did not accept nor did He play the role of the Messiah - the anointed One, the Christ (in Greek). In the words of Dunn (1991:169) 'Jesus was not crucified for blasphemy but rather as a political threat to their power and their power base which was the temple'. In other words, it was not because He said He was the Son of God, but suffered for being declared, the King of the Jews. Dunn (1991:169) asks, 'did Jesus see Himself as the Son of God'. The office of the Messiah and the role of being the Son of God are related. If Jesus never saw himself as the Messiah 'how can He regard Himself as the Son of God? ' Dunn (1991) suggests that it was the production of the Nicene Creed to regard Jesus as the Son of God. Since the Nicene Creed was the church's production,this may also mean Jesus as the Son of God is the production of the church. If that is so, then the church is guilty of reducing or uplifting Jesus to a level He was not. That may also mean the historical Jesus differs with the one produced by the council of Nicaea. Dunn (1991:170) says 'our problem is the difficulty of hearing Son of God other than from this side of Nicaea. He argues that there were some instances where a group of people were known as sons of God, like in Genesis 6:2 and Job 1:6-12. In Dunn's (1991:171) understanding 'a son of God was a way of characterising someone who was thought to be commissioned by God or highly favoured by God'.

Dunn's (1991) position makes it difficult to interpret Scriptures like in I John 1 1-2:

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched. This we proclaim concerning the word of life. The life appeared, we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the father and has appeared to us.

The book of John, the fourth gospel, was written as proof so that people may believe that Jesus is the Son of God. Dunn (1991:176) does not have trust in the book of John because his question is 'whether Jesus of Nazareth actually spoke in terms used by the fourth Gospel'. In Mark chapter 5, Jesus came to the region of the Gerasenes where He came out of the boat, 'a man with an impure spirit came from the tombs to meet Him' (5:2). This is a description concerning the man who came to meet Jesus. 'He ran to meet Jesus and fell on his knees in front of Jesus' (5:6). The impure spirits that were in that man recognised Jesus as 'Jesus, Son of the Most High God'. In Luke chapter 4, Jesus encountered a man possessed by a demon, an impure spirit which said to Jesus: 'Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, The Holy one of God' (Luke 4:34). At Simon's house in the same book of Luke 4:38-41, in the evening, when Jesus healed the sick, demons came out shouting: 'You are the Son of God'. Luke says Jesus rebuked the demons and would not allow them to speak, because they knew He was the Messiah.

Kaiser (19918:222) argues that it 'is unlikely that Christians would have found the Trinity in the Hebrew Bible if they had not been convinced of it already, on the basis of their knowledge of Jesus Christ'. He further argues that Christians first came to the conclusion that Jesus was God in the flesh and later realised that there was a Trinity of divine persons. In order to understand Jesus as the Son of God, it is better to start by understanding Him starting from the Scriptures in His human form up to His glorification. It is who He was and His office in the flesh which leads towards the doctrine of the Trinity. Kaiser (1998; 227) points out that 'in the earliest text of the New Testament, Jesus was confessed as "Christ", "Lord" and "Son of God", "Jesus is the Christ", "Jesus is Lord" and "Jesus is the Son of God", were among the very earliest creedal statements of the church'.

As mentioned by Dunn (1991:167), according to records 'Jesus did not respond positively to the role of Messiah'. The response of Jesus may not mean He was denying the fact that He

was the Messiah. There is the fact of timing which the Gospel keeps on mentioning. Kaiser (1998:228) claims that 'the sparseness of Jesus' command, "follow me!" and the immediacy of the disciples' response indicates that Jesus was perceived even at the earliest stages of his ministry, as a prophet like Elijah, or possibly the Messiah himself'. Kaiser (1998:228) motivates his point by saying 'there never was a historical Jesus in isolation from offices or types that Jesus was believed to fulfil'.

During Jesus time, it was acceptable for someone who was used by God to be regarded as a prophet. Kaiser (1998:232) argues that 'the Mosaic prophets were known by their deeds as well as by their words'. Some examples of Moses and Elijah who performed great deeds of liberating a nation from slavery, giving water when thirsty and food when hungry and also the healing of the sick. But of all the prophets who came before Jesus including Moses and Elijah, Kaiser (1998:233) says 'none of them was ever worshipped by their followers as a divine being'. He further said 'Jesus presented himself and was perceived by others as the very embodiment of God's life-giving Word'. This perception was not a latter development, but He was perceived in this way from the very beginning.

Jesus was above all the Hebrew prophets in the way He spoke. The prophets before Him were used to saying 'Thus says the Lord' but Jesus used words like 'I say to you'. According to Kaiser (1998:234) 'Jesus was understood to be above the Torah because He was the very Word of God'. Lammert (2009:204) argues that 'when one grabs the word of *YHWH* as a theophanic expression, it is not surprising to find the word as a hypostasis or theophany in the literature of the second temple periods or in the New Testament referring here on the use of the term as the wisdom of Solomon and in John 1:1 and 14'. He points out that 'when one views the word of *YHWH* as a theophany in the Old Testament, its explicit use as such in the second temple period and in the New Testament is understood not as a development of its use in the Hebrew Scriptures, but as a continuation. After linking the word of *YHWH* with *YHWA* Lammert (2009:208) concludes that 'the connection of the Old Testament word of *YHWH* with the New Testament, the word was in much more than a linguistic connection – it is a theological one as well. Because the word of *YHWH* took a visible manifestation from time to time, Jesus Christ spoke not only on behalf of *YHWH*, but also *as YHWH.*

To conclude this argument, it must be stressed that based on the life and words of Jesus Christ, He was aware of His identity and of His relationship with God the Father. Luke recorded Jesus at the age of twelve saying: 'Why were you searching for me? Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house? 'By saying 'my Father's house' Jesus meant the temple. Jesus said He came to fulfil the Scriptures. Again this was unprecedented because never before or even after Jesus incarnation did any human being claim to fulfil the Scriptures. Jesus used words that were spoken by God in the Old Testament as His own, saying 'before Abraham was, I am' (John 8:58). Jesus used the Old Testament 'I am the first and the last' (The Alpha and Omega) found in Isaiah 48:12 and made His own saying 'I am the first and I am the last' (Revelations 1:17-18). Jesus knew who He was and was aware that even the evil spirits were aware of who He was, Jesus the Son of the living God!

Walvoord (1969:107) argues that those who accept the inspiration and infallibility of the Scriptures do not question the deity of the incarnate Christ. He is convinced on this matter because He says the evidence of Scripture is so complete that one who denies the deity of Christ must necessarily reject the accuracy of the Scriptures. It is in this manner that one views the Scriptures, as Dunn (1991) who questioned the accuracy of the fourth gospel, does.

Von Harnack (1904:121) views Jesus as the One who 'appeared among His people as a physician'. He says that in the three synoptic gospels Jesus becomes a physician of the soul and body and the Saviour or healer of men. Jesus was followed by many people and the Bible puts it openly that He healed their sickness. He attracted all kinds of people in life and He was even blamed for attracting sinners and tax collectors. Von Harnack (1904:122) says 'no sickness of the soul repels Him - He is constantly surrounded by sinful women and tax gatherers'. He further says 'in this world of wailing, misery, filth, and profligacy, which pressed upon Him every day, He kept Himself vital, pure and busy at all times'. Jesus was able to perform all these tasks and made God known to His people and Von Harnack (1904:123) says 'the people know they were healed, just because they had recognised God as the Father in His Son'. The impact of the ministry of Jesus Christ was manifested by the crowd He pulled to Himself. Jesus gave the people a new life. According to Von Harnack (1904:124), 'the new life uprooted the old life as that life swayed to and fro between sin and

virtue, it also gave birth to a new life whose aim was nothing short of being a disciple of Christ, and whose strength was drawn from the life of Christ Himself'. In return, the followers of Jesus went around preaching and uplifting the name that is above all names. That name is Jesus, who became the only way toward God, and Von Harnack (1904:125) is able to say 'the primitive Christian Missionaries were ready to die daily' because of Him.

1.3.1   From Judaism to Christianity

If heresy was a disease it would be very infectious and extremely contagious producing viruses like Gnosticism, Manichaeism, Marcionism and others that nearly destroyed the Early Church. Arian got the disease and infected and affected the Early Church. The Church Fathers produced two "anti-virus" attempts: the 325 AD Nicene Creed and 381 AD Constantinople Creed to disinfect the church. The Church Fathers confessed God as God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. From a human point of view it can be taken that there are three individuals all of whom are divine. The number three may result in the conclusion that there are three Gods mentioned. To Jewish monotheism and Pagan Roman/ Greek polytheism, it was as if the Christianity of the Church Fathers was perceived to be introducing Tritheism. The response of the Church Fathers from Gregory of Nazianze (in Oration 31: xxviii) was summarised to say that they worshipped God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. He continues to explain that 'the Three' are three persons, one Godhead, undivided in honour and glory and substance and kingdom'. Why did the Church Fathers then refuse the idea that they were introducing Tritheism but argued and justified that they still regarded God as monotheistic?

The investigation in this chapter is to analyse the different positions that might have an influence on the approaches and conclusions of both Orthodoxy and heresy. Maybe both were trying to maintain the Jewish monotheism being influenced by the *Shema* in Deuteronomy 6: 4-7 (the word *Shema* shall be discussed later). Having said that, the reality of the events of Jesus Christ and how He was recognised within worship in the church and the role He played in salvation might have some influence. He was simultaneously true God and true man. Some may have tried in theological discussions to bring Him closer to God without recognising His humanity and others, closer to human beings without recognising His divinity. One other issue was the issue of reference when it comes to interpreting

Christianity, reality and life in general. It seems that the difference between Heretical and Orthodox faith was the interpretation of the Scriptures in the light of the event of Jesus Christ; and what He has done in relation to how a Christian ought to worship God recognising Deuteronomy 6:4 (on the Oneness of God). There was also great influence from Greek culture and philosophy.

1.3.2 The state of the church

The fourth century was one of those times where there were events that changed the course of history. Before the fourth century the church suffered from persecution coming from outside (Workman 1980:20). Workman (1980:20) states that 'persecution in its origin must be ascribed to the Jews; it was really an attempt of the hierarchy to crush out the new sect'. The evidence is recorded in the book of Acts. Persecution changed hands from the Jews to the might of Rome. At the time of persecution the church had the Martyrs and the Apologetics to hold on to the faith. By 311 AD the Roman Emperor, Galerius, ordered that Christians must no longer be persecuted and the church got the legal right to exist within the Empire. By 312 on 28 October at the battle of Milvian Bridge, Constantine defeated Maxentius and became the ruler. Constantine, who had declared himself a Christian, became an important figure in uniting the church and state. Theological debate became a public matter, but the church began to fight a different kind of enemy not from outside but from within the church. The situation became ugly and was damaging to the image of Christ and the church.

1.4 Heresies

1.4.1 Monarchianism

According to Brown (1988:95), the name 'monarchianism' is applied to groups that sought to stress a fundamental Biblical and Christian truth, namely, the conviction that God is One, the sole Monarch of the universe'. The Monarchianists rejected the duality or plurality of God taught by Marcion and Gnostics. Christie-Murray (1976:38) says 'monarchianism was a youthful Christianity, daughter religion of strictly monotheistic Judaism, (which) was early faced with the problem of three persons in one God'. Christie-Murray (1976:38) further explains that it arose out of the church's experiences of Christ and of the Holy Spirit, and the

problems which believers had to face in regard to the relationship of these two beings with God the Father. There is a possibility that some of the heresies occurred as innocent individuals were trying to defend the oneness of God as He is in Jewish monotheism. The problem and the challenge was that it was done within the Christian context and faith that can be observed in the first sermon of Peter, where the Holy Spirit, Jesus and God the Father were recognised. According to Pryor (www.jcstudies.com), the early Jewish church was aware that they were bringing Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit into the Oneness of God the Father. They never attempted to resolve this tension, but rather celebrated it in the Jewish church. They recognised God the Son and God the Holy Spirit within the context of God the Father and it was done by way of liturgical worship, not in some theological speculation.

It was when the church moved out of Jerusalem and Samaria that the church tried to solve the problem of monotheism *versus* polytheism. Christie-Murray (1976:38) says that since they were convinced that God was One, they had to reconcile to their conception of Him and the distinct functions of the creatorship of the Father, the redeeming and saving power of the Son, and the advocacy, intercession, comforting and revealing characteristics of the Spirit, which made the third person much more than a mere emanation.

A number of heresies as observed by Christie-Murray (1976:38) 'arose out of Christians' attempt to define the indefinable and to reconcile the relationship of the Godhead and Manhood in the person of Christ'. Brown's (1988:95) classification of Monarchianism is explained through adoptionism and modalism. Adoptionism holds that Jesus was a man endowed with special power from God and thus in a way was adopted as God's son (Brown 1988:95). Brown (1988:96) argues further that 'adoptionistic ideas arise wherever Christians are reluctant to use the language and tools of philosophy to grapple with the apparent conflict between the unity of God and the Deity of Christ'.

Paul of Samosata is the man who is associated with the heresy of adoptionism. According to Brown (1988:98) 'Paul of Samosata taught that Jesus was born of a virgin and that the Holy Spirit had been poured upon Him at His baptism'. At baptism, Jesus received 'moral perfection' and miraculous powers and was adopted to be the Son of God. Thus Paul of Samosata regarded Jesus as a human being and nothing more.

1.4.2   Modalism

There are those who use the following example to explain the Trinity: 1x1x1=1; the other example is that of H_2O, which is water in liquid state, ice in solid state and is steam as a gas. Sometimes they give an example of a male figure who is a son to his parents, a husband to his wife and a father to his kids. Pryor (www.jcstudies.com) says those examples are all Modalistic. Modalism is an exaggerated oneness of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit to make them one person. The suggestion is that the Trinity does not have persons but energies or modes. It is God who created the creation and came as the Son for salvation and at Pentecost appears as the Holy Spirit. Those who accepted this heretic teaching sometimes were called Sabellianists. They believed that Jesus was divine, but He was not fully human. The problem with this is the question of Jesus praying, to whom did He direct His prayers? Modalism resolves the mystery of the Trinity by viewing the three persons as different modes of the one God; they are not distinct individual persons in the sense of Orthodoxy (Brown 1988:96). Brown (1988:96) says 'the modalist Christ is not only God, He is the faithful Himself'.

According to Brown (1998:99) modalism upholds the deity of Christ, but does not see Him as a distinct person *vis-à-vis* the Father. The Father became the Son in Jesus and in Pentecost He returned as the Holy Spirit who was in creation and gave the Law to Moses. The challenge still is to whom Christ was praying and how can Christ be an advocate for human beings before the Father, when He is both the Son and the Father at the same time? They tried to justify their conclusions based on passages like John 10:30 or John 14:9 saying 'I and my Father are One' or 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father'. As if the verses given are saying Jesus and the Father are the same person.

1.4.3   Sabellianism

Brown (1988:102) says modalism reached its high point early in the third century in the teaching of Sabellius. According to Brown (1988:103) Sabellius taught the strict unity of the Godhead, one person (*hypostasis*), three names, God is *Hyiopater*, Son-Father. This means that there are three different persons i. e. the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, to describe three different forms of revelation. The Son revealed the Father as a ray reveals the Sun.

1.5   Councils and the Creed

The gathering of believers was a common tradition since Israel used to appear before God for worship. The believers of the New Testament met daily during the hour of prayer for worship. In Acts chapter 6, the Apostles requested the multitude not to worship, but to bring a solution to a problem. The event in Acts chapter 6 opened the eyes of the believers that Christianity is not only a solution to the human predicament on issues of relationship but furthermore provides a fundamental basis on how to mend relationships between God and human beings and also amongst humans. This meeting was the first of many to come. Both meetings of Acts chapter 6 and that of Acts chapter 15 were not dealing with the issues of God's revelation, but were confronting human attitudes towards one another. The second meeting that was in Acts chapter 15 produced a letter to the church of Antioch. This led to the question that was later formulated by Kelly (2006:6). Did 'the Apostolic Church possess an official, textually determined confession of faith or did it not? '

At first it seemed that the church had not yet developed structures and processes that define what they believed in or practiced. Kelly (2006:7) points out that 'the early church was from the start a believing, confessing and preaching church but later it developed and expanded, beginning to define and explain its faith'. Kelly (2006:8) investigates several texts which may have been termed creeds or statements of faith. He points out instances where Jude makes the statement, 'the faith once delivered to the saints' and 'your most holy faith'. He talks of Paul writing to Timothy about the model of sound words such as 'the healthy doctrine'; and Paul also mentioning that Christians should 'hold fast to the tradition'. It is also common to find in the New Testament words like 'be established in the faith as you have been taught it', or the phrase, 'preaching of the faith'.

According to Kelly (2006:13), the New Testament extracts mentioned above show that 'the faith was already beginning to harden into conventional summaries'. Even though creeds were not yet formulated by the movement, fixity was under way. He further states that the creeds were the solutions to a problem saying, 'they were provoked by particular situations in the church's life'. Creeds developed for reasons of liturgy and baptism, as a way of the confessing one's faith. Kelly (2006:14) emphasises that 'the day to day polemic of the

church, whether against heretics within or pagan foes without, provided another situation propitious to the production of creeds, formulated were in use for the exorcism of devils'.

In the Jewish faith it was mentioned that Israel confessed the *Shema* in the morning when they opened their eyes and at evenings before they went to sleep - even at death. Kelly (2006:15) is convinced that to say 'Jesus is Lord' was a slogan and he suggests that such a slogan might have been used at baptism. The slogan can be found in Philippians chapter 2:11 where the Bible states that all knees are to bow down and all tongues confess that Jesus is Lord. Another is used to usher a person into salvation in Romans chapter 10:9 where the Bible says: 'If you declare with your mouth *Jesus is Lord* and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved'. In Colossians chapter 2:6 Paul says that 'You received *Christ Jesus as the Lord* and they received what was given' which shows that even in preaching, Jesus was presented as Lord.

It can be said that although in the Bible there are no formal creeds, confessions nor formulas of faith, an informal credo can be identified in the New Testament in the slogan that '*Jesus is Lord* or *Jesus is the Christ.* Kelly (2006:23) argues that 'what is manifested on every page is a common body of doctrine, definite in outline and regarded by everyone as the possession of no individual but of the church as a whole'. What is clear is that for salvation, Jesus was confessed as Lord within the Oneness of God the Father. At the same time, it can be said that the church was also aware of the operation of the Holy Spirit, as Peter said to Ananias: 'Why hath Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the price of the Land' (Acts 5:3) and again in Acts 5:9, Peter continued and asked Sapphira 'How is it that you have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord'?

Before the year 325 AD, it can be claimed that there were creeds as well as councils. Kelly (2006:205) reveals that 'all creeds before 325 AD were local in character'. According to Kelly, these creeds and confessions of faith owed their immediate authority, no less than their individual stamp, to the liturgy of the local church from which they emerged. In other words, a person was excommunicated within the parameters of his or her local church based on the violation committed according to the local leadership. Kelly (2006:205) points out that a 'great revolution took place with the introduction of Synodal or Council Creeds'.

In the letter of Arius to Alexander of Alexandria, written approximately 320AD, the following words can be noted:

> *We acknowledge one God, alone unbegotten, alone eternal, alone with beginning, alone true, alone possessing immortality, alone wise, alone good, alone sovereign, judge of all, governor, dispenser, immutable and unchangeable, just and good, this God of the law and of the prophets and of the New Testament, who begot on only-begotten Son for times ages, through whom also He made the ages and all things. Who begot Him, not in appearance but in truth, by His own will making Him subsist, immutable and unchangeable, a perfect creature of God, but not as one of the creatures; offspring, but not as one of the offspring. . .*

<div align="right">(Athanasius, De Synodis, 1892)</div>

Kelly (2006:206) noticed that this letter of Arius to Alexander contains 'a Creed like summary of their theological position'. It should be noted that this letter was written before the Nicen**e** Creed, and Kelly (2006:207) noted that 'the Creed of Nicaea was the first formula to be published by an ecumenical synod: consequently it was the first which could claim universal authority in a legal sense'.

Before the Nicene Council of 325, there was a Council held at Antioch and according to Kelly (2006:208), this Council was attended by 59 Bishops from Palestine, Arabia, Phoenicia, Coele - Syria, Sicilia and Cappadocia, under the chairmanship of Ossius of Cardoba. The Council coincided with the need to fill the vacancy of Antioch and out of this meeting a Creed about faith was formulated as follows:

> *To believe in one God, father, almighty, incomprehensible, immutable and unchangeable, and in one Lord Jesus Christ, only begotten son, begotten not from that which is not but from the father, not as made but properly an offspring, but begotten in as ineffable indescribable manner,. . . who exists everlastingly and did not at one time not exist, for we have learned from the Holy scripture that he alone is the express image,. . . . for He is the express image, not of the will or of anything else, but of His father's*

very substance. This Son, the Divine Logos, having been born in flesh from Mary the mother of God and made incarnate, having suffered and died, rose again from the dead and was taken up into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Majesty most high and will come to judge the living and the dead, furthermore, as in our saviour, the Holy Scriptures teach us to believe also in one spirit.

Kelly, 2006:209

Rusch (1980:18) points out that 'Ossius of Cardobas was not only presiding over the Council of Antioch but was also an advisor to Constantine, the great'. Most theologians affirm that the council was strongly anti-Arian due to the wording of the terms in the Antiochian Creed and the attitudes of the council towards Eusebius of Caesarea who was censured by the council. When the council took a stand against Arius, it was in agreement with Alexander of Alexandria. Kelly (2006:210) says 'when one juxtaposes the Creed in the letter of Arius addressed to Alexandria with the Creed from the council of Antioch 325, a claim can be made that Antioch seem to respond to that Creed in the letter of Arius'. The 'anathemas', according to Kelly's (2006:211) observation, 'are particularly interesting, for they anticipate with closer attention to the genuine thought of Arius, the ones to be adopted by the Nicene Fathers'.

In the book by Basil (*De Spiritu Sancto* Ch. 30:16-79) he reports what the church had become. He began by explaining how he could compare the condition of the church of that time to people or a nation in war. He used a few metaphors that made it possible to realise what the church had become – similar to a battle of two persons fighting each other out of hatred. In this way he divides the church between orthodox and heretic. He compares it to a fight of two people fighting in the dark, where even a friend may get hurt. In Chapter 30:77 he gives this advice: 'Turn now I beg you from this figurative description to the unhappy reality'. Basil's pain is that the situation had moved away from where the church was supposed to be heading, just like a ship driven astray by storms. How can it happen that Christians attack one another? As in battle when one falls and another walks over him. The love that Christ talked about had turned to hatred. Christianity should be a product of love and unity, but the church as Basil saw it was full of hatred and division. In the same chapter

he states that 'already all the church is almost full of the inarticulate screams, the unintelligible noises, rising from the ceaseless agitations that divert the right rule of the doctrine of true religion' (Basil *De Spiritu Sancto* Ch. 30:77).

The other concern for Basil was that there were many who regarded themselves as Christians when they were not. For the Roman government it was no longer illegal to be Christian. He says 'everyone is a theologian, though he has his soul branded with more spots than can be counted'. The individuals to whom Basil directed his attack, were not only dividing the church and living a disorderly life, but they were also power hungry. They had brought a lot of confusion into the church of God.

One may also ask if those individuals were really Christians or not. As the saying goes, 'you shall know them by their fruits' (Matthew 12:33). In chapter 30:78 Basil continued to say 'just as in a plague, men of the most regular lives suffer from the same sickness as the rest because they catch the disease by communication with the infected, so nowadays by the evil rivalry which possesses our souls we are carried away to an emulation in wickedness, and are all of us each as bad as the others'. The concern of the Church Fathers was that although Rome may have killed some Christians, Rome was killing the body, but faulty doctrine or heresy could kill the soul!

One should bear in mind that most of the Church Fathers were encountering a God not of their forefathers but a God from another nation. The next section is an investigation of the point of origin of this Christian God who had to be explained to and by the Church Fathers.

1.6   Four thousand years quest for God

It was mentioned that the Christian faith holds a conviction that God was never discovered but that He revealed Himself. It can be assumed that the Bible is the where, when, why and to whom this revelation was directed. In the Bible Christians read the historical events of God's revelation. The history of God's revelation has a context, a purpose and a continuation. In other words God's revelation can be taken from one generation into another. Since the revelation is directed towards human beings, the study of God cannot take place by excluding that history. Human concepts, ideas and opinions may have been influenced by God Himself and by the realities of life facing human beings.

The investigation of the development of monotheism until the birth of Christianity shall be exercised to test some of the developments of the concepts of God within African Traditional Religion. It is evident that the foundation of Christianity is about Jesus Christ, and He is the one who connects Christians with God. There may be other approaches to God, but the means to the Christian God is the God-Man Christ Jesus. What role does Jesus have within monotheism belief? The Christian church worships and venerates God the Father and Jesus Christ (as well as the Holy Spirit) and still maintains the Oneness of God. The question is: Before Jesus came to earth, how was God, and how was He worshipped?

Karen Armstrong (1999) who grew up in the Catholic faith, but experienced God from a distance, wrote a book '*A history of God: from Abraham to the present; the 4000-year quest for God'.* Her book is written from a philosophical approach. This history about God and the concepts of God are based on three religious faiths, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. According to these three movements faith is based on the worship of one God, *YHWH*, God, and Allah. They all have someone whom they regard as a 'leader', a prophet, a saviour sent by God to speak, and act on God's behalf. Moses the lawgiver was for Israel, Jesus for Christianity and Muhammad was for Islam (Muslims). They all share Jerusalem as a Holy Land and Abraham as their Father. Jerusalem may be the only city in the world to have three religious days in a week. Friday is the Muslim day of prayer; Saturday is Sabbath for the Jews while Sunday is Resurrection day for Christians. Does it mean that each has its own God or is it the same God approached in different manners? Maybe the answer stems from the slogan that states 'there is but one God'?

If God is a human construction then human faith is in trouble. From generation to generation believers from day to day and week after week have been going to church to worship God by songs, prayers and acts of gratitude. This human behaviour suggests that God is not just a historical figure that remains somewhere in the past or a monument in the museum of human memories - God is alive. According to Armstrong (1999:3) the drive behind the need to worship a God is because 'human beings are spiritual animals'. She claims that religion is 'an effort to find meaning and value in life'. If that is the approach any religious means may help to find meaning in life, but some may suggest that the effort may be bigger than that, beyond the meaning of life but rather to find the origin and owner of life. For McGrath

(1990:13) God is not just a concept but 'someone Christians encounter or experience'. He continues to say that 'the human experience of God is something which humans talk about with others, and the encounter with Him is something which humans try to put into words, but behind those ideas there is a greater reality'.

Armstrong's work is about how God was perceived from Abraham to this day (1999) throughout history. So the history of God's revelation goes hand in hand with the history and development of human beings. These concepts about God as she presents them may differ with what God in His reality was and is. The human concepts about God may be inspired by what there is or by emptiness. People may be observing the same image or object but from different angles. To McGrath (1990) who is supported by Armstrong (1999) there is a possibility that people may speak about God from two different contexts. One may tell about God without the 'encountering' or 'experience' but having been informed through opinions and another may have that 'experience' of God and put it in words. Some concepts may have been inspired by God's revelation in history or through a historical event. While to others it is the non-existence of a revelation (as there are other religions without a God in them). There seems to be no uniformity as Armstrong (1999:5) declares that 'each generation has to create the image of God that works for them'. Thus images and concepts formed may differ from one generation to another.

The words of God in the Bible are part of God's revelation, to an individual in history, and there is a reason why He came. Israelites are able to evaluate how they relate to God based on those historical events of God's revelation. When Stephen was standing before the Sanhedrin, his point of departure was 'the God of glory appeared to our Father Abraham while he was still in Mesopotamia' (Acts 7:20). Their faith was based on what God has done in history. As the writer of the letter of Hebrews said, 'in the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways…' (Hebrews 1:1). Those historical events of God's revelation occurred in the midst of worship of other gods. But Armstrong (1999:11) understood the God of Abraham as being experienced as an imperative in the here and now.

There were some common practices and a common way of worship to most nations especially within the region of the ancient Middle East. It was the practices of rituals of

animal sacrifices and burnt offerings. It was during those ceremonies that the individuals or nation experienced the divine, as expressed by Armstrong (1999:21). But who was this God of Abraham? That is the question that some theologians and historians such as Dijkstra (2001) and others ponder on: Was there a relationship between the God of Abraham and the God of Moses? Armstrong seems to have reservations in this regard; she seems to argue that the God of Abraham was not the same God of Moses.

Armstrong (1999:22) suggests that Abraham's God could have been the Canaanite God known as *El*. This *El* of Abraham was the same known as *El Shaddai*, *El Elyon* (the Most High God) or *El* of Bethel. This is the same *El* that is in the names like; Israel, Ishmael or Samuel. Armstrong (1999:22) continues to say that 'the Israelites called YHWH the God of our Fathers yet it seems that He may have been quite a different deity from El, the Canaanite High God worshipped by the patriarchs'. He may have been the God of other people before he became the God of Israel. Reading Genesis 4:26, says after the birth of Enos, the son of Seth, people began calling upon the name of *YHWH*. When that text is compared to Exodus 6:2-3, in which God spoke to Moses saying to him, 'I am YHWH. To Abraham, Isaac and Jacob I appeared as El Shaddai, but did not make my name YHWH known to them'.

Armstrong (1999) and Dijkstra (2001:84) asked questions about the inconsistencies presented by these two texts mentioned above. Before God revealed Himself to Abraham there were some sacrificial offerings made as the story of Cain and Abel demonstrates. After the birth of Enos people started calling upon the name of *YHWH;* but when God revealed Himself to Moses through the name *YHWH,* He said He was not known by that name before. Another understanding by Dijkstra (2001:83) is that 'the Israelites were not the only nation worshipping *YHWH*'. Therefore Armstrong (1999) and Dijkstra (2001) are in agreement that Israel may have made *YHWH* famous but other nations around the regions of the ancient Middle East knew this God. Dijkstra (2001) reminds us of Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, who was a priest of Midian and who gave Moses good advice concerning issues of law and leadership. Might he have been a priest of the same God of Moses?

Another argument comes from the story of Balaam who was not from any tribe of Israel, but according to the records in the Bible this man knew who *YHWH* was. Balaam was instructed by God not to curse Israel who was blessed by God. When Balaam cursed someone or

something, the curse took effect. But the God of Israel who blessed Israel prevented him from cursing Israel. The Bible has individuals who were not Israelites but who knew the God of Israel. One could add to that list Job and Melchizedek.

Both Armstrong (1999:68) and Dijkstra (2001:84) suggested that there were about four narrations from different contexts and writings for diverse purposes. These four sources are known as the Yahwist, Elohist, Deuteronomist and Priest, based on the well-known work of Wellhausen in 1905 as stated by Dijkstra (2001:90). It is assumed that the five books of Moses known as the Pentateuch underwent a long history of growth and redaction. The debate about the growth and redaction of these sources is outside the scope of this study, but there are some observations that must be noted. To whoever was involved in compiling or writing the Pentateuch the name *YHWH* was known. Exodus 6:2-3 might be the first encounter of Moses with *YHWH.* God knew who Moses was and who Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were. If this is the same God who made Abraham leave his country and be a wanderer, then it is the same God who met Moses. Maybe there was a reason why God did not reveal Himself as *El Shaddai* but as *YHWH* to Moses.

Armstrong's (1999:30) concern is the attitude and the behaviour of God from the time of Abraham to Moses. God had time to sit down to talk and eat with Abraham but in Moses' time He was full of terror. As if to imply that the God of Abraham was not the same as the God of Moses. But it was in Abraham's time when Sodom and Gomorrah were burnt down to ashes. Before Abraham, in Noah's time, people were killed by floods. It is true as Armstrong (1999:31) stated that 'Yahweh is the unconditioned One; "I shall be that I shall be". He will be exactly as He chooses and will make no guarantees'.

God has been the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He formed relationships with them and formed some partnerships. After meeting Moses, God wanted to take Israel out of Egypt but He also wanted to be their God. Pryor (www.jcstudies.com) suggests that God's identity was related to what He was about to do for Israel, so that He might be their God. This proposition by Pryor (www.jcstudies.com) about the relationship of God's identity with the purpose of his revelation is extremely essential especially when God was to be presented in future to other nations who are not Israelites. The purpose of God's revelation was given to Moses in Exodus:

I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows; And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and bring them up out of that land unto a good land and large… Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh…

Exodus 3:7-8 & 10 (KJV).

God's revelation to Moses was the revelation of his life that made such a big impact that it convinced him to go back to Egypt to face Pharaoh and to influence the Israelites to turn away against their slave masters. Moses' faith in God and God's activities through Moses had to be so powerful and unique in order to make Pharaoh lose his hold on the Israelites. Not only to convince Pharaoh but also the Israelites without any shadow of a doubt to follow Moses to wherever he was leading them. Whatever Moses was going to do in Egypt, must have been so great and that all may be convinced about the greatness of the God of Moses. Throughout God's revelation there is the theme of the greatness of God, that He is the only One.

1.6.1   YHWH our God is One

The worship of one God was a challenge throughout the history of Israel, because they made a binding agreement with God to worship no other God but *YHWH*. A question needs to be answered within this investigation and analysis: How was Jesus venerated and worshipped by the church alongside *YHWH?* It is this kind of question that the Early Church Fathers were wrestling and speculating about. That shall be dealt with at a later stage. The response to some questions shall reveal that Israel fought to maintain their monotheistic worship and how the first church modified monotheism by worshipping the three persons of the Godhead while maintaining the Oneness of God.

1.6.2   The Bible and Monotheism

Ferguson (2003:538) explains that the emphasis in Israel's worship was on one God. He says the Jews also emphasised God's holiness and His transcendence. Therefore monotheism is a system of worship to venerate one God. Some theologians accept that Judaism has a system of the worship of one God, but the debate is the origin of this system. The struggle for Israel

was (and still is) in maintaining the contract they made with God and the unbearable temptation of bringing other gods into their worship of the one God.

There was a struggle to maintain the agreement made with God, disregarding the gods that were all over the region of Canaan. When Moses enquired 'in what name are you revealing Yourself' (Exodus 3:13), he was aware of the existence of other deities which were worshipped and venerated by other nations even in Egypt. In most of God's revelations, He does something that no other being may be able to copy or replicate. When God went to Abraham, at the age of 90-100 years (Genesis 17:17) and 'Sarah's womb' that was 'as good as dead' it was clear that it would be impossible for them to have a son (Romans 4:19-20). Human beings are born into the world and through the process of socialisation they learn how to be human beings. When Abraham met God the society that he was born into had already moulded him. If others had done something before God could, in Abraham's life, He might have begun by destroying the work of others to accomplish His own ends. One might say God began the process of re-socialising Abraham. For 75 years Abraham was a product of his environment and it took God about 25 years to destroy his past in order to reconstruct his future. Abraham had to be a wanderer until his trust was in God and God alone, and he believed in God alone. God wants people to see that He is at work.

There are good reasons to assume that for Moses YHWH was the only God worth veneration by him and the Israelites. God introduced Himself to Moses on Mount Sinai as the 'God of your ancestors; the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob' (Exodus 3:6). Moses' attitude was that of a person aware that he was in the presence of God. He hid his face. One can only speculate about where he learned this behaviour and attitude towards God, in Egypt or in Median? He stayed 40 years in each place, Pharaoh's house and Jethro's house. Moses asked God about His identity and God responded by saying: *I AM THAT I AM, Ehyeh asher ehyeh* (Armstrong 1999: 31).

Armstrong (1999:31) interprets God's answer to Moses as 'never you mind who I Am or mind your own business'. This statement may also mean that God cannot be influenced by anything outside Himself. In other words God was saying 'I shall be that which I shall be'. Pryor (www.jcstudies.com) says the name was given on the eve of the Exodus to connect God's revelation with His purpose. It was like Moses wanted to know by what authority God

was sending him into Egypt. God was going to reveal Himself as He had never been revealed before. Throughout history God was going to be known by the name of that revelation. Whatever was going to happen in Egypt to liberate the Israelites as Moses obeyed Him, God was going to make it happen. From that time when Moses returned to Egypt with a rod in his hand whatever was going to happen, God was going to make it happen under the name given to Moses. He is the God of what was happening. God was going to be known by His actions through Moses. Pryor (www.cstudies.com) believed that when God was saying '*I AM THAT I AM*', could also suggest that He was also saying: *I WAS THAT I WAS // I AM THAT I AM // AND I SHALL BE THAT I SHALL BE.*

According to Pryor (www.jcstudies.com) when Jews study the Scriptures they do not ask what God is like, but what He said. Pryor calls this theonomy. It is a study about the law of God. The Torah or Law is a gift from God. So Israel studied the requirements of the law or what God had spoken that they may obey Him. Israel was known to be obedient to the God who revealed Himself to Israel. To be known at that level meant there had to be a relationship between God and the Israelites. The name may say something about God and about how He relates.

YHWH is a holy name. Armstrong (1999:53) and Pryor (2005) explain that He is not just holy but; Holy, Holy, Holy, in Hebrew, *Kaddosh, Kaddosh, Kaddosh*. The meaning of *Kaddosh* is Other, therefore Other, Other, Other. Pryor explains that God is radically holy, transcended more than anything that exists or can be imagined. He is the source of all that exists and He is the self-existing one who called creation into existence. Because God can relate, it means He can also enter into a relationship with His creation.

1.6.3   Shema

Moses through the power of God took the Israelites out of Egypt. He challenged most of the gods of Egypt one by one and prevailed against them. Moses had to lead Israel to Mount Sinai where they were going to enter into a relationship with God. He is the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob, but He had to be the God of Israel by entering into a covenant. If God was going to take them for His own, they should also enter into an agreement with Him that they will belong to Him alone. Armstrong (1999) writes 'the Israelites did not believe that YHWH, the God of Sinai was the only God but promised in their

covenant that they would ignore all the other deities and worship Him alone'. On Mount Sinai God introduced Himself as 'I am the lord your God who has brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before me' (Exodus 20:2-3).

As was mentioned previously, the ancient world especially the Middle East was a polytheistic world of many gods. In Egypt where they stayed for more than 400 years, there were many gods and the Promised Land where they were going to, was also a land of many gods. Armstrong (1999:33) declares that 'the children of Israel had promised to worship YHWH alone as their Elohim and in return, He had promised that they would be His special people and enjoy His uniquely efficacious protection'.

Block (2004:194) presents Deuteronomy 6:4-5 as the Shema which he says represents one of the most important symbols of Judaism. The Shema is a declaration of faith more or less like the Creeds. Pryor (www.jcstudies.com) says that the Shema was recited together with Exodus 20:1-4 and Numbers 15:37-41. In addition Block (2004:212) says that the Jews to this day still recite the Shema twice daily as part of their prayers in the morning when they wake up, and at night before they go to asleep. Pryor (www.cstudies.com) says even at their death those must be the last words spoken by Israelites.

The next part of the Shema is about loving God with all their being, Israel's love for God must not be questioned. He is not going to settle for anything but total loyalty to Him. They had to love God with their entire being and nothing less. Block's (2004:204) interpretation is that 'the commitment must be rooted in the heart but then extend to every level of one's being and existence', and he comes to the following conclusions:

- From the very beginning Israelites' faith and religion were to be internal matters of the heart. The performance of ritual and covenant of relationship shall follow.
- It was to be a family matter demonstrated through the intentional indoctrination of the children.

- It was to be a public matter by binding the words on their hands, apply them as phylacteries on their foreheads and inscribe them on the doorposts of their buildings.

Block (2004:208) regards the Shema as a 'declaration of Israel's complete undivided, unqualified, and undistracted devotion to YHWH, to YHWH alone they shall cling, Him alone shall they serve, and by His name only they shall swear (Deuteronomy 6:13 & 10:20).

Moses through God's power succeeded to lead the Israelites out of Egypt, but where was he leading them to? The Bible talks about the Promised Land, but he was also taking them to a relationship with YHWH, who was also known as Elohim and Adonai (www.jcstudies.com). A covenant was made and terms and conditions were stipulated. Many questions have been asked about this relationship between God and the Israelites, in relation to the Shema. One of these questions concerns how the Shema relates to Jewish monotheism?

1.6.4   Judaism and the Shema

According to Dijkstra (2001) two historical events are connected with the birth of Jewish monotheism or Judaism. The first event was the discovery of the book of Deuteronomy by King Josiah (2 Chronicles 34:1-33) and the second was the return from exile. Tenney (1996:81) says, 'Judaism as it existed in the first century was largely the product of the exile'. How do these two events relate to the Shema and the covenant God made with Israel? How far was Israel true to the covenant made with God? It is a known fact that while Moses was with God on the top of the mountain, the Israelites were busy making an image to worship. In Canaan, whoever was in the position of leadership had an influence on how Israel worshipped their God. One may view the Old Testament as the history of how the Israelites worshipped God or other gods, or how the Israelites related to God in the light of the Shema.

The testimony by Dijkstra (2001:90) is that 'under the name *YHWH* this God of the Patriarchs concluded a covenant with Israel of which Moses was the mediator'. After the life of Moses and Joshua, the Israelites in Canaan were in a different setting, away from Mount Sinai and the desert. Mount Sinai was a place where Israel received the God's commandments and where the covenant was made with God. Israel is a nation that was established on religion

and when they lose that sense of their religiosity, they believe that they will become like any other nation. As stated above: Whoever is in a position of leadership has the power to influence their relationship with their God. One leader may move them away from God, while the next one may bring them closer to Him. Evidence of the power of leadership can be seen when reading Kings and Chronicles. When the Israelites experience hardship in life as a nation or individually, that was regarded as a punishment for their sins against God.

Armstrong (1999:35) makes it known that in Canaan, cities were built and a kingdom was established, but Israel had to find a unifying religious symbol to keep them united. In Jerusalem a temple was built, and from that time the city became the centre of the world because it was a centre of worship. Harrington (2001:45) explains that 'temples were considered bonds between heaven and earth in ancient cultures'. Jerusalem became a place where heaven met the earth, because that is where human beings encountered their God. According to Harrington's (2001:45) explanation the land and the temple were holy because sacrificial offerings to God were offered at that place.

According to Armstrong (1999:35) the temple soon became special because the Israelites began to see the temple as the 'replica of Yahweh's heavenly court'. Most of the religious rituals and worship activities like sacrificial offerings were done in Jerusalem where the temple was. Most of Israel's holidays or celebrations are connected with religion. They celebrated their New Year's festivals, the Harvest festivals and many others in the city that is known today as the "Holy Land".

Armstrong (1999:63) lamented that the worship of *YHWH* appeared in a masculine form and had some challenges from goddesses like Asherah, Ishtar or Anat. There were three important positions in Israel, the king, the priest and the prophet. The king played a political role, the priest was a liturgical leader of worship and represented the people to God and the prophet represented God to the nation. All of these positions were held by men. There were women who played a significant role, but they were never recognised publically. For instance the death of Miriam and Aaron are reported in the same chapter but Miriam had only one verse while Aaron is given three verses (Numbers 20:1-29). The nation mourned for Aaron but not for Miriam. In a feministic sense, *YHWH* as observed by Armstrong appeared to be a violent God and a God of war rather than a God of love. Armstrong's views of the

violent God are based on the instructions that the Israelites had to destroy and kill any appearance of other gods. Armstrong (1999:64) mentions that 'the rise of the cities meant that more masculine qualities of martial physical strength were exalted over female characteristics'. Before the establishment of the worship of one God, *YHWH,* there were powerful women who were in 'leadership'. Armstrong (1999:64) mentions women like Deborah, who led armies into battle. Women like Judith and Esther who were celebrated as heroes in Israel. But Armstrong is of the opinion that after *YHWH* had effectively conquered the other gods and goddesses of Canaan and other regions of the Middle East and became the only God, His religion would be managed almost entirely by men. Maybe that is why there had to be a queen of heaven? (See page 91).

In the African context, the theological discussions it was about the behaviour and the attitude of the missionaries towards Africans when they encountered each other less on the content of their message. It was what the European missionaries had imposed upon Africans based on their perception that one culture enjoyed superiority over another. Christianity seems to have been equalled to Western culture, and therefore to be Christian was to become civilised in European terms. But the setting of the theological discussion in the 4th century A. D. was about the correct doctrine concerning the teaching of the Oneness of God with the challenge of avoiding polytheism. It was necessary to find where this God comes from in order to have an informed conclusion based on how He revealed Himself. The African setting is about how human beings treat each other and the secondary setting is about the Church Fathers and how God relates to human beings. The following section is a brief examination of the Oneness of God and the presentation of both the Nicene and Constantinople Creeds.

1.7   The first church in worship

Pryor (www.jcstudies.com) maintains that Jesus had established in the church a witnessing community of faith. This community of faith is based on the person and work of Jesus. He explains that Christianity was not just the faith of Jesus but faith in Jesus Christ. The first Christians saw Jesus in His human form, and of those, Jews were in the majority. Pryor (www.jcstudies.com) points out that they never saw themselves as a new movement but as

a continuation. With that understanding Pryor (www.jcstudies.com) shows that the young church inherited with the monotheism of Judaism, the following:

- Personal nature of God, the God who dwells among his people
- The revelation of the Holy Scripture

According to Hurtado (1988:94) it is generally accepted that the resurrection of Jesus was understood by the first Christians as involving two things:

- The vindication of the one crucified as a Messianic claimant.
- His exaltation to a position of heavenly glory. God has made Him Lord and Christ.

Both Pryor (www.jcstudies.com) and Hurtado (1988:93) argue that the recognition of Jesus as Lord was done as early as the foundation of the church and not in the third and fourth century as it is stated by Paul in the letters to the Colossians and Philippians. In Acts according to Peter's first sermon, Jesus was made by God to be both Lord and Christ who 'as to His earthly life was a descendant of David, and who through the Spirit of Holiness was appointed the Son of God in power by His resurrection from the dead, Christ our Lord'.

Hurtado (1988:97) points out two passages from Scriptures which need recognition, that is Philippians 2:5-11 and 1 Corinthians 8:1-6. He suggests that Philippians may have been a hymn from a Jewish Christian setting. Hurtado (1988:96) elaborates his point that Philippians 2:5-11 combines 'an amazing description of the exalted status of the risen Christ together with a clear commitment to the uniqueness of God'. The hymn in Philippians 2:5-11 recognised that Jesus has a name above every name. Pryor (www.jcstudies.com) and Hurtado (1988:97) believe that the name that is above every name from the Jewish setting is *YHWH*. This name was not just a Holy name but Holy, Holy, Holy and that name was given to Jesus Christ. According to the song in Philippians 2:10-11, it was the highest status Jesus was given by the Father. Hurtado (1988:97) asserts that the status of the risen Christ is unsurpassed in any of the ancient Jewish references to God's chief agent.

In I Corinthians 8:1-6 both Hurtado (1988:97) and Pryor (www.jcstudies.com) regard verse 6 as a modified Shema. It says: 'yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live, and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all

things came and through whom we live'. Hurtado (1988:98) maintains that 'alongside its Christian distinctive the above passage shows us (that) the use of the divine agency category to grant Christ a position of enormous importance while still protecting the uniqueness of God'.

Pryor (www.jcstudies.com)) suggests that the church worshiped Jesus along with God without trying to solve the tension between monotheism and polytheism. He says the young Jewish church accepted the tension without trying to resolve it. The challenge is that Jesus was born into a nation that was warned by God 'you shall have no other gods before me'. That is further explained by Hurtado (1988:99) who points out that 'although Jesus receives a prominent place in the devotional life of the earliest Christians, He is not portrayed as another God with a culture of His own'. Thus

Jesus is exalted to a particular position, second only to the one God,

- In this position, He acts by divinely granted authority and as God's principal agent in the execution of God's will.
- He is directly associated with one God and likened to Him in certain ways e. g. the name.

The worship of Jesus alongside God was done in the light of the resurrection. Pryor (www.jcstudies.com) maintains that the monotheism of the first Jewish church was expressed in worship not as theological speculation. They were not asking about the *divinity* of Jesus but the question was about his *identity*. They were expressing Jesus' identity by citing the Scriptures. In other words the passages of Scripture that had previously been directed to God, after the resurrection, those passages were applied to Jesus. Hurtado submits that before that Jesus was not 'portrayed as another God with a culture of His own'. Pryor (www.jcstudies.com) says if Jesus was venerated as he was but outside the oneness of God then that worship of Him would violate the Shema. Pryor (www.jcstudies.com) argues that the only time one can venerate Jesus is alongside God and with God. That is when the worship must be in recognition of Jesus in the *Ehad* or oneness of God. Jesus is part of the unity in plurality.

God was worshipped in the Holy of Holies within the Jewish religion but Christianity took Him out from Jerusalem to all Judea, to Samaria and to the ends of the world. Pryor (www.jcstudies.com) says by then 'the ends of the world' were Hellenized. The Hellenized world was full of other gods and it was also the world of philosophy. Pryor (www.jcstudies.com) adds another significant observation that the first disciples experienced Jesus as a human being; they knew Him in human form. They saw Him, touched Him and ate with Him but after the resurrection they experienced Jesus in His divine form in His glory. According to Pryor (www.jcstudies.com) Jews never asked about the nature of God but they asked about His commandment that they may obey Him. And they never tried to solve the tension of bringing Jesus into the oneness of God, rather they celebrated it. He says their monotheism was not practised through theological speculation but in the manner of their worship. But the Hellenized world experienced polytheistic worship with a background of philosophy. Pryor (www.jcstudies.com) says the philosophical mind as an enquiring mind asked questions with the aim of trying to resolve the tensions within Christian worship.

According to the Catholic the New Advent Church Fathers Encyclopaedia, Arius the arch-heretic was thought to have been a native of Libya. It is understood that he was born and lived from c. 270 AD to c. 336 AD. He was excommunicated for criticising the decision taken against Meletius of Lycopolis, but was re-instated and ordained to the priesthood in 311 by Achillas of Alexandria (311-312 AD). Between 312 AD and 328 AD, Alexander became the bishop of Alexandria, and Arius was in charge of Baucalis. Arius took an approach that put him on a collision path with Alexander Bishop of Alexandria. By 318 AD the conflict between Bishop Alexander of Alexandria and Arius took a turn and moved out of Alexandria to other parts of the Roman Empire.

Some of Arius' conceptions are found in the letter from Arius to Eusebius of Nicomedia (318 AD) which had been preserved by Theodoretus in his work of the history of the church. He reports that the Bishop (meaning Alexander of Alexandria) had destroyed him because he had a misunderstanding with him. The main points of the misunderstanding were based on the nature and the role of Jesus Christ. Arius did not agree with Alexander when he preached about

Eternal God, Eternal Son

Like Father, like Son

The words of Alexander, according to Arius' understanding, are that the un-originated Son co-exists with God.

He is eternally born, He is un-originated born

> *Neither by mental conception nor by the slightest temporal interval does*
> *God precede the Son.*

Arius opposed Alexander, his Bishop, and in response Alexander wrote some letters to all non- Egyptian Bishops in 324 a year before the Nicene Council. He confirms that his position of the nature of the matter is:

The Son of God was not produced out of what did not exist, and that there never was a time when He did not exist.

Bishop Alexander considered that what John wrote confirmed his position. That passage is John 1:18 that says, 'the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father'. Alexander states that 'the Father and the Son are two and inseparable from each other'. The words, 'in the bosom of the Father', may demonstrate that the two are inseparable. And since they are inseparable the Fatherhood of the Father is without a beginning as their relationship is eternal. Of the Father he said 'not in time, nor after any interval, nor out of what did not exist, did He beget the only begotten Son'.

From the 648 Fragment 3: *Apud* Athanasius discourses against the Arian 1, 5 and encyclical letter to the Bishop of Egypt and Libya, these are the preserved words of Arius saying:

> *God was not always a Father; there was a time when God was alone, and*
> *He was not yet a Father. He became a Father - the Son was not always the*
> *Son of God too was made out of what did not exist. And as all that are*
> *made exist as creatures and work, He too is a creature and a work.*

Yet Alexander recognised that the Son in worship is to be accorded the honour which befits Him the same as the Father. Alexander also points out that the birth of Jesus Christ was a purpose to take away sin, and it was at the fullness of time to dwell among the human race. The emphasis here is the purpose of His coming and the assurance that Jesus was a historical figure.

The debate between Arius and Alexander resulted in the meeting of 325 AD in Nicaea. It seems that both parties were motivated by trying to maintain the worship of one God but at the same time they were to redefine the concept of monotheism in reference with Jesus Christ and the presence of the Holy Spirit. The study is to examine how much of their understanding of the Shema and their own experience in worship had influenced their theological reflection.

Before going towards the discussions after the Nicene Council of 325 AD some reflections about Jesus: God is always associated with creation and is referred to as 'the Creator'. Pannenberg (1991:3) indicates that the God of Jesus Christ was a Hebrew God or the God of the Hebrews. But the birth of the church realised a religion that moved outside the parameters of the Jewish nation to the 'ends of the world'. Pannenberg (1991:4) asks the reason why an individual should commit to being a member of the Christian church. A Jew is born into a Jewish faith, just like an African is born into an African culture and religion. To be a Christian, one does not have to be born into it. He further asks 'what in the world should motivate a person to embrace the God of another nation? ' Jesus was a Jew born into Judaism, and He employed the resources of the Jewish faith. Pannenberg (1991:10) suggests that the answer is based on linking the God of Israel and Jesus Christ with the God who created the universe. If the God who created the universe is the same God of Israel then that may mean He is the only true God in all nations and cultures.

If the creation is real and the creatures are real then the Creator who created the creation has to be real. Pannenberg (1991:11) maintains that the certainty of the creation justifies the certainty of the Creator. Pannenberg (1991:5) believes that 'the Christian faith cannot live by relating to the history of Jesus as to a myth of Christian ancestors, if it were just that. The story of Jesus has to be history, not in all its detail, but in its core, if the Christian faith is to continue. God must be real, not just mythical if we are to entrust ourselves to him'.

Pannenberg's views are vital because there are some theologians, mostly African and African sympathisers who justify the introduction of the African myth within the Christian faith in the name of Africanising Christianity. According to Pannenberg (1991:6) 'coherence provides the final criterion of truth and it can serve as such a criterion, because it also belongs to the nature of truth'. He is of the view that creation and the God who is in control of creation and the God of our day to day activities have to be the same God. It can also be said that the Early Church was faced with the problem of coherence between what God said in Deuteronomy 6:4: 'the Lord is our God, the Lord is one!' And that of Exodus 20:3: 'you shall have no other gods before me' but still recognise what God had done through Jesus Christ His only Son.

Already here the church in Alexandria (Africa) began a debate concerning the relationship and the nature of Jesus Christ and the conversation and questions were initiated by Christians who were not Jewish. By asking the questions and having debates about Jesus, they were also taking ownership of something that was not theirs by birth but by conviction. Since they were Greek writers they were also Hellenizing Jesus Christ. The Jewish Christians like Peter and James might have said the same thing, had similar ideas and concepts about Christ, using Jewish Scriptures and historical background. Now outside Jerusalem and Judea the Christian faith is confronted by questions about the relationship between God the Father and God the Son. If the questions stemmed from a Greek background then the response would be Greek.

Another observation about these questions is that they are not based on the behaviour of one Christian to another, but about the ideas and concepts of their teaching. They were confronting one another based on their teaching and insight on the relationship between God the Father and God the Son. They were engaging one another rationally. The stage was set based on concepts and ideas, not on cultural heritage or human attitudes towards other human beings.

1.8   African Traditional Religion

African Traditional Religion (ATR) is what Africans practised before the 'interruption' by European missionaries. The faith in ancestors continued to be practised by many African

Christians. This phenomenon and practise according to Choon Sup Bae and P. J. van der Merwe (2001:1299) is an 'attempt to preserve good relations with the departed kin? The practise and the involvement in ancestral rituals had to be seen as part of religious elements. Choon and Van der Merwe (2001:1300) state that 'ancestral rituals (are) intrinsically a form of worship'. However Seoka (1997:5) argued that the rituals and the practises within ATR are not the worship of ancestors. According to Seoka (1997:5) 'it could not have been the African people who coined the phrase "ancestor worship"'. Mtetwa (1996:23) is of the same opinion that Africans throughout their history have never worshipped their ancestors. It had to be non-Africans who coined the phrase 'ancestor worship'. The influence seems to come from outside by Westerners especially Western missionaries and anthropologists who had no proper insight into ATR and its practises. Seoka (1997:5) holds that the motive was to 'exploit and deliberately misconstrue so as to promote Western religious practise'. Mtetwa (1996:23) went further to say that 'the use of Western theological and anthropological categories in articulating African rituals and philosophies has to discontinue, precisely for their capacity to distort and confuse'. In the Roman Catholic Church there is the practise known as the veneration of the saints. Mtetwa (1996:23) does not feel comfortable with the use of 'ancestral veneration' because it is foreign and neo-colonial. The question is what then will be the proper term to use?

Both Mtetwa (1996) and Seako (1997) prefer the use of African terms like '*ukuhlabela amadlozi or gopaasa badimo'*. These terms are used by Mtetwa to explain the ritual of slaughtering an animal. According to Seoka (1997:5) in African religious practise ancestors are serviced, but not worshipped - thus Africans talk of *umsebenzi kababa or umama*. Meaning, the entire event is called *umsebenzi* of remembering or thanking the ancestors but in an approach that is similar to worship.

The argument for Mbiti (1969:178) is the use of the word worship, because for him the word itself does not exist in many African languages. Zulu (2002:476) also disputes that to worship a human being in the real sense of the word is foreign to Africans. He adds that the word *ancestors* denotes human beings and Africans worship God alone. Mbiti (1969:178) only disputes the use of the term worship but also accepts that in the worship of God in some cases, sacrifices and offerings are directed to one or more of the following: God, spirits and

the living dead (ancestors). It is not only offering and sacrifices that are directed to spirits and the living dead, but prayers and invocation are also made. Turaki (1999:162) says that due to the distance between the Supreme Being and Africans, those who follow ATR turn to the 'lesser' being, that is African divinities and the ancestors. In the post exilic period the Jewish nation felt the distance between them and God, and began to recognise other beings that were closer to God.

Nevertheless the use of ancestral worship has been accepted and used in the theological arena. The term is not only used in ATR but also from the work done in Asia. Many articles have been written and a lot of research has been carried out in the East where the term has been used. It can be said that most theologians agree that Africa has never had a temple or statue like in other continents. The reason for this may be due to the strong connection Africans have with their ancestors.

It seems that those who claim that Africans worship ancestors seek to condemn and disapprove of ATR and those who argue that there is no worship of ancestors within ATR, seek to approve of ATR. Most Evangelicals and Pentecostals denounce the practises and rituals within ATR.

To use African terms like *badimo, izinyanya, swikwembu or abaphansi*, is to use terms that are stronger than ancestors. Anyone who speaks or knows South African languages knows that the word *badimo* is the same as the gods. The same can be said about Shangaan because God is *Xikwembu* and the ancestors are *swikwembu* meaning the gods. These terms are close and are used by Turaki (1999:80), reflected in the title of his book *Christianity and African Gods* referring to ancestral spirits. The ancestral spirits are part of African divinities. African divinities shall be discussed when dealing with the *Trinity in an African context.*

It seems proper to make comments about the African understanding of the ancestors. Zulu (2002:479) explains that they are people who have passed away, yet it is believed that they 'continue to exist in the land of the dead'. Their bodies are buried yet their spirits continue to live and are accommodated by their living relatives. Choon and Van der Merwe (2001:1300) discovered that 'the ancestors' identity is explained as transcendental beings representing the religion, ethical and institutional value of society in their community'.

Obengo (1997:46) also reveals that 'parenthood before death is a vital qualification for the attainment of ancestral statuses'. This means that death is not the end of the role of parenthood, it continues beyond the grave. Later the study will zoom in further on the argument of the worship of ancestors and its meaning in relation to the relationship of Jesus and God.

1.8.1   Contextualising African Doctrine

How does one approach theological discussion and reflection within the context of the African Church? Maimela (1991:17) employed 'inculturation' which he explains as an approach which 'attempts to marry Christianity with the African worldview so that Christianity could speak with an African idiom and accent'. *Inculturation* is the term that was used before *contextualisation*. This is further explained by Mtetwa (1996:21) saying that 'African Theology must be understood in the context of African life and culture and the creative attempt of African people to shape a new future that is different from the colonial past and the neo-colonial present'. Most African theologians like Mtetwa (1996) are convinced that the African situation requires a new theological methodology that is different from the approach of the dominant theologies of the West. They strongly feel that there is not only a need for a new methodology but that, 'African Theology must reject the prefabricated ideas of North Atlantic Theology by defining itself according to the struggles of the people in their resistance against the structures of domination' (Idowu 1977:4). After the rejection of the 'ideas of the North Atlantic Theology' then the African theologians are called upon by Mtetwa (1996:21) to 'create a theology that arises from and is accountable to African people'.

African theologians claim that the Western approach has failed in Africa. Muzorewa (1990:36) says 'the Western oriented traditional Christian theological language has not adequately met the needs of the developing nations. The West has failed to change colonialism, slavery and imperialism; instead the missionaries were seen as agents and collaborators with the oppressor of the African people'. Some of the criticism against the missionary is unfairly directed. It cannot be denied that missionaries may have been responsible for behaviour that was not based on Christianity, but can energy be directed in formulating a Theology against missionaries? Many African Church leaders and politicians

attended schools that were developed by missionaries. Some of the schools, clinics and hospitals built by missionaries still stand and function to this day. They may have failed to recognise the role of culture or unknowingly regarded their culture to be pure and superior. They failed to recognise that they came to change African hearts and turn them to God through Jesus Christ. The kind of clothes Africans wore was less important to God than the relationship with Him in Jesus Christ. Christ died on the cross to open a way back to God in order to relate with Him, not to change people's names.

As a way forward for a new methodology and new approach, African theologians propose a theology that is based on Africans. Muzorewa (1990:36) declares that African scholars are developing a relevant theological doctrine that speaks to the soul of the African people. Bediako (1996:6) points out an important fact that 'the era of African theological literature as reaction to Western misrepresentation is past'. After more than 40 years, Africa is still responding to the 'failures' of the missionaries. This behaviour and methodology can be witnessed even in politics; the corruption and mismanagement of funds in most African governments are blamed on colonialism and apartheid. He proposed a 'critical theological construction which will relate more fully the wide spread African confidence in the Christian faith to the actual and on-going Christian response to the life experiences of Africa.

What is evident from the above discussion is that to contextualise theology in Africa, the foundation must be the African people and their experiences. The reason given by Tingle (1992:53) is that 'by contrast contextual theology is deeply relativistic, it is also essentially humanistic focusing on man rather than God'. It can be concluded that theology in Africa is a critical reflection on the self. It is also called 'theology from below', because it is based on the African people and African experiences.

The question is how to deal with issues of authority and points of reference. How then does African Theology deal with salvation and the role of Jesus Christ as the savour of humanity? The challenge is if the starting point is the African people and their experiences then what next? If one is hungry for the knowledge of God what and where is the source of that knowledge. This section will investigate the process of contextualisation in relation to theology and the experiences of the African people and investigate how Africans relate to God. In John 6:44 Jesus said 'no one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws

them'. . . and Jesus also said in John 14:6 … 'no one comes to the Father except through me'. What Jesus said concerns relationship; How He relates to the Father who sent Him and how human beings can relate to God.

Contextualising theology in Africa seems to set terms and conditions for the gospel. It suggests preaching or evangelising that must accommodate the needs of African society and be relevant to them without any establishment of a relationship with God. The problem seems to be the lack understanding of God's demands from Africans. God does not reconcile Himself to human beings; rather God reconciles the world to Himself. The study shall now investigate how 'theology from below' is achieved. One can sense a negative attitude towards any Western influence in African theological reflections, as if all Western influences were sinful.

1.8.2   Theology from below

Meiring (2007:733) in his article titled *A perspective on African Theology* refers to African Theology as a 'theology from below'. *Theology from below* according to Meiring's (2007:733) perspective, is addressing specific context(s) of Africa. Within this discussion the Bible does have an important role to play.

The term 'theology from below' seems to have the same meaning as contextualisation. In Erickson (2006) the term 'theology from below' may not be found but he does mention some understanding of contextualisation. Erickson (2006:77) mentions in his work a bi-polar approach to theological reflection, 'the *Bible* and the *situation'*. '*The situation'* is the reality facing the people in their situation and how they find meaning in life. He mentions things like 'the art, music, and politics of a culture which is the whole expression of the mind-set or of the mood or outlook of a given society' (Erickson 2006:77).

Gundani (2007) wrote a paper titled, *Theology from below: an examination of popular mourning songs by Shona Christian women*. The research was to investigate and analyse songs that are sung during the services that are held before a funeral. Gundani (2001:49) claims that 'the songs (carry messages of courage and hope in the face of tragedy) they assist the spirit of the bereaved to soar from the depths of despair to a stage where they can face life again with expectation'.

On the question 'What is African Theology? ' Mugambi's (1994: 9) response is two pronged. Firstly, the phrase may refer to the discourse which Africans conducted among themselves before their contact with Christians and Muslims and the influence thereof. Here Mugambi is presenting what is called the pre-Christian African understanding of God and their worship. It is an undocumented African understanding of their identity. Secondly, the phrase refers to 'the discourse which is being conducted by Africans, in order to relate their own cultural and religious heritage to Christianity'. Mugambi (1994:9) confesses that there is no consensus among African theologians on the meaning of African Theology. Misunderstandings stem from relating African Theology with Christian Theology. Of course African Theology may also refer to the theology of ATR (African Traditional Religion).

Following Mugambi (1994), Meiring (2007: 734) holds a similar position that it is not easy to determine exactly what African Theology is. On the lack of consensus Meiring (2007: 734) points out that it is hard to establish a single common denominator in African Theological writing. The foundation of African Theology was based on a response to the opinions of some authors about Africans and their religion. The majority of the authors were Western scholars and missionaries investigating the phenomenon within African Initiated Churches (AICs). Some of these authors are: M. Sundkler, M. L. Daniel, J V. Taylor, and P. Temples. Although these authors could portray the reality of the situations they observed, they used categories that were not African. What attracted these writers to embark on the history of the African church?

Scholars and historians like Hofmeyr and Pillay (1994:167) do point out that there was a great move out of missionary churches to the self-initiated churches by black preachers - men and women. The move was seen as a form of self-protection by Africans against white churches. What is it that attracted Africans to these African Initiated Churches? It seems they needed a church that they could call their own. A church fulfils certain needs within an African person but the question was: What kind of church? According to Hofmeyr and Pillay (1994:168) missionaries during the Anglo-Boer War 'concentrated all their energies on white congregations and neglected the welfare of African Christians'. African preachers were poorly paid by missionaries, which resulted in more dissatisfaction and tension.

At another level Hofmeyr and Pillay (1994:169) explain that 'the church was an important agent in the politicisation of Africans; it provided the ideal environment for shaping a new African religious culture'. Most of the political leaders in Africa were from missionary schools or were religious leaders in their communities. So Africans wanted a church that can accommodate their culture and also attend to their political needs. The problem is the question of culture. One must also remember that they did not leave the missionary churches because they felt that their doctrine was erroneous. That is why Meiring (2007:734) concludes that 'it seems that African Theology may mean a number of different things for different theologians'. Meiring (2007:734) however proposes a single and all-encompassing idea to this African contribution for an understanding of who God is.

Meiring (2007: 735) points out that 'the African worldview emphasises the importance of the community more than most and this is summed up in the well-known concept of Ubuntu. 'I am because we are'. This study is going to attempt to make a comparison between the concept of Ubuntu as part of the communion in African Traditional Religion and the notion of Perichoresis by the Cappadocian Fathers. For now it is enough to mention here that Meiring (2007) regards this concept of Ubuntu as a way of doing African Theology and that he regards it as a 'theology from below'. Are there other contributions by African Theologians in this theological reflection?

1.8.3   African Theologies

As part of setting the record straight, there was a need to speak with one mind as Africans. At the beginning of the 1950s there was a wind of change blowing all over Africa especially the Northern, Central and Western parts of Africa. Early in the 1950s Kwame Nkrumah's Gold Coast (Ghana) gained self-rule from the British (Meredith 2006:26). According to Meredith (2006:26) 'the date for Ghana's independence was 6 March 1957, it was a date that marked the beginning of a new era not just for Ghana but the entire continent of Africa'. Meredith (2006:26) gives the information that the celebration lasted for six days. For Nkrumah the independence of Ghana was not enough. He began to focus on the entire continent of Africa. He realised that Ghana's independence was going to be meaningless without the independence of the entire continent. Meredith (2006:26) states that Nkrumah

was determined to turn Accra into 'a centre of African liberation to provide a base from which nationalist leaders from colonial Africa could draw support and encouragement'.

Nkrumah was able to organise 'political parties, trade unions and student groups from across the continent with the aim to co-ordinate an African non-violent revolution'. The meeting was called the All-African People's Conference. The names of some of the leaders were: Julius Nyerere from Tanganyika (Tanzania), Joshua Nkomo from Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), Kenneth Kaunda from Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), and Hastings Banda from Nyasaland (Malawi) among others. 1963 saw the birth of the Organisation of Africa Unity with thirty-one representatives from different African countries.

The political initiatives by freedom fighters and their achievements had resurrected an African spirit that had been suppressed for many years by white oppression. The black church saw itself as an agent of liberation. According to Muzorewa (1985:57) 'the formal inauguration of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) in 1963 marked the official beginning of African Theology'. It is interesting to note that the name is similar to that of All African People's Conference. This may imply that the agenda of All African People's Conference influenced the agenda of AACC. The AACC took a role of champion, teacher, counsellor and shepherd. Muzorewa (1985: 58) argues that 'Africa had had enough of foreign domination, and from the outset its very structure conveyed the message of freedom from foreign rule and domination'.

Many leaders in Africa from the beginning of the 20th century were products of missionary schools as mentioned above. They fought fearlessly and searched for independent self-rule from British colonisers. These leaders won their independence as political liberation movements, not as a church movement. The church developed them but the church never took a leading role politically, most formed political movements for liberation. One may even conclude that the church lost their product to politics. For that reason the church did not set the agenda for political change but politics set the agenda for the church. Muzorewa (1985: 61) states that 'the timing of the inauguration of the AACC in 1963 placed the church in the midst of the independence era'. It is out of the socio-political milieu that African Theology began to materialise. The choice of the theme 'Freedom' for the inaugural conference of the assembly was regarded as most appropriate.

This 'theology from below' was firstly a response to the writings of Western scholars and missionaries. African theologians and scholars saw a need to set the record straight. Secondly, it was a response to socio-political agendas and challenges facing Africans. Thirdly, it was not so much a response as the need for African theological reflection and discussion with each other.

The unfortunate situation of colonialism, slavery, and Euro centricity combined with evangelism set a stage for an African theological response in Africa. The issues in Africa, even though they were unfortunate, they were not unique. There was slavery throughout the time of the Roman Empire. But the questions asked of the Early Church to theologically respond to were very different from those asked of the Church in Africa. The challenge to Africa was about attitude, behaviour and cultural issues, while the Church Fathers responded to the question of the position and nature of Jesus Christ.

1.8.4   African Theology or Black Theology

Motlhabi (1994) in an article titled *African Theology or Black Theology? Toward an integral African Theology*, attempted to respond to the question of re-appropriation of African Traditional Religion. His attempt is in the light of what he calls the 'classical debate'. Motlhabi (1994:114) proposed 'a single theology having common concerns but responsive to the particular needs of different situations and conditions experienced in different African countries'. Maluleke (1995) on the other hand proposed a continuation of Black Theology in his work titled *'Black Theology lives on a permanent crisis'*. In his paper Maluleke (1995) interacts with the work of Motlhabi (1994) struggling with the issue of whether it is necessary or compelling to integrate Black Theology with African Theology? The two theologians engage with the work of Tutu(1995) and Buthelezi (1972), which Motlhabi (1994:115) calls 'the classical debate'. Maluleke (1995:27) is in favour of the maintenance of Black Theology as a theology that is relevant towards the needs of the South African people while Motlhabi is advocating for the amalgamation of the two. According to Maluleke (1995:27) 'Black Theology still has a lot of life in its belly a full agenda to take us beyond the year 2000. So let us get on with the job'.

Motlhabi (1994:115) raises the question of whether Buthelezi's work portrays Black Theology or African Theology? Motlhabi (1994:116) picks up two approaches, one based on African Theology called the '*ethnographical* approach' and the other based on Black Theology which is called the '*anthropological* approach'. According to Motlhabi (1994:116) the '*anthropological* approach' focuses on persons themselves and how they can work towards their own liberation and fulfilment as human beings.

Buthelezi is viewed by Motlhabi (1994:116) to be in favour of Black Theology because it answers to the requirements of *anthropology* and claims 'that it is a proper theological method for South Africa'. What Motlhabi calls a 'classical debate' was not a debate at all. The two did not even engage each other in a theological debate. According to Maluleke (1995:6) there were 'different occasions and audiences that the two theologians were faced with'. Maluleke (1995:6) viewed Buthelezi as writing in South Africa for South Africans. A point to which Motlhabi (1994) had alluded. And Tutu was viewed as presenting to an outside audience on an international level at the University of Ghana (Accra) in a consultation of Black and African theologians. In addition Motlhabi (1994:116) elaborated that in Buthelezi's document, while African Theology was still almost exclusively concerned with issues of indigenisation and Africanisation in the 'Traditional sense', most Northern and Western African countries were still in the mood of celebrating their independence from colonial rule. At that time South of Africa was still under oppression and fighting for independence. Motlhabi (1994:117) points out that 'they were seeking answers more directly relevant to their condition and problems. Problems of racism, induced landlessness, deprivation, poverty was in the midst of plenty and general suffering and oppression'.

In response to their situation and context in the late 1950s and early 1960s and beyond, as Nkrumah was getting into parliament to rule, some of the Southern African leaders were in prison or in exile or were banned. From the mid-1960s the voice of resistance was silenced. There was a need for a voice that would speak for the voiceless and the voice was heard coming from the church via church organisations and Christian student movements in partnership with labour movements. The voices from the church and student Christian movements were inspired by Black Theology from America which inspired African theologians to formulate a South African Black Theology (liberation theology). Motlhabi

(1994:117) viewed this as 'advocating a re-interpretation of the gospel in accordance with the requirements of the situation of black people in South Africa'. Since Black Theology was an attempt to liberate black people and Jesus was seen to be on the side of those who are suffering, Motlhabi (1994:118) draws the conclusion that Buthelezi objects to African Theology as a possible 'indigenous theology from South Africa'.

1.8.5   Soul mates or antagonists?

There is a suggestion that Tutu seemed to accept both African Theology and Black Theology with reserve. According to Motlhabi (1994:119), 'there were certain shortcomings particularly in African Theology'. African Theology, as stated above arose from Africans attaining their political freedom and as they began to attempt to Africanise Christianity, using culture to re-appropriate the gospel. African Theology advocated a campaign of going back to culture but neglected the suffering of black people in South Africa. African Theology was soon promoting issues of African identity and African ownership, Africa for Africans. Black Theology as Motlhabi (1994:120) further explains is not a Theology of *pie-in-the-sky* (the vertical aspect), but takes seriously the incarnation of Christ (the horizontal aspect). This approach by Motlhabi (1994) it is an attack on the Church Fathers' approach, because their approach to theology was more vertical than horizontal. The difference is that for the Church Fathers the focus of their theology was on the relationship between God and human beings, while for an African it is on the relationship among Africans themselves.

Motlhabi (1994:120) suggests that African Theology must not only 'confine to issues of cultural appropriation and indigenisation but needs to address the issues of liberation in response to the various manifestations of oppression. When African Theology has reached a level of being appropriated then it shall be capable of addressing all of African life. At that point African Theology would be more representative of the two theologies. '

The challenge would be when Black Theology also begins to address and extend its concerns to what Motlhabi (1994:121) refers to as religio-cultural issues. The names may differ, African Theology or Black Theology, but the content will be the same. Perhaps Meiring's (2007:734) concern that it is not clear what is meant by African Theology or Black Theology is justified. As Meiring (2007:734) pointed out earlier that 'it was hard to establish a single

common denominator'. But culture seems to take a centre stage in both African Theology and Black Theology. It seems that when the focus is based on the issues of culture and human experience without finding the Christ of Christianity as the centre, somewhere along the way theology becomes a pie-in-the-sky. Then theology faces a crisis.

1.8.6   Black Theology lives on a permanent crisis

Maluleke (1995:3) picks up on the notion that Black and African Theologies would have only a name difference, the content, scope and method would be the same. He seems to be concerned that 'issues of culture are again acquiring a new form of prominence in various spheres of South African society. The concern is that there is a need to recognise first what Black Theology has done, and then a constructive proposal on the way forward can be suggested'. Though Maluleke (1995:5) seems to agree with the suggestion of 'appropriation of African culture', he argues that 'it is not central to the way the two theologies relate to one another or to their ultimate identity'. Maluleke (1995:5) puts forward a suggestion that 'the real issue is how African culture is understood and appropriated by both'. About the name changing after what he calls 'amalgamation of African Theology and Black Theology' he feels it is premature. He feels it should not even be an issue that needs to be discussed.

1.8.7   African and Socio-Political Realities

When the church and political endeavours are linked together due to certain socio-political agendas, one may have more influence than the other. Politics may influence the way the church practises theology or the church may influence politics. It is stated that Africans saw Western missionaries and colonisers as one. There were also some missionaries who did not see a contradiction between Christianity and imperialism; according to Hofmeyr and Pillay (1994:158) 'these missionaries viewed imperialism as an extension of evangelism'. Is there a need to take consideration of the issues facing Black Theology and African Theology and their developments, before moving forward? The euphoria of the political changes that took place from late 1950's to the birth of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and the birth of the All African Conference of Churches in 1963, until the liberation of Zimbabwe in 1980; was the change for better or for worse?

Meredith (2006:275) offers the following analysis of post-independence and the achievements of freedom fighters; given the array of adversities that Africa faced:

At the time of independence, the advances made in the two decades after 1960 were remarkable. In the field of education, school enrolment in black Africa grew faster than in any other developing region. Primary-school enrolment increased from 36% to 63% of the age group, enrolment at secondary level increased from 3% to 13%, universities turned out thousands of graduates each year . . . . similar improvements were recorded in the field of medical care. Child death rates fell from 38 to 25 per thousand, life expectancy increased from 39 to 47 years, the numbers of medical and nursing personnel per capital doubled, despite a large increase in the population. New infrastructures were built at a record-breaking pace: ports, railways, roads and buildings. The number of miles covered by all-weather roads tripled, opening up vast areas of the interior for the first time.

From the above stated developments, Africa was doing well and the future was bright. There were a lot of positive initiatives causing individuals to celebrate the African dream. The implication is that Africans did not just become poor by forces unknown. It seems the history of the liberation movements in Africa was bright in regard to the liberation of the African people from colonial rule. But when it came to governance, the history is dark. During the time of the liberation struggle when people fought for independence people sympathised with the oppressed, even to the point of breaking laws. The challenge seems to be when the liberation movement faces the transformation into a governing party, with the responsibility of making laws and obeying them. The governing party's duty is not only to obey the laws but to teach its constituencies the rule of law. Many liberation movements, who helped to liberate people from white oppression, unfortunately became worse oppressors themselves. A number of difficulties which Meredith (2006:277) outlines as follows:

The drive for industrialisation, regarded as the key to economic development by most African governments: the majority of African states began to experience corruption. Jobs began to be provided to families and

friends. There were 'irregularities' on the awarding of tenders. Banks began to give out large loans to politicians, the state of things were becoming worse.

Meredith (2006:282) indicates that in growing desperation, 'African governments tried to rally their commitments by borrowing heavily abroad rather than adopting austerity measures or policy reforms and currency devaluation that would hit the urban elite'. Meredith (2006) observes that between 1970 and 1980 black Africa's external debts rose from 6 billion to 38 billion dollars. Hospitals and clinics ran without medicines and other health equipment. Schools suffered a shortage of learning resources such as textbooks and many factories were closed.

Africa thus became unsettled politically and experienced wars and battles. Many of the wars in Africa were not between countries, but it was mainly the case a country against itself. Meredith (2006:29) states that,

> *by the 1980s a mood of despair about Africa had taken hold. No other area of the world aroused such a sense of foreboding in relentless succession. African states had succumbed to military coups and brutal dictatorship, to periods of great violence and to economic decline and decay. One by one African leaders had failed to deliver effective programmes to alleviate the plight of their population.*

The political freedom and the move to Africanise Africa (since it was westernised when it was also colonised) had gone from sweet to sour. The foundation and pillar of African Theologies began to disintegrate. A harrowing example is when in 1994, April the 7th the Hutus of Rwanda began killing their fellow citizens the Tutsis as if they were killing rats. How can a human being hack the arms, legs, breasts, faces and necks of another human being? Meredith (2006:523) wrote that 'in the space of 100 days some 800 000 people had been slaughtered'. That is about three quarters of the Tutsi population. The genocide in Rwanda was a case of people being killed by their neighbours while some pastors were implicated in the genocide, which lived within the same location, attended the same church. How does

one view the issue of culture and how does African culture view the issue of humanity in the face of that?

The West was blamed for undermining African culture because Western culture was perceived to be superior. Many people were killed inside church buildings and school buildings. How much respect is there from African culture for African life and humanity? According to Mbanda (1997:3) 'although these groups (Hutu, Tutsi and Twa) have been referred to as ethnic or tribal groups, they share a common language, and Rwanda elders believe that these three groups are one people with a common ancestry'. They had lived next to one another for many years and shared many things. Mbanda (1997:81) asked about the behaviour of Christians during the genocide, Mbanda points out that 'there were those who killed, some hid their friends and there were those who never killed but pointed killers to where the Tutsi were hiding'. There is mention that in some places a church would be used as a slaughtering house.

Culture and African history cannot be divorced from the realities of African life. There is a question that is asked whenever people face evil situations and realities 'where is God'? Maybe the question speaks right into the heart of African Theology. Where is God in the worship of the African people? Is the God revealed in ATR the same as the one in the Christian Tradition?

1.9   The African Traditional Religion and Evangelicals

In other parts of the world there are Catholics, Reformed, Evangelicals and postmodern scholars and thinkers within the Christian Tradition. Does Africa have similar categories? Going by discussions between theologians such as Maluleke (1995) and Motlhabi (1994) it is expected that all Africans follow ATR. Therefore to do theology in Africa it is assumed that one must follow Black Theology and/or African Theology. African theologians base their arguments on African Traditional Religion. Are there no other Christian Traditions within the African church which do not draw their reference from ATR?

1.9.1   Christ in Africa

The world may be represented as one united village because of process like globalisation but issues of classifying and categorising shall remain a challenge for many years to come. Globalisation has helped to advance Christianity and to make it a universal movement. The challenge is the encounter of culture from one nation to another. The culture and traditions of our different institutions may influence one's approach to God. Do the Roman Catholic Church, the Protestant or Evangelical churches have the same approach to God? In the period of Modernism liberals differed in their understanding of God with conservatives. Post-modernism also has its own influence on the approach to God.

The emphasis and point of departure based on Jesus Christ has been classified as the Evangelical approach. McGrath (1997:25) claims that 'Evangelicalism has never felt any awkwardness in defending or proclaiming the uniqueness of Jesus Christ. 'He is also reacting to the claim that a 'decisive and definite knowledge of God must be universally available in space and time'. McGrath (1997:26) calls it 'Evangelical Christological Particularism'. He argues that the ultimate authority remains located in God's self-revelation'. A human product cannot be viewed as an authority, but as a means to disclose God's revelation. He further attests that 'the justification of the content of God's revelation can be achieved with the employment of culture or reason, but for the Evangelical there is nothing more fundamental than God' (McGrath 1997:26).

1.9.2   About authority

According to McGrath (1997:27) for Evangelicals 'Jesus Christ is of constitutive and definitive importance for Christianity, possessing and intrinsic authority which is grounded and focused in His own person and work'. It can be suggested that without Christ there can be no Christianity, and Christians recognised that in Jesus there was God. The miracles he performed do not make Him God; they were a proof that He was God. He spoke as no other human being ever spoke before for He was the word. McGrath believes that in the case of the New Testament, the ultimate legitimating authority for Jesus Christ is God himself, who is seen as having vindicated and exalted Jesus through the resurrection, thereby retrospectively validating his ministry.

When Jesus is set up as the foundation and point of departure he is linked with the historical events that accompany his life and activities of God the Father and the Holy Spirit based on what the Scriptures testify to. Agendas from socio-political sources or culture cannot dictate how Jesus and his events are to be interpreted. Evangelicals form their interpretation from the Jesus event, not from a human point of departure or human experiences. Jesus came in from eternity and broke into time and space for the transformation of human lives not to be transformed by human life. McGrath (1997:35) elaborates 'that in their situation the Evangelicals' emphasis is on the authority of Jesus Christ. As He is revealed in Scripture, rather than as He is constructed by human interest groups or power blocks'.

1.9.3   Christian life

Evangelicals believe that there is no distance between human beings (especially Christians) and God. If there ever was a vacuum Jesus Christ closed that gap. Christian life begins when a person receives Jesus Christ by faith. McGrath (1997:36) indicates that 'the Evangelicals' understanding of the significance of Jesus is that He is both constitutive and illustrative of Christian life'. Without Jesus no one can be a Christian and there would be no Christian life. In the Christian view no one can approach the Father without the means of Jesus Christ the Son. Jesus says no one can come to Him unless they are drawn by the Father (John 6:44). McGrath (1997:36) is of the opinion that the Christian life is shaped and moulded by Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit – the Triune God is present in each and every day of one's life, moulding each life according to his word into His image for His glory.

1.10   The African perspective on Jesus's Identity and Purpose

Questions had been asked and some conclusions had been drawn concerning how African Christians accommodate ATR or how ATR accommodates Christianity. From the information given above it is evident that in ATR Africans have relationships with ancestors who are venerated and worshipped. The problem is about the identity and the role of Jesus. The position of Evangelicals from both the West and in Africa is unsympathetic to ancestral worship, while other disciplines and traditions are more sympathetic to worship of ancestors by Africans.

As African theologians tried to formulate a way of approach to the identity of Jesus Christ and his work, they encountered some problems. Many scholars accept God as the Supreme Being the Zulus call Him *'unKulunkulu'* the Sotho *'Modimo'* and the Shangaans call Him *'Xikwembu'*. It has been revealed by many theologians both African and Western that most, if not all African people groups have a name for God as the Supreme Being. It has been argued that the existence of these names for God proves that there had been some form of worship long before the first missionaries arrived in Africa. What is not clear is the question of the relationship between the Supreme Being with Jesus Christ.

1.10.1   Jesus and ATR

'Christ in Africa' is a title from Maluleke's (1994) article with the sub-heading *The influence of multi-culturality on the experience of Christ.* As in most writing by Africans there is what I call *'blaming the missionaries'* approach. That is evident from Maluleke's (1994) work. He states that Christ was in Africa before the coming of missionaries. It is not clear what thesis Maluleke proposes when he says Christ was in Africa before the arrival of missionaries. There was a time after the birth of Jesus that his parents hid themselves away from King Herod. There are two views that are put forward, African culture or missionary enterprise. Maluleke (1994:56) suggests that 'Jesus in Africa needs to be understood to refer to how, black and white Christians in the light of past discrimination, racism and artificial separation, can come together as participants in a largely homogeneous culture perceive and proclaim Christ'. On the Christological debate Maluleke (1994:57) says 'in Africa, Christ is the healer, liberator, ancestor, mediator, elder brother, the crucified one, head and master of initiation and the black messiah'. At the end of his paper one feels that Maluleke (1994) did not go far enough in saying something about the identity and the role of Christ in the African worship of God. Perhaps he should have explained further how Jesus is 'the healer, liberator, ancestor, mediator, elder brother and the crucified one'. The *'blaming the missionaries approach'* has been done over and over. Is there is not a prophet in this place who can reveal the identity and the role of Jesus Christ so that Africa can relate to Him?

In 1997 Maluleke published an article titled *Will Jesus ever be the same again? What are the Africans doing to Him?* It seems like in Africa; Jesus must be taught how to be an African. In that state there seems to be no room for him to transform African life. Maluleke (1997:13)

starts by saying 'when the question of the relation between Jesus and Africans is raised, it is often in terms of what Jesus has done for Africa and Africans –or at most what He has done with them'. He says he was putting forward a view of how Africans have appropriated him. Does Jesus need any appropriation or is it human teaching that needs to be appropriated by their relationship with him? Maluleke (1997:14) indicates that 'Africans have done a lot to Jesus, perhaps as much as He is supposed to have done to them'. But it seems here the discussion is what Africans have done to Jesus. There is a need for African Theologies to focus on what He has done to Africans: African Theology has focused persistently on the evils of Europeans and their culture against the culture of Africa. This has been done consciously or unconsciously at the expense of God's revelation and relationship with Africans.

Maluleke (1997) makes an assurance that there is only one Jesus who cannot be duplicated. In other words the Jesus who is being presented by Africans is the same as the one Paul of Tarsus preached when he said 'I preached Christ and Him crucified'. Can an African theologian say 'when a person is in Christ he is a new creature? The old things are pass away behold, all things are become new' (2 Corinthians 5:17). In African Theology, it seems when Christ is in Africa He becomes one of the ancestors. If Christ becomes one of the ancestors then what is the position of God the Father? Unless they say Jesus becomes an ancestor to the people while the Father becomes an ancestor to the Son. If that is so then there is a question of the position of the Holy Spirit and somewhere the boundaries of the Christianity faith are challenged and broken.

1.10.2   Who do people say I am?

There are some images of Jesus that have been presented by Africans, in an attempt to contextualise Christianity in Africa. Wendland (1991) mentions three of these attempts which are: 'our advocate with the Father, Christ the great ancestor mediator', the second is 'Jesus and the witchdoctor' (African healer or medicine man, *sangoma*), an approach to healing and wholeness, the third is 'Jesus Christ liberator of the oppressed masses'. The point here is not to compare which is best in presenting Jesus Christ but how one can understand the reality of Jesus Christ best?

1.10.3   Jesus as an ancestor

Mbiti (1971) cites words which are often used by African people when they speak of the dead, viz. 'going to one's Fathers', 'going home', 'be taken away or be received', 'departed'. 'Going away' in an African world view implies going to the spiritual world because the spiritual world is as real as the physical one. Amongst other things, Mbiti (1971:132) claims that 'there are mountains, rivers and trees; those who have died as babies continue to grow; God is the Originator and Sustainer of all things by "all things"' and the living dead and spirits'. At the point of death a person becomes part of the 'living dead' and joins other members of his/her household who have preceded him/her in the spirit world. This person would from time to time visit the family. Mbiti (1971) states that some may see the person and some may not. Those who are lucky enough to see the person are the elderly. The revelation of God is not based on luck but on grace, and is for all generations and age groups. Luck seems to suggest only a few can 'see' and that depends on how lucky they may be, but the grace of God is for all. There is no fear whatsoever concerning the presence of the person. The person does not inform the family about the world of the spirits. After three to five generations, when no one in the family is there to recognise them, the living-dead person changes and becomes a spirit.

According to Mbiti (1971:153) 'the understanding of African Christianity is that since Jesus died and was seen by some walking the streets of Jerusalem, he is regarded as living dead. When Jesus died on the cross He went to meet others'. Those who accept Jesus and partake in baptism and the sacraments are to be joined with the spiritual world. Water baptism is symbolised as death. Mbiti (1971:153) describes 'the Sacramental death when baptising a person is regarded as the doorway into the New Testament world of the spirit'. He further explains that the saints commune with God and the whole of heaven. The Christian practice of sharing the Eucharist, eating the body of Christ and drinking His blood, is regarded to be the same as Africans sharing their meal with the living dead (ancestors). In Christianity the two worlds of the living and the living dead overlap in Jesus Christ, and the goal is to transform and try to emulate the numerous African traditions that are associated with Jesus.

Beyer and Mphahlele (2009) began their work by relating what an ancestor is, while Afeke and Venter (2004) explain what the meaning of African views concerning ancestor

veneration is. But the concern here is about Jesus as an ancestor. In the work of Afeke and Venter (2004) He is seen as 'Jesus the supreme ancestor'. Some even go further and say 'Jesus is the greatest of all ancestors'. Since a person according to the beliefs of ATR becomes an ancestor after death and Jesus continued to speak and eat after his death that qualifies him to be an ancestor. Christ, by virtue of His incarnation, death, resurrection and ascension into spirit-power, is seen as the Supreme Ancestor by some African theologians (Afeke & Venter 2004:47). The suggestion is that 'African Christians be encouraged to communicate with their ancestors within the context of the Eucharist'. During the Eucharist 'Christians can pray to the greatest of all ancestors' (Afeke & Venter 2004:52). It is believed that human beings have Jesus as their ancestor and similarly, Jesus has God. Christ and those who died are united as one family.

S. M. Mogoba and I. S. Mekoa presented a paper at the Theological Society of Southern African in June 2007. Their topic was '*Saints, Martyrs and Ancestors: an African Reflection on the Communion of the Living and the Dead'*. They suggested that African Traditional Religion had enriched Christianity rather than threatened it. God was understood to be an intangible, invisible phenomenon able to penetrate and defuse things. God was extremely great and far removed from humankind and therefore ancestors acted as mediators between them and God. This poses the question as to why God sent His Son to die an incredibly painful death in order to bring humankind back to Him, when there was such an easy way through the ancestors.

1.10.4   African spirituality or African spirits

People in Africa are more connected to the things of the spirits. They sing, dance and play thereby being connected to spiritual forces. The rivers, mountains and some animals can be a representative of some spiritual forces. With that kind of mentality Christianity can be perceived as representing some form of spirituality. Turaki (1999:81), who was influenced by Mbiti, wrote about the close relationship between 'the spirit beings and the mystical or impersonal powers and forces'. He suggests that, 'the realm of the supernatural operates mystical power, magic, witchcraft and sorcery'. The spirit world or the realm of the supernatural is, in a sense, a battleground of spirits and mystical powers that use their to

influence the course of human life. These mystical powers can be designated as positive or negative, good or evil, which may be a blessing or a curse.

These spirits are closer to human beings than God (Mbiti 1971). 'They live in the intermediate mode between God's and human beings' mode of existence, and their world must not be allowed to get either closer or too far from the human world' (Mbiti1971:134). When they lose contact with them, human beings begin to experience misfortune. The phenomenon of such misfortune calls for a sacrifice. And the families frequently choose to consult mediums that have knowledge of the spirit world. Women are sometimes married to spirits they call 'guardians'. Mediums are also consulted with regard to receiving help for farming, jobs, luck and fertility. Often spirits appear in the form of an animal, for example, a snake. A domestic animal could be deformed because of a spirit. An impression has been made that in the spirit world of the African there is neither time nor space. Attempts to explain the African spirit world by scientific means and reason have failed. It is a world that can only be experienced and not subjected to scientific analysis.

1.10.5   The queen of heaven

The text about the 'queen of heaven' is found in Jeremiah 44, it is about a group of Judeans in Egypt after the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BC. Jeremiah is prophesies against the group. Becking (2001:197) points out that in this 'confrontation the veneration of the queen of heaven is a bone of contention'. From the text in Jeremiah 44 it is not clear who this goddess queen of heaven was, but Becking's perception is that this might have been Asherah.

Both Jeremiah and the Judean group have different interpretations of the situation. The reality is that Jerusalem was destroyed by the armies of the king of Babylon Nebuchadnezzar. The temple which was their centre of worship was gone, and the kingdom of Judah had fallen. The two deferent interpretations that are presented below are concerned with the reason for the fall. According to Jeremiah the fall is due to the fact that God *YHWH* was provoked to anger because the group worshiped other gods. Becking (2001:198) continues to say that 'strangely enough, after finding refuge in the Egyptian exile, the Judean continued their evil ways'. They went on venerating other deities, which provoked Jeremiah's prophesy of doom.

The response of this group is very strange because they consider that the reason for their situation was because they stopped the veneration of other gods. This is an indication that for a long time they had venerated the queen of heaven as they did in Egypt. Becking (2001:199) indicates that the stoppage might refer to the time of the 'cult-reformation under king Josiah of Judah'. King Josiah of Judah was humbled by the words read from the book of the Law.

If God has revealed Himself why must human beings construct a being for their spirituality? Armstrong (1999:11) seems to suggest that 'the ancient people of the Middle East personalised the unseen force and made them gods, associated with wind, sun, sea, and stars but possessing human characteristics, they were expressing their sense of affinity with the unseen and with the world around them'. About King Josiah's reformation of 622 BC, Armstrong (1999:65) says that 'the king was anxious to reverse the syncretistic policies of his predecessors, King Manasseh' (687-42) and King Amon (642-40) who had encouraged their people to worship the gods of Canaan alongside Yahweh.

Armstrong's (1999) conviction that the queen of heaven mentioned in Jeremiah 44 might be Asherah, is based on the fact that Manasseh had put Asherah in the temple of God in Jerusalem. The reason for the reformation was due to the discovery of ancient manuscripts which some scholars think could have been the book of Deuteronomy. When the King and all his people realised what they had done against their God they repented. They responded by taking all the images, idols and fertility symbols out of the temple and burned them. The King took the responsibility of pulling down the 'large image of Asherah and destroyed the apartment of the temple where the prostitutes who wove garments for her were' (Armstrong, 1999:68).

According to some scholars such as Armstrong, King Josiah's reformation was the beginning of Jewish monotheism. The reason given by Armstrong (1999:69) is that such a belief (monotheism) is likely to 'flourish at a time of political insecurity when people are haunted by the fear of their own destruction'. But others may see it as a genuine repentance towards God.

Becking (2001:199) strongly believes that when Josiah removed the goddess Asherah from the temple, was when this Judean group stopped the worship of the queen of heaven. Becking (2001:199) uses the two names simultaneously as Asherah and/or the queen of heaven. In Egypt this Judean group started to worship the queen of heaven to regain blessing from this goddess.

Jeremiah says the continuation of worship of the queen of heaven was wrong and that was the reason for the Egyptian exile and the fall of Jerusalem. According to Jeremiah the neglect of the Shema and the lack of worship of the Lord God, Him and Him alone, invited God's anger into their lives and they should stop it because God would punish them. But the way they looked at life was different from Jeremiah. According to them the reason why they were in Egypt, was because of neglect of the worship of the queen of heaven. Becking (1999:199) remarks that the example of Jeremiah 44 has shown that belief in *YHWH* was not static, but a dynamic process.

When Moses took the Israelites out of Egypt, God revealed His power of salvation. If there were any gods in Egypt, both the Egyptians and Israelites came to know who the only true God was. YHWH and Moses constructed a powerful nation that became powerful, that would never be taken lightly and would be known by both Israel and other nations.

It is clear that the African approach to theology is based on African culture and the realities facing Africans. The African context has been influenced by a socio-political agenda which is facing the African people. It is a theology that is expected to deal with issues of liberation which must be achieved through Black Theology and African Theology taking into consideration African culture. When African theologies are compared to the Cappadocian Fathers' theology there seems to be a contrasting approach with the contents of their theologies and their context. Talking about the Cappadocian Fathers now, attention shifts to matters concerning the councils of 325 AD.

CHAPTER TWO: SOME CAPPADOCIAN CONTOURS

2.1   The Nicene and Constantinopolitan Creeds and the Shema

2.1.1   What Happened at Nicaea?

There is some uncertainty concerning the day of the opening of the Council of Nicaea. Some hold the view that it was the 20th of May 325AD. According to Kelly (2006:211), 'its opening session was held on the 20th of May, but it has been shown that the true date was the 19th of June AD 325 '. Hanson (2005:152) however suggests that it was the 25th of May because that is the date according to Constantine's Edict. According to Jurgen (1980:280), the bishops held some informal preliminary sessions from the middle of May while waiting for Constantine to arrive so that he could open the Council officially, on the 19 June'325 AD. The same confusion clouds the closing of the Council, where some say it ended in July while some say it ended on the 25th of August. Ossius of Cardoba presided, and was also chairman for the Council of Antioch. He visited Alexander some months before this Nicaea Council, notwithstanding that he was an advisor to Constantine, the Great. With regards to the bishops that attended the Council, different numbers are given, with the consensus being 318 bishops. There were more Eastern bishops than those from the West. According to Hanson (2005:156), it is more likely that the great majority of Western Bishops did not know what the fuss created by the Arian controversy was about and saw no compelling reason to make a long journey to a Greek-speaking city for so uncertain a purpose. The challenge is in the reconstruction of the details of what really occurred at the Council because no minutes were written nor published. Kelly (2006:212) points out that 'there survive three, illuminating glimpses into the Council's activity in regard to its Creed from pairs of three personages who were eye witnesses of, or even protagonists in, the proceedings'. These are Eustathius of Antioch, Athanasius and Eusebius of Caesarea. At the end, about 20 canons were produced by the Council.

The Creeds may be regarded as being of the same status as the Jewish Shema in Deuteronomy 6:4, as they are regarded as the Christian confession of faith. Let us consider some analyses before considering what the discussions were before and after the Council of Nicene and whether the creed of Constantinople is appropriate and imperative.

The Nicene Creed was an attempt to clarify Jesus' position within Christian worship and the Constantinopolitan Creed was an attempt to clarify the position of the Holy Spirit. This happened during the fourth century when Christianity had already established its own identity away from Judaism (Ferguson, 2003:603). The opening statement in both Creeds is identical:

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty

There is nothing like the God of our ancestors (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob), who redeemed Israel from the land of slavery and the house of bondage. Here it is a new setting with different categories of thinking. The setting is not based on a revelation of God that focuses on a certain nation, but based on a revelation of God that is universal.

Armstrong's (1999) work on the search for God is based on the activities in the Middle East. She mentioned that the Middle East was a place where people lived their lives interacting with the gods. They manipulated the gods through rituals of offerings and sacrifices and they were in turn also being manipulated by the gods. The harvest was not built on the richness of the soil but the results of the harvest were determined by the gods. 'In the Palaeolithic period …when agriculture was developing, the cult of the mother goddess expressed a sense that the fertility which was transforming human life was actually sacred' (Armstrong, 1999:11). The image of a mother goddess had different names from one nation to another, she was known as Inana in ancient Sumeria, Ishtar in Babylon, Anat in Canaan, Isis in Egypt and Aphrodite in Greece.

Egypt, as Schultz's work (1990:46) reveals, 'was a land of many gods'. He says that they were so 'plentiful that they came to be grouped in families of triads and enneads'. Schultz (1990:46) categorizes the gods in Egypt as follows: As local deities belonging to each family and household to be worshipped and venerated. Nature gods were those that were commonly represented by animals and birds. Then there were the cosmic divinities which can also be referred to as national or universal deities. The cosmic divinities were elevated above the local deities and represented the forces of nature. The land of Egypt was a land of many temples and many priests. Schultz (1990:46) points out that the Egyptians believed in life after death.

Some of the well-known gods within the region of the ancient Middle East mentioned by Armstrong (1999) especially around Canaan, were Marduk, the sky god, Baal-Habad, Tiamat, Yam-Nahar and there was also the one known as El - the high god of Canaan. Some of these gods were responsible for storms and fertility, seas or water. There was also Asherah who was regarded to be the wife of El and the mother of the gods.

Therefore when the Church Fathers declared their faith, they said 'We believe in one God, the Father Almighty'. What had God done, that He is to be known as 'The Father Almighty'? The qualification in the Creed is '*Maker of (heaven and earth and of) all things visible and invisible.* In short the God Almighty is the Creator of all of existence and of what can be seen as well as that can't be seen.

The next Declaration was:

And (we believe) in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God

This is the heart of the debate. One also notices some few changes in the wording from the Nicene Creed to the Constantinopolitan Creed. It is also good to remember that there were debates before the Nicene council and some leading to Constantinople Creed. Those debates may have had some influence on the way words and terms were used. They both say '*and in one Lord Jesus Christ*. The use of the word '*one*' even if it is critical, one feels they are overdoing it. There was only one Jesus Christ the Son of God. But it was necessary in that historical context. They differed subsequently as the Nicene Creed says *'the only-begotten of His Father',* while Constantinopolitan Creed says *'the only begotten Son of God'.*

Another change is in the words *'God of God, light of light, very God of very God'*. When those words were inserted in the Constantinopolitan Creed *'God of God',* was removed and it said *'light of light, very God of very God'. (*The discussions about Jesus shall be continued in Chapter 3. 5, *The African Response to the Creeds*. Here we just make some observations).

When it comes to the Holy Spirit the Nicene Creed just declares, '*and we believe in the Holy Spirit'.* But the Constantinopolitan Creed goes further and makes the following additions:

And [we believe] in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver-of-life, Who proceeds from the Father, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, Who spoke by the prophets'.

A question had to be asked concerning the additional wording and the developments from Nicene to Constantinople. Why was there a need for some modification and addition when the Constantinopolitan Creed was written? Maybe the debates concerning some words suggested a change in some words.

Both Creeds emphasize 'one' in respect to both the Father and the Son:

> *We believe in one God… and in one Lord Jesus Christ.*

But 'one' is not mentioned about the Holy Spirit. This 'one' has been mentioned throughout the debate and discussions concerning the Trinity. The oneness may have been adopted from the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4-5). On the eve of entering into the Promised Land Moses gave Israel this declaration:

> *Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.*

Block (2004:195) explains the following about Deuteronomy 6:4, that the word Shema is translated as 'hear oh Israel'; it can also mean to listen or to obey.

Block presents it as follows:

> *YHWH Elohenu = Yahweh our God*
> *YHWH Ehad = Yahweh One*

Pryor (2005: online mp3) and Block (2004:194) give the following four possible translations of these Hebrew words of the Shema:

> *YHWH Our God, YHWH Is One (Pryor prefers Adonai instead of YHWH)*
> *YHWH Our God Is One YHWH*
> *YHWH Is Our God, Is One Or Unique*
> *YHWH Is Our God, YHWH Alone*

The church Fathers coined the words of the creed by saying

- We believe in One God…. and
- In One Lord Jesus Christ

For them the oneness was probably founded on the Shema, or on the apostles' faith or it was a response to the challenges of their time.

2.1.2 Pre-Nicene Creed

The following are words of a hymn that is known as a 'evening hymn of the Greeks' (HIST ECCL 4,3,1 Eusebius); the song *Hymnus Vesperitinus Graecorum* is dated about AD 125.

> *Joyous light of the Holy Glory of the immortal Father*
> *(who is) heavenly Holy blessed Jesus Christ*
>
> *Having come to the setting of the Sea,*
> *Seeing the evening light*
> *We praise the Father and the Son*
> *And the Holy Spirit of God*
>
> *It is right that You be praised*
> *At all times with Holy Sounds,*
> *O Son of God, Giver of Life*
> *Therefore the world glorifies You*

The song discloses something about the formation of the faith in the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. It also illuminates how to approach God in worship. As early as AD 125, they were bringing praises to God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in their worship.

Origen (*De Principiis*) reveals how much they trusted in the Scripture but also in the teachings of the apostles. Origen (*De Principiis*) states that 'the apostles taught them that there is one God who created and arranged all things and also all existence was called into

being by God'. After creation by God, the next best thing, the Church Fathers believed, was the coming of Jesus Christ.

When one analyses the hymn and what Origen stated together with other the Church Fathers of the Early Church, one realises that long before the Creeds were established as a declaration of faith, Jesus occupied the highest position closer to God. Paul wrote in his letter to the Philippians (2:9), 'therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name'. That same point is also mentioned in the letter to the Colossians (3:1). According to Pryor (2005: online mp3) *YHWH* is the name given to Jesus which is translated as Lord in the New Testament. The Early Church already identified Jesus within His oneness with God.

2.1.3   Divine agency in Ancient Jewish Monotheism

Becking (2001:189) wrote a paper which was a contribution to the topic: '*Only one God?*' He talks about 'the Christian Tradition being an imitation of Judaism, a monotheistic religion'. According to Aiken (2012: online website) 'Monotheism (from the Greek *monos* "only", and *theos* "god") is a word coined in comparatively modern times to designate belief in the one supreme God, the Creator and Lord of the world, the eternal Spirit, All-powerful, All-wise, and All-good, the Rewarder of good and the Punisher of evil, the Source of our happiness and perfection'. Therefore monotheism is a system of worship and veneration of one God. It is Mckim's (1988:4) testimony that the Early Church began in a Jewish environment and many of the first Christians were converts from Judaism in which they had been born and raised.

Becking's view (2001:191) is that the Bible was written in honour of the oneness of God. The Bible is a book that venerates God YHWH and abolishes other gods. God told the Israelites to destroy all images that were in the Promised Land. Other gods were not real and some were just a result of human hands. Becking (2001:191) regards the Bible as God calling the world to worship Him alone (one God).

2.1.4 Second Temple Judaism

Another reference to this period is 'postexilic' Judaism. The explanation by Grabbe (2010:3) is that this period may be marked from the Persian period (539-331 BC) until the rise of Roman rule (63 BC). During this period there was a set of writings known as 'the Apocrypha'. Most of these writings can be found in the Roman and Orthodox canons (Grabbe, 2010:33). Sometimes they are known as Deutero-Canonical books which consist out of 1 Baruch,1 Ben Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), 1 Esdras, 4 Ezra, Judith, 1 Maccabees, 2 Maccabees, Tobit, Wisdom of Solomon as well as parts of Daniel and Esther. From these documents there were the so-called Messianic expectations. The expectation was held within ancient Jewish monotheism. According to Hurtado (1988:17) this is the phenomena in ancient Jewish tradition that in all likelihood assisted the first Christians in framing the earliest understanding of the position of the exalted Christ. The Messianic expectations arose in a form of speculative divine agency.

2.1.5 Divine Agency Speculation

Hurtado (1988:17) refers to various heavenly figures that are described as participating in some way in God's rule of the world and His redemption of the elect. The speculation on these divine agencies refers to these figures as occupying a position second to God and were believed to be acting on God's behalf in what Hurtado (1988:17) refers to as a major capacity. These divine agencies were not of one type but three. The documents of that period had some interest in divine attributes and powers, secondly their interest was in exalted patriarchs and lastly in principal angels. Hurtado (1988:17) says that Israel was used to have priests and prophets acting on behalf of God.

That there were variations of types of the divine agencies may prove that there were different groups within Judaism. Grabbe (2010:26) mentions various revolutionary sects, which were active. Towards the birth and the life of Jesus Christ from the New Testament well-known groups were the Sadducees, the Pharisees, the Zealots and most historians and theologians also add the Qumran community, sometimes known as the Essenes. Pryor (2005: online mp3) argues against the thinking that the postexilic period was a silent period because there were a lot of developments. There was the translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek; the Messianic expectations and speculations; the writing of Apocrypha documents; the rise of the synagogue and the rabbis, to mention just a few.

Hurtado (1988:18) believes that the speculation about divine agents that occupied the highest position close to God was not done by one sect of Judaism. Hurtado (1998:19) also thinks that speculation was not a 'purely intellectual development', but a conceptual development in religious traditions. Another development pointed out by Hurtado (1988:19) was the sense that God was less accessible than in earlier times like in Moses' time or Isaiah's time. Therefore Jewish piety populated the heavens with intermediary beings to make up for the religious distance that Jews felt between themselves and God. Therefore one can say when God's revelation is not experienced and people begin to feel distant from God, they will fill the vacuum with something else. It can be assumed that the reason why theological discussion took a direction from that of the Church Fathers was because God was experienced at a distance by the Jews in Moses and Isaiah's time.

With regards to the realisation of a chief agent who occupied the highest position next to God, Hurtado (1988:22) does not support the perspective that by that time Judaism represented a weak stage of exclusivist monotheism. He argues that Jewish monotheism. Especially during the Hellenistic crisis of the Maccabean period shows signs of a fairly healthy commitment to the uniqueness of God.

2.1.6   Personified Divine Attributes

Wisdom: The book of Proverbs is regarded by Hurtado (1988:42) as the book where wisdom has been personified and presented as working together with God. Hurtado (1988:42) points out that 'the description of divine attributes as a personified being is a well-known feature in the Jewish religious language'. The following passages in Scriptures are clear examples of wisdom personified as a personal being: In Proverbs 1:20-33 wisdom portrays a female speaker. In Proverbs 3:13-18 people are encouraged to find wisdom because 'she is more precious than rubies, nothing you desire can compare with her' and in Proverbs 8:1-9,12 wisdom is calling: 'to you, O people, I call out, I raise my voice to all mankind' here wisdom speaks of being present in all creation.

The personification of wisdom is also found in the Wisdom of Solomon 6:12-11:1. Here wisdom is presented as being in most of God's work. In the Wisdom of Solomon 7:21 wisdom is presented as the designer of all things and in the Wisdom of Solomon 7:22 the

passage continues to say that 'within her (wisdom) is a spirit, intelligent, holy, unique, manifold, subtle, mobile, and Almighty'. In the Wisdom of Solomon 7:25 wisdom is known as a breath of the power of God, pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty, and that nothing impure can find its way into her. In the Wisdom of Solomon 8:1 she is an associate in the work of God.

In Sirach 24:9 it says 'from eternity, in the beginning, He created me, and for eternity I shall remain'. In other words here wisdom is sharing eternity together with God. In the same chapter 24:2, wisdom speaks in the assembly of the Most High, and she also glories in the presence of the Most High. So since this is an assembly of the Most High it means that wisdom being personified can also be witnessed in Baruch 3:29-4:4. In Baruch 4: wisdom is linked to the law as it is said 'she is the book of God's commandments, the law that stands for ever, those who keep her shall live, those who desert her shall die'. Hurtado (1988:43) points out that whatever the possible sources of the imagery employed, the link of wisdom with the religious obligation of Judaism (Torah) and the descriptions of the figure of wisdom as an agent of the God of ancient Israel, show that we are dealing with a category of thought that was contextualised into and was governed by the fundamental religious commitments of the Jewish faith.

There is evidence of a change in language, that words that were used only to refer to God are directed to wisdom and wisdom is seen as acting on God's behalf and thus being close to God. One of the most significant observations is the presence of wisdom acting with God in creation, being in His Company. One place that played a significant role as a source of speculation was Alexandria where Philo's name had been mentioned. Ferguson (2003:481) referred to Philo living in Alexandria between 30 BC and 50 AD. Philo had a great education. Ferguson (2003:481) sees Philo as having an elaborate logos speculation which attracted students of the New Testament and Christology to his witness. Philo regarded logos as the mind or reason of God. Hurtado (1988:50) reasoned that this concept that God has a chief agent in heaven above all other divine agents, served the early Christians in their attempt to accommodate the exalted Jesus alongside God.

The other two categories were *exalted patriarchs* as divine agents and *principal angels.* In Ben Sirach (*Ecclesiaticus*45:1-5) Moses is called the 'beloved by God and people, Moses of

blessed memory'. Moses is also raised high in esteem by kings and is said to be 'sanctified' and chosen alone out of all human beings. Even though angels played some roles throughout history, Hurtado (1988:71) is of the opinion that angelic beings seem to have had a prominent place in the religious thought of post-exilic Judaism.

Even during the second temple of Judaism when the challenges in the lives of the people and their culture it seems that their history was narrated in terms of how they related to their God. Away from the temple they had to find a way to make God real in their everyday life. They had lost much when Jerusalem was destroyed. They may have lost the power to determine their political destiny, but they were not prepared to lose their position with God.

What Hurtado (1988:99) attempted to communicate in his work was to illuminate some developments that may be perceived as being to the advantage of Christianity. The roles of the concepts of wisdom, exalted patriarchs and principal angels prove that towards the coming of Jesus Christ, the perspective on monotheism was changing. In other words, somewhere within the worship of one God there was recognition of certain agents that approximated YHWH's oneness without violating the Shema.

In the book of John the writer claims that there were many signs and wonders that Jesus carried out and the reason for this was that people should believe that Jesus is Christ the Son of God. This was the same identity Peter mentioned when he said 'you are the Christ the Son of the living God'. Pryor (www.jcstudies.com) points John 19:37 out as being a fulfilment of Zechariah 12:10 which states 'and they will look to me, they will mourn for the one whom they have pierced as though for an only child, and weep for Him as people weep for a first born child'. Pryor (www.jcstudies.com) asks how one can 'pierce' God. God is invisible; the only way that God can be 'pierced' is if He would be visible. In other words Pryor (2005: online mp3) is suggesting that the prophesy was anticipating a time when God was going to be visible. In the Old Testament the words in Zachariah were spoken by God and in New Testament the words are directed to Jesus on the cross. Pryor argues that Jesus was not ambiguous about His identity. Jesus identified Himself as on the same level with God the Father. The proof was when Jesus said: 'before Abraham was I Am' and when Jesus forgave sins. Pryor (www.jcstudies.com) points to the fulfilment of Zechariah 14:9 that said Yahweh will be the one and only and His name the one name.

2.2   After the Council of Nicaea

The outcome of the council of Nicaea (AD 325) was the Nicene Creed. Due to the Nicene Creed the Bishop of Alexandria, Alexander was justified but Arius was anathematised. From the position of Alexander the Creed did not provide something new, but reflected what he already believed. Thus the Creed consolidated the thinking of the Church Fathers in the light of what Jesus had done. One needs to take note that according to the statements of the Synodal letter that the assembly at Nicaea came through the grace of Christ.

From the Synodal letter which was written to the church of Alexandria the following declaration was made: 'that Jesus is from things that are not, and that before He was begotten, He was not; and that there was a time when He was not and that the Son of God is by His own free will capable of vice and virtue, saying also that He was a 'creature'. All these words represented the doctrine of Arian and his followers. The Synodal Letter states that 'all these things the Holy Synod has anathematised, not even enduring to hear his impious doctrine and madness and blasphemous words. '

2.2.1   Athanasius

After the synod of Nicaea of 325 those who had lost, organised themselves against the Nicene Creed, their teachings were known as Arianism which stood against the Orthodox faith. Athanasius was a deacon when he attended the council of Nicene and had to take a position against the position of Arianism. By standing against the heresies of Arianism, Athanasius had to define and defend the confession of the Nicene Creed. The conversations and debates were now based on, for or against the Nicene Creed, and also on the words of the Creed, because words convey concepts and opinions.

The *De Synodis Part 1:5* reflects on the developments after the Synod of Nicaea and about some meetings or councils that were held after the Nicene Creed in opposition thereof. He declared that Arian heresy had risen up against the Catholic Church and found supporters in Eusebius and his fellows. Athanasius insisted that the Fathers (Church Fathers who met at Nicaea) pronounced the Arian heresy to be a forerunner of the Antichrist.

In defending the Nicene Creed against heresy, he stood by the confession of the Church Fathers 'we believe in one only and true God, the Almighty, Creator and Framer of all things'. To emphasise the monotheistic worship he adds 'only' and says we believe in one, only and true God.

About the Son he says 'and in the one and only begotten Son of God', arising from the Creed Athanasius introduced new thinking concerning the relationship between the Father and the Son. It would seem Athanasius felt that the Creed did not address it or that it was a new discussion. In *De Synodis Part 1:8* – the history of the councils - Athanasius introduced, 'who, before all ages, and before all origin and before all 'conceivable time, and before all comprehensible essence, was begotten impassibly from God'. The notion of eternity seems to be missing from the Creed. From the documents of Alexander, the Bishop of Alexandria, it is stated in response to Arius, that there was a time when Jesus was not. Athanasius seems to address the question of when Jesus became the only begotten and when the Son shared the substance with the Father. In other words we can say when Jesus became a human being or the making of Jesus. So he includes 'before all ages, and before all origin and before all conceivable time'. But it is arguable what the Creed meant, when it says 'begotten not made, is (was) being of one substance with the Father'.

In the same letter Athanasius discussed the term 'essence' which had been adopted by the Church Fathers. He admits that the term could offend when misunderstood by people. The argument is that the term is not contained in the Scriptures. Athanasius seems to feel uncomfortable with that term 'essence'. He preferred to say 'that the Son is like the Father in all things', because that is what the Scriptures imply and teach. Later the study will deal with the arguments concerning the controversial terms used in the Nicene Creed.

2.2.2   History of African opinions

Athanasius preserved some of the teachings of Arius which were considered blasphemous. Arius and his fellow heretics didn't deny the existence of God the Creator. But they refused to have someone else equal to Him. Arius employed these terms about God namely 'equal' or 'like', 'himself He alone, 'has none', or 'one in glory'. If this is how they thought about God as 'being alone' and 'without any equal', what would the position of Jesus in relation to God

be? They say 'we praise Him who has a beginning and adore Him as everlasting, because of Him who in time has come to be'. By these words Arius denied the worship of Jesus Christ together with the Father. But he accepts Jesus as a way towards worshiping God. According to Arius, Jesus was the first to be created out of nothing and through him God created, creation. There came a time when God adopted Jesus as His Son. Because Jesus was created and that there was a time when He was not, it implies He could not share everything with God.

In *De Synodis Part 2:19* Athanasius preserved the letter of Arius to Alexander which has been mentioned earlier. Arius used words against the Son such as 'the Son is one among others, for He is first of things originate, and one among intellectual natures'. Arius and his fellows such as Eusebius didn't speak only against the council of Nicaea. They began to plot against the bishops who withstood them, and to substitute men in the church with men of their own heresy. They also organised their own councils to oppose the confession of Orthodox faith.

At first Athanasius seemed to be uncomfortable discussing the issue of the essence of the Son, since the term was not found in the Scriptures. But in part 3 of *The Symbols of the Essence and Co-essential*, the Arians forced him to respond. In chapter 41 he sympathised with those who accepted the Nicene Creed but had a problem to accept the term 'co-essential'. His reason for sympathising with them was that he felt they must not be treated as enemies, nor be attacked like the Arians. He advised that they be regarded as brothers. In that regard he mentioned the name of Basil who wrote from Ancyra. The other term which was problematic was the difference between 'like-in-essence' (which did not convey), and 'of the essence'. It seems here the debate was about 'same' and 'similar'. At this point it is important to introduce the Cappadocian Fathers because they went into great detail discussing the problem of 'essence'.

2.3   The Cappadocian Church Fathers

Cappadocia just like Alexandria became a centre of Christian theology especially during the controversy of the fourth century AD. It was put on the map by three Church Fathers who were known as the Cappadocian Fathers namely Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa.

- Basil of Caesarea was probably born in 329 AD and died 1 January 379 AD according to McSorley (2012: online website). He ranks after Athanasius as a defender of the Eastern Church against the heresies of the fourth century and he became influential in the 4th century for his contribution to Christian Theology and monasticism. Basil and his brother Gregory of Nyssa came from a Christian family.

- The second was Gregory of Nazianzus (CA 330-389/390 AD) was also known as Gregory the theologian. Gregory of Nazianzus was also from a Christian family and his Father was also named Gregory and was a very close friend of Basil.

- Gregory of Nyssa was the third member of the Cappadocian Fathers, the younger brother of Basil. His date of birth is unknown but he may have died in 385 or 386 according to Leclercq (1910: online website). Although Basil died in 379, two years before the council of Constantinople, the two Gregory's were there.

2.3.1   Basil of Caesarea

Discussion of the *De Spirito Sancto*: is about the position of the Son and the Holy Spirit being on equal level with the Father. In chapter 1:3 Basil says that 'when praying with the people and using the full doxology of God the Father in both forms, at one time with the Son together with the 'Holy Spirit' and at another through the Son in the 'Holy Spirit'. The debate was about the words 'with', 'together with' and 'through' and 'in'. He continues in chapter 2 where the passage, 1 Corinthians 8:6 was investigated. 'Yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we exist through Him' (NIV). As mentioned above the debate was based on 'of whom' and 'in whom' the scripture says 'one God, the Father, from whom are all things'. But when it comes to Jesus the passage says, 'and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things and we exist through Him'. Because for Jesus it says 'by whom and through Him', it means Jesus is not on the same level with the Father because it says of the Father 'from whom'. The question for Basil was 'Does the variation of language indicate the variation of nature? ' Basil indicates: 'by the term "of whom"' they wish to indicate the Creator by the term 'through whom' as a subordinate agent or instrument. Basil continues to unfold their thinking that 'by the term "in whom" or "in which"' they mean to show the time or place.

What they (these students of vain philosophy as Basil indicates [*De Spirito Sancto* chapter 3:5]) are doing is to belittle God as the Word and equate Him to the divine Spirit. The words may be put differently, but they have the same meaning. Basil also implies that it is not enough to draw a conclusion based on one passage. He states (*De Spirito Sancto* chapter 4:6) that they 'maintain that scripture varies its expressions as occasion requires, according to the circumstances of the case'. The book of Romans 11:36 (KJV) says 'for of Him and through Him and to Him are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen'. Basil continues to prove through different Scriptures that the phrase 'through whom' is supported by Scripture in the case of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit alike.

One argument from Basil's opponents concerned their view regarding the relationship between the Father and the Son in worship. They claim that the Son is not 'with' the Father but 'after' Him, meaning that the two are not equal in glory. They also have the problem of not separating the Son from the Holy Spirit. Again they used terms like 'glory' that should be ascribed to the Father; 'through Him' (meaning through the Son), but not 'with Him', because the term 'with Him' expresses equality of dignity, while 'through Him' denotes subordination. They further assert that the Spirit is not to be ranked along with the Father and the Son but under the Son and under the Father. They say the Holy Spirit is 'not co-ordinated, but sub-ordinated; and not con-numerated, but sub-numerated. Basil states that when John 1:1 says 'in the beginning was the word' (NIV), the term one imagination goes beyond 'beginning'. For a human being it is difficult to go beyond the time frame 'before there was the beginning'. Basil disputes the fact that the Son is after (second to) the Father. Is the Son after the Father in time, or maybe in order or in dignity? How can Jesus be second in order when He is the image of the invisible God and also the brightness of his glory? Based on scripture, Basil reasons the fact that Jesus has sat down on the right hand of the Majesty of God. For Basil that is a position of dignity being a seat of honour. Therefore for Basil it is not an expression signifying inferiority of rank. The Son was not unclear about His position with the Father because the Son said 'he that has seen me has seen the Father' (KJV). The Son also said He shall come in the glory of His Father (Mark 8:38). Basil also cites John 5:23 which says that all men (human beings) should honour the Son just as they honour the Father. Thus the Cappadocian Fathers engaged the heretics head on by citing the Scriptures.

In chapter 8 Basil deals with 'how many ways "through whom"' is used, and in what sense 'with whom' is a more suitable explanation of how the Son receives a commandment, and how He was sent. Basil discusses the matter of the household of God, explaining the ontology of God and the economy of God. The tension here is about the equality between the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. If the Son is equal to the Father why was the Son praying in the gospels to the Father? (*De Spirito Sancto* Basil, Chapter 8:17). Paul in Romans 1:5 thanks God through Jesus Christ also saying 'we have received grace and apostleship'; 'through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we stand' (Romans 5:2 NIV). In the same letter Paul says that the gifts are given to the church and Christians by God through Jesus. For the sake of salvation, Jesus is called Shepherd, King, Physician, Bridegroom, Way, Door, Fountain, Bread, Axe and Rock. According to Basil these are titles which do not set fourth His nature. In other words, these titles are mentioned in terms of the household of God (economy) whereas God's nature is based on His ontology. Therefore the term 'through Him' is used when titles like *door*, *way* and so on are used in terms of the economy of God. It is through the Son that Christians are more than conquerors. Christians are able to approach the Father through the Son. Basil (*De Spiritu Sancto* chapter 8:18) warns Christians not to 'regard the economy through the Son as a compulsory and sub-ordinate ministration resulting from the low estate of a slave, but rather the voluntary solicitude working effectually for His own creation and goodness and in pity, according to the will of God the Father'. Jesus Christ is the way leading to the Father and the means into God's presence. Even though He is the way to the Father that may not be considered proof that He is of lesser glory than the Father. Jesus is the means towards the destination, and God the Father is regarded as the destination according to Christian faith. The destination and the end are both regarded as divine. The experience of the way may be regarded the same as a point of destination because they are both divine and belong to one godhead. It's a taste of where one is going to, before one reaches that destination. It's like one is already there, even though the journey is still continuing. The light, glory and honour which the Father has are the same, not similar with the Son. Since Jesus is God and also a way to the Father who is God it means the experiences of the way to the Father and the destination being the father is the same. That the reason Basil (*De Spirito Sancto chapter 8:19*) recalls the words of Jesus in John 17:10 when He says 'all mine are yours and yours are mine'. And so the word is full of His Father's excellences, He shines forth from the Father and does all

things according to the likeness of Him that begot Him. Ontologically speaking He is in essence without variation, so therefore He is without variation in power.

One more comment before we get to a discussion about the Holy Spirit. Basil looks at the following passages in scripture where Jesus says 'I have not spoken of myself' (John 12:49). Right in the next verse Jesus continues to say 'as the Father said unto me so I speak'. In chapter 14:24 of John, Jesus says 'the word which you hear is not mine but the Fathers' who sent me' and in John 14:31 He speaks of the Father who gave Him commandments. Basil explains that the reason why Jesus speaks in this manner is no proof of Him being lower than the Father, but the 'object is to make it plain that His own will is connected in indissoluble union with the Father'. Basil (*De Spirito Sancto* chapter 8:21) says that when Jesus was saying 'He that has seen me has seen the Father' (John 14:9) it was not based on the express image, nor yet the form. He says the expression is based on the goodness of the will which is concurrent with the essence. So the Son and the Father are the same and equal.

From chapter 9 onwards he includes the Holy Spirit into the discussion. One needs to take note that the majority of the work of the Fathers of the Church was a response to someone or something, just like most of the letters in the New Testament. Basil (*De Spirito Sancto* chapter 10:24) says they must proceed to attack their opponents, so his response is more like an attack, in other words he is not only defending their position or clarifying some concepts but they are also attacking. The best defence is to attack.

He gives some titles of the Holy Spirit as they are gathered from the Holy Scripture but were also received from the unwritten tradition of the Church Fathers. The titles are 'Spirit of God', 'Spirit of truth which proceeds from the Father', 'the Right Spirit', and 'a leading Spirit'. When one hears about these titles the soul is lifted up. Basil includes the well-used title 'the Holy Spirit', a name especially appropriate to everything that is incorporeal, purely immaterial and invisible.

Basil's point of departure is John 4:24 (KJV) which says, 'God is a Spirit'. Can God be a Spirit without the Spirit being God? He admits that they are compelled to 'advance in their conceptions to the highest, and to think of intelligent essence, in power infinite, in magnitude unlimited, unmeasured by time or ages and to whom all things needing

sanctification turn'. The descriptions given here are on the same level with those of the Father and the Son. Because of the above descriptions given, He can never be associated with any creature. All things cannot turn for sanctification to one who has a need for sanctification. If things turn to the Holy Spirit for sanctification then the Holy Spirit is in a position of God and needs no sanctification Himself. All things turn to Him for sanctification because He is the 'origin of sanctification'.

Basil gives the analogy of the sun which is able to illuminate the land and sea and mingles with the air. This light is shared by all and whoever receives it enjoys it as though it shone for him or her alone. The Holy Spirit makes the weak strong and aids hearts to be lifted up. The power of the Holy Spirit as an inspiration becomes effective when those who receive Him fellowship with Him. Basil (*De Spirito Sancto* chapter 9:23) says when a sunbeam falls on bright and transparent bodies, they themselves become brilliant too. Therefore souls wherein the Spirit dwells illuminated by the Spirit, become spiritual themselves. A believer wherein the Spirit dwells begins to have an understanding of mysteries and becomes a heavenly citizen, there is joy without end, and he/she abides in God.

Having said all these things about the Holy Spirit, how does He relate to the Father and the Son? In chapter 16:37 Basil states that 'the Holy Spirit is inseparable and wholly incapable of being parted from the Father and the Son'. Basil in *De Spirito Sancto* chapter 16:38 explains the fellowship of the Spirit with the Father and the Son. When dealing with God as the Creator, Provider and one who sanctifies is just like looking at the things God has created which are out there. Dealing with the fellowship of the Spirit with the Father and the Son is like taking a journey into the being of God. Clarity had already been achieved about God the Father and the Son 'that the word is He who was with God in the beginning and He was God'. The Son is referred to as the only begotten of the Father who was ever from eternity with the Father. Basil describes the Spirit as the Spirit of truth which proceeds from the Father as stated in John 15:26. Basil says we have to consider all three. How must the three be perceived? Basil presents 'the Lord who gives the order, the Word who creates and the Spirit who confirms'.

What Basil stated above is what distinguishes the East from the West. The three had to be perceived within a relationship, the Son as begotten by the Father and the Holy Spirit which

also proceeds from the Father. The three were presented in creation as 'the Father gives orders, the Son creates and the Holy Spirit confirms'. There is a continuation of upholding monotheism as explained in (*De Spirito Sancto* chapter 18:44) that there is one God and Father, one only begotten and one Holy Spirit. Basil says that each of the hypostases is proclaimed singularly, but that does not mean a plurality of gods. Basil says they confess the distinctions of the persons, yet recognising the unity in the invariableness of the Godhead in worship.

Pryor (2005a: online mp3) explains how the issue of oneness of God was resolved. The word one (*ehad*) first occurred in the Bible in Genesis chapter 1 'and there was evening and there was morning, day *one*'. The word *one* appears within the unity of evening and morning. In chapter two the Bible says 'and they shall become *one* (*ehad*) flesh', here is the union between two people. Adam was single (one) at first and out of him someone was taken out and then they were two. The singular was divided into plurality of persons through the creation of Eve, but out of that plurality there had to be a unity, they would become one flesh. Adam was taken from singular to plurality and from plurality to unity. It is in this relational plurality of persons that human beings are able to express their love towards each other.

The three are recognised to be in fellowship of the plurality of persons 'for the Son is in the Father and the Father is in the Son'. Basil (*De Spirito Sancto* chapter 18:45) explains further that 'according to the distinction of persons, both are one and one, and according to the community of nature, one'. There is one Father, one Son and so there is one Holy Spirit and the three are one, the oneness is in the union that consists in the communion of the Godhead with each other.

h. The Letter of Eusebius of Caesarea

According to the Catholic Encyclopaedia, the Greek word *homo-ousion* came from two words: *homo* (the same) and *ousia* (essence). The Latin equivalent is *con-substantia* which means 'of one essence or substance. The latter was used by the Church Fathers in the council of Nicene 325 AD. According to Bridge (2012: online website) 'Homo-ousion was indeed used by philosophical writers to signify of the same or similar substance; but as the

unity of the divine nature wasn't questioned, the word carried the fuller meaning: of one and the same substance'.

The word *ousia* is the 'ancient Greek noun formed in the feminine present participle of 'to be'. In English it represents the word *being*. The term was also translated as 'substance and essence'.

Eusebius wrote a letter to his church to explain his behaviour and position concerning the Nicene Council, but also presented his own Creed to the church. Hanson (2005:164) points out that 'Eusebius was approved by both the Council and Emperor'. In the letter, there was Eusebius' Creed as well as the Creed of Nicaea. When Hanson (2005:164) investigated, he realised that both Creeds look similar except for the word '*Homo-ousion*'. Eusebius in his letter explains the questions concerning the term '*Homo-ousion*', as representing these terms: the essence of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, very God from Very God, Begotten not made, one in essence with the Father. The wording 'only-begotten, first born of every creature, before all ages, were missing (removed or excluded) in the Nicene Creed. Eusebius explained further in his letter that the reason he resigned was because he had a problem with the term *Homo-ousion*. These are his words: 'On their dictating this formula, we did not let it pass without inquiry in what sense they introduced the "essence of the Father", and "one in essence with the Father"' (Hanson, 2005:165).

It is clear from the *Ecclesiastical History Book I of Theodoret*, that the Council thought that the Eusebius Creed was blasphemous. It was reported in chapter 7 that when they 'began to inquire into the nature of faith, the formulary of Eusebius was brought forward, which contained undisguised evidence of his blasphemy'. Eusebius' Creed caused great grief to the Council and Eusebius himself, as it was perceived to have moved away from 'the faith'. In *Theodoret Book I*, Eusebius and the group of Arians had in mind that words from the Scripture would be used, such as 'the brightness of the glory', and 'the express image of the person of the Father'. According to *Theodoret Book I* (chapter 7), 'the bishops saw through their evil design and impious artifice and gave a clearer elucidation of the words of God, and wrote that the Son is of the substance of God'.

In the *Ecclesiastical History Book I of Theodoret*, chapter 11 points out that 'the Holy Catholic and Apostolic church anathematises all who say that there was a time when the Son of God was not; that before He was begotten He was not; that He was made out of the non-existent; or that He is of a different essence and of a different substance than the Father, and that He is susceptible of variations or change'. Hanson (2005:167) argues that the anathemas in the Nicene Creed are a remarkable condemnation, especially the line which says 'the Son is of another *hypostasis* of *ousia* from the Father'. He says the above line is 'highly ambiguous and extremely confusing statement' because if *hypostasis* stood for person then the Son should be of a different *hypostasis* and same *ousia*. The difficulty according to Hanson (2005:167) is in failing to understand why the Eastern bishops would permit what was to them a rankly Sabellian statement to appear in the Creed of the first General Council at Nicaea.

Kelly (2006:217), in comparing the Nicene Creed to that of Eusebius reasons that Nicene was 'the local Creed of Caesarea revised in the light of the Emperor's instructions'. That suggests that those who were appointed for the task of revision might have inserted the word '*Homo-ousios*'. There is also the point that the Creed of Eusebius contained these words 'first-born of every creature, before all the ages', but the Nicene Creed did not have these words. Kelly (2006:217) points out also that the title 'Son' was replaced in the Nicene Creed with 'Logos' in Caesarea. While Eusebius' creed said 'only-begotten Son, first-born of every creature, before all the ages, begotten from the Father', that of Nicene said 'only begotten, that is from the essence of the Father'. Kelly (2006:235) observes that 'the clause "from the substance of the Father", which was inserted immediately after the words "begotten from the Father"; "only-begotten", was clearly intended to give a more precise interpretation to "begotten from the Father"'. It seems that these words were carefully chosen for a reason. According to Kelly (2006:235), these words were intentionally put together to counteract the principal tenet of Arianism that the Son had been created out of nothing and had no community of being with the Father.

Because Eusebius' Creed was pro-Arius, Kelly (2006:235) says that the words of the Nicene Creed were coined to contradict the Arian positions. Eusebius' Creed says there is One Lord Jesus Christ, the word of God, God from God. Kelly (2006:236) states that to counter the

Arians, the Bishops said 'from the essence of the Father, God from God, light from light', and even went further to say 'very God from very God, begotten not made'. Since Arius declared that the Son was made from nothing and there was a time when He was not, in response the Nicene Creed had to counter that and say 'begotten not made'. By so doing, they (the Nicene Bishops) declared that the Son was not a creature, but in essence very God from very God.

Kelly (2006:242) also examined the use of the term *Homo-ousia, i. e.* of one substance with the Father. The Nicene Creed took a position that the Son was truly divine and He was from eternity to eternity. Hanson (2005:168) suggests that it 'might be taken to mean that *hypostasis* and *ousia* were different terms for the same concept, i. e. substance. But the word "or" does not favour this view; the Creed had already used the word *ousia* for substance without producing *hypostasis* as a synonym for it'. One can agree with Hanson (2005:168) that 'the Creed produced by the Council of Nicaea was a mine of potential confusion and consequently most unlikely to be a means of ending the Arian Controversy'. In the *Tomus ad Antiochenos* Athanasius relates to issues that took place in the Council of Alexandria. According to Stevenson (1966:53) 'the Council was held in 262 AD' and that 'the letter from this Council of Alexandria was intended to cure the schism that had rented the church of Antioch'. It was more about peace and unity, for Athanasius stated that for the future all men everywhere might say 'One Lord One Faith' as it is found in Ephesians 4:5. There was a need for a call for brethren to dwell in unity and harmony. The call for peace among brethren came as a realisation that God seeks for them to be in peace and unity so that God may dwell among them, but another problem had surfaced regarding the Holy Spirit, who was regarded by some as a creature. The cry of Athanasius in the *Tomus ad Antiochenos* is that 'those who, while pretending to cite the faith confessed at Nicaea, venture to blaspheme the Holy Spirit, do nothing more than in words deny the Arian heresy while they retain it in thought'. He gives instruction that the impiety of Sabellius and Paul of Samosata also be anathematised by all, as well as the madness of Valentian and Basilides, and the folly of the Manicheans.

Athanasius in the same letter *Tomus ad Antiochenos,* addresses the Creed of Sardica on the question of *hypostasis*. Some Synods sat in order to deal with the term *hypostasis* which was

used in Nicene. It seems that the gathering at Sardica accepted the Nicene Creed and had no problem with it, but the Council at Sardica had to take the blame for saying 'three substances *(hypostaseis)*, because the scripture does not support such position'. The question was concerning (*hypostaseis*) substances, because the:

> *Arian madness meant that, subsistences is foreign and strange, and alien*
> *in essence from one another, and that each subsistence was divided apart*
> *by itself, as is the case with creatures in general and in particular with*
> *those begotten of men, or like differently substances, such as gold, silver*
> *or brass or whether, like other heretics, they meant three beginnings and*
> *three Gods, by speaking of three subsistences.*

<div align="right">(Athanasius: Tomus ad Antiochenos)</div>

According to the doctrinal statement of the Western Council of Sardica they tried to clarify that there is one *hypostasis* in the Godhead and they held that anyone who claimed that there were three was an Arian. Athanasius continues to say that if it were asked what the *hypostasis* of the Son is, according to the doctrinal statement of Sardica, the response would be 'we confess that it is the same as the sole *hypostasis* of the Father', and it continues to say 'the Father has never been without the Son, nor the Son without the Father' (Athanasius: *Tomus ad Antiochenos*). To separate themselves from any heretics like Sabellianism they say 'we do not say that the Father is the Son, nor that the Son is the Father'. (Athanasius: *Tomus ad Antiochenos*) The understanding from the doctrinal statement of the Western Council of Sardica *hypostasis* or subsistence is interpreted as nature, essence or substance.

Why then did they use the word *hypostasis* as *hypostasis* corresponds with Sabellius' thrust? The explanation given in *Tomus ad Antiochenos* is that they used the word subsistence (*hypostasis*), thinking that it is the same as 'essence' (*ousia*) and they further said 'but we hold that there is one because the Son is of the essence of the Father, and because of the identity of nature'. (Athanasius: *Tomus ad Antiochenos*) They continued to say, 'we believe that there is one Godhead, and that it has one nature and not that there is one nature of the Father from which that of Son and the Holy Spirit is distinct'. (Athanasius: *Tomus ad Antiochenos*).

In the *letter 9 of Basil of Caesarea*, addressing Maximus the philosopher, the phrase 'like in essence' if it be read with the addition without any difference, I accept as conveying the same sense as the *Homo-ousios*, in accordance with the sound meaning of the *Homo-ousios'*. This corresponds with what Athanasius said about those who accepted the Nicene Creed. That they should be regarded as brothers even though they had a problem with terms like *Homo-ousios* or *Hypostasis*. The *letter 39 of Basil of Caesarea*, says, 'many people failed to distinguish between what is common in the essence of substance and the meaning of the *hypostasi*s' and for that reason, 'they do not mind using *ousia* or *hypostasis* as same meaning as it seems in the Synod of Sardica of the West in 343'.

b. Semantic Confusion

Hanson (2005:181) explains that 'the search for the Christian doctrine of God in the fourth century was in fact complicated and exasperated by Semantic confusion such as that people holding different views were using the same words as those who oppose them, but unaware, giving them a different meaning from those applied to them by their opponents'. Many theologians and historians concur with Hanson (2005) that at the beginning of the fourth century, the word *hypostasis* and the word *ousia* had more or less the same meaning as it has been recorded by Athanasius in *Tomus ad Antiochenos*.

Kelly (2006:243) explains that *'Homoousios* is, of course, a compound adjective with *ousia,* or "substance", as it is a principal element'. He emphasizes a similar position as Hanson (2005) by saying that its fundamental significance can be at once defined as 'being', 'essence' and 'reality', but that these synonyms only bring out the cause of the ambiguity. Kelly (2006:243) continues to say that 'the precise meaning attached to *ousia* varied with the philosophical context in which it occurred and the philosophical allegiance of the writer'.

Hanson (2005:190) reveals that *'Homoousios* was a word occasionally used by pagan writers. It was in the second half of the third century that the word *Homoousios* was introduced as a term to be used in trinitarian context'. According to Hanson (2005:190), *'Homoousios* was utilized in a very fluid and diverse way from which no particular conclusions can be drawn'. He claims that it was in Alexandria where it was used by Clement to mean 'belonging to the same order of being' (Hanson, 2005:190).

Three definitions are given by Kelly (2006:243) on the word *Homoousios*:

- Sometimes the term was generic; it stood for the universal, the class to which a number of individuals belonged. It is called a secondary substance.
- Sometimes the dominant meaning was 'individual' an *Ousia* that was a particular entity regarded as the subject of qualities, primary substance.
- To people of a Stoic cast of thought, *Ousia* might suggest just matter, stuff, nothing more or less.

Basil and Athanasius seemed to have some concerns with *Homo-ousios* because scholars like Paul of Samosata and Sabellius used the term to mean 'of the same or similar substance'.

Thus also in the doctrine of the Trinity we witness the gradual rise of unusual terms such as ὁμοουσιος, οὐσια, ὑπαρξις, ὑποστασις, προσωπον, γενναν, τριας, *unitas, trinitas, substantia, personae, nomina, gradus, species, formae, proprietates*, and so forth. Initially the meaning of these terms was far from precise and clear. The term οὐσια (being) was employed as a rule to refer to the one being of God, yet in the works of Origen, Athanasius, and Gregory of Nyssa it still frequently served to describe the three persons in that being. Athanasius in his polemic against Sabellianism, expressly defended himself by saying that the Son is not μονοουσιος (of one substance) but ὁμοουσιος (of the same substance) with the Father (Athanasius, *Statement of Faith*, *NPNF (2)*, IV, 83–85). So also the term ὑποστασις (subsistence; subsistent) was sometimes used to indicate the one being, and other times to denote the three persons. In line with this practice, people sometimes spoke of the one 'hypostasis' of God and then again of the three 'hypostases'. But Sabellianism merely regarded the three persons revelatory modes of the one being. To oppose this view the church had to stress that those persons were really existing 'subsistences' in the divine being. For that purpose the word ὑποστασις [which thus became the equivalent of 'person'] was used. Basil in his letter *Concerning Ousia and Hypostasis,* brought about greater uniformity in the use of these terms by employing οὐσια for God's being or essence and ὑποστασις or προσωπον for the three persons. Accordingly, every ὑποστασις has its own unique subsistence (ἰδια ὑπαρξις) and is distinguished from the other persons by 'peculiar traits', 'properties', 'distinctive features' 'signs', 'marks'," 'characteristics' and 'forms'. This

terminology is continued in the language of the two Gregories, John of Damascus, Greek theology, and the Greek Church in general (Von Harnack 1957).

These words had to be looked into because they had a significant role in how they were modified in order to refer to the ontology and economy of the Godhead. The theory is that Jesus was just a man anointed and elevated to a high place. Jesus was born of a virgin, lived like other men (human) and was most pious. At his baptism in the Jordan River the Holy Spirit came down upon Him in the likeness of a dove. (What about his crucifixion and resurrection?). There are those who accepted that after his resurrection He was elevated.

c. Apollinarian Controversy

Gregory of Nazianzus got a pamphlet authored by Apollinarius where there was information that contained the wrong doctrine about the nature of Jesus Christ. From a letter to Nectarius, Bishop of Constantinople (EP CC11), the teaching of Apollinarius is preserved as follows: That 'the flesh which the only-begotten Son assumed in the incarnation for the remodelling of our nature was not a new acquisition, but that carnal nature was in the Son from the beginning'. The teaching is based on the interpretation of John 3:13 (ASV) that says, 'no one has ascended into heaven, but he who descended out of heaven, even the Son of man, who is in heaven'.

After the Nicene Council, the debate was directed to the nature of Jesus Christ based on the terms used in the Creed. The question was about the identity of the 'individuals' that make up the Trinity, but also about their relationship with the Holy Spirit. To the letter of Cledonius, the priest standing against Apollinarius (EP C1) Gregory of Nazianzus states the Orthodox confession about Jesus as He who before all ages, unmingled with body or anything corporeal: but who in these last days has assumed manhood also for our salvation, passable in his flesh, impassable in His Godhead, in the Spirit, at once earthly and heavenly, tangible and intangible, comprehensible and incomprehensible, that by one and the same man and also God so that the entire humanity fallen through sin might be created anew.

2.3.2 Gregory of Nazianzus

According to Daley (2006:3) Gregory of Nazianzus 'was born into a family of landed gentry on a country estate called Karbala near Arianzus, a village in a hilly centre of the Roman

province of Cappadocia sometime between 326 and 330'. His studies took him as far as Caesarea in Cappadocia to Caesarea in Palestine where he studied Rhetoric. Daley (2006:3) states that his father was Gregory the Elder who used to belong to a 'Judaeo-Christian sect called the *hypsistarii*, the servants of the Most High God'. His mother Nonna was from a rich family and she was a very influential person. Daley (2006:3) notes that it was through 'her good example and strong persuasion that his father became a bishop of Nazianzus at the age of 50 still a lay man'. Then he went to Alexandria where Athanasius was the Bishop. It was his desire for knowledge that fused a bond between him and Basil of Caesarea. Gregory of Nazianzus seemed to have been very shy of public life and rather chose the monastic or ascetic life. According to Von Campenhausen (2000:101) he was not a 'dominating personality and was constantly being thwarted by the hard and common realities which he ignored in his thinking'.

The debate between Alexander of Alexandria, Athanasius and Arius resulted in the council of Nicene of 325 AD. Post Nicene the debate began to develop in Asia Minor. Where Athanasius could not reach, the Cappadocians Fathers (Basil of Caesarea Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory of Nazianzus) stepped in. They emerged and continued the discussion about the oneness of the Father with the Son and developed to include the Holy Spirit into that oneness. The debates resulted in the first council of Constantinople of 381 AD being held, where Gregory of Nazianzus played a prominent role as the co-chair of the council.

a. On Jesus Christ

The oration 38 on *The Theophany or Birthday of Christ* is less confrontational, but more informative. Gregory of Nazianzus began by recognising the historical event of the birth of Jesus Christ as a reality. Christianity is a historical religion. This view is supported by many like Richardson (1981:5) because Christianity is a 'religion which bases its whole view of the universe and human destiny upon certain historical happenings'. In this oration 38 Gregory of Nazianzus was attempting to state the significance and ultimate philosophy/attitude towards life (Richardson 1981:5).

Gregory of Nazianzus (oration 38:11) put forward his understanding about the coming of Jesus as the passing of darkness. Darkness is a metaphor for ignorance and so Jesus is the great light of knowledge. He interacts with the passage in Isaiah 9:6 as a declaration of Jesus'

coming on earth. He also built on 2 Corinthians 5:17 to argue that the historical event of the coming of Jesus was the end of a certain period in human existence on earth and the beginning of a new one. Gregory believed that this renewal takes place also in the presence of the Holy Spirit. Because the Spirit comes to the front, the shadows flee away and the truth prevails.

Thus the coming of Jesus Christ in the world precipitated the going away of certain things like darkness (ignorance) and the coming in of knowledge. One may ask, 'knowledge about what? ' Since Jesus is presented as an image of the invisible God and no one knows the Father like the Son, it can be assumed that Gregory is talking about knowledge of the Father. Jesus is the light of the world and through Him as light, people are able to come into full knowledge of the great light. This great light (knowledge of the Father) cannot be approached or penetrated without the light being Jesus Christ.

The light is able to bring transformation. The making of all things new is the work by God that is directed to human beings. Because Jesus took human nature as mentioned earlier by Gregory of Nazianzus, Jesus was 'perfect man and also God so that the entire humanity fallen through sin might be created anew'. But Gregory of Nazianzus immediately includes the third person of the Holy Spirit, because the entire Godhead was present in the salvation of the human race.

With the coming of Jesus, Gregory of Nazianzus further explains that 'the law of nature' was upset. Jesus was without a mother - He also came to be without a Father. Gregory of Nazianzus this in regard referring to the tension between the two natures of Jesus Christ, the human nature and the divine nature. In his divine nature Jesus had no mother and in his human nature He had no Father. Gregory of Nazianzus further asserted that Jesus who was not carnal, was incarnate. God was manifested in men by birth. When the divine was incarnate, and God became human, he followed all steps taken by human beings for coming into this world. The Creator was going back to the beginning of human beings through the process of birth. 'The One who gave us our being (oration 38Ш) came for our well-being, to restore humanity to his being'.

In oration 38:1V Gregory of Nazianzus gave the idea that the birth of Jesus Christ is also regarded as the coming of God to man that human beings may 'go forth or rather that human beings might go back to God'. Also that humanity may put off the old man so that a new man may be put on. How can people put on a new man without a reason? Or is there any desire to do so? Going back to where Gregory of Nazianzus said Jesus was a perfect man and God so that the all of humanity fallen through sin might be created anew. So when Gregory mentioned (oration 38:1) that the coming of Jesus was a light that moved darkness, it can be assumed that 'the darkness' represents the place and situation of the whole of humanity which had fallen'. It is the place where the first Adam took the human race and left them there, unable to move out. Jesus was born as a human being within the fallen race that was experiencing darkness. Gregory of Nazianzus emphasized that He was not part of darkness, but He came to be a light to open a way back to God. It can be assumed that the reason Jesus had to be human was for the sake of salvation. Therefore salvation of human beings cannot be defined outside the act of God the Father through Jesus Christ and the operation of the Holy Spirit. The Trinity can be regarded the Alpha and the Omega of salvation.

If salvation is based on God then who is this God? Gregory of Nazianzus (oration 38:V11) states that 'God always was, and always is and always will be'. Or rather God always is. When human beings say 'the One who was and the One that shall be, that is not based on who God is because the "was" and the "will be" is according to human experience, not God's experience'. Gregory of Nazianzus says the 'was' and 'will be' are the fragments of our time, because God cannot remain in the past and the future cannot come without Him. He is the God who occupies the past, the present and the future at the same time. Time cannot be ahead of him because before time was, God was forever there. God is the same yesterday, today and forever. Gregory of Nazianzus (oration 38:V11) states that 'God sums up and contains all beings, having neither beginning in the past nor end in the future, limitless and unbounded, transcending all conception of time and nature'.

If God is not limited but human beings are limited, how can the visible have knowledge of the invisible without the reality of that invisibleness? In their limited time and space, how can they contain the unlimited? The incarnation was a miracle. Gregory (oration 38:X1) says

'it was a King of all upon the earth, but subject to the King above, earthly and heavenly, temporal and yet immortal, visible and yet intellectual, half-way between greatness and lowliness, in one person, combining spirit and flesh'.

Going further Gregory of Nazianzus makes a comparison between the words 'Creator' and 'creation'. Gregory of Nazianzus (oration 38: X) says with astonishment: 'When we look at the fair form of every part, but yet more worthy of admiration when we consider the harmony and the unison of the whole, and how each part fits in with every other, in fair order, and all with the whole tending to the perfect completion of the world as a unit'. According to Gregory of Nazianzus this was to postulate that God can create a creation that is far remote from Him in nature. When human beings look at nature and creation, the way the earth rotates to make day and night, the way it calculates time as it moves, the stars and the moon, they see the beauty. If creation as it stands reflects beauty and harmony how much greater in glory is the One who created it. The Church Fathers believed that creation can never be above God in beauty, perfection and in nature.

The incarnation can be taken as the wonder of the universe that cannot be compared to any other. But the incarnation with all its beauty, greatness and wonder, was the correction of God for something wrong that happened in the history of humanity. The incarnation was not undertaken for the beauty of the universe, but for the ugliness in human beings. The ugliness is the sin of which Gregory of Nazianzus (oration 38:X11) said was such that 'human beings hid themselves away from God, because of sin humanity needed a remedy for this disease were growing worse, mutual slaughters, adultery, perjury, unnatural crimes, and that first and last of all evils, idolatry and the transfer of worship from the Creator to creatures'. Because this situation of the fall of the human race was severe, it needed a great remedy. Gregory of Nazianzus said (oration 38: X111) 'they obtained a greater, and that was the Word of God Himself'.

A further description of the 'word' by Gregory of Nazianzus is that 'He came forth then as God with, that which he had assumed, one person in two natures, flesh and spirit of which the latter defied the former'. Gregory views what was just mentioned as 'new commingling' (oration 38: X111), strange conjunction, the self-existent comes into being, the uncreated is created, that which cannot be contained is contained. Jesus had to assume two natures, fully

God and fully human to become the neutral zone between God and human beings fallen into sin. Jesus had to be God to stand for God before a human God. As Jesus assumed the two natures, flesh and spirit, He also became a meeting place between a holy God and sinful human beings, as Gregory of Nazianzus explained that Jesus assumed the poverty of the flesh, that human beings may 'assume the richness of His Godhead'. He continues to say that 'He that is full empties Himself, for He empties Himself of His glory for a short while, that humans may have a share in His fullness'.

Sin may be viewed as separation from the Creator - the source of human life. And when human beings are separated from God, life deteriorates to emptiness and darkness. The separation away from God resulted in the loss of the separated. That also means sinners are in darkness and lost. Gregory of Nazianzus (Oration 38:X1V) asks 'will you deem Him little on this account that He humbled Himself for you, because the good shepherd, He who lays down His life for his sheep, came to seek for that which had strayed upon the mountain and the hills, on which you were then sacrificing, and found the wonderer? ' The reason for the incarnation was that Jesus would be able to find the lost human being. As God came to the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve ran away from Him, for the guilty are afraid. When Jesus became a human being, it was God being born so that the lost would be able to find Him. Gregory of Nazianzus (oration 38:XV1) say 'Jesus being betrayed and crucified, was crucifying Himself with my sin, offered as a lamb, and offering as a priest, rising again, and then ascending, and to come again in His own glory'. Salvation for Gregory of Nazianzus is about perfection and the return to the first condition of Adam. Jesus died to build for Himself a witnessing community of faith to worship God. God said to Pharaoh 'let my people go that they may serve me' (Exodus 5:1). In Oration 45:XXIII Gregory of Nazianzus says 'let us sacrifice nor young calves nor lambs that put forth horns and hooves, in which many parts are destitute of life and feeling, but let us sacrifice of praise upon the heavenly altar, with the heavenly dances, let us hold aside the first veil, let us approach the second, and look into the Holy of Holies'. He also adds, 'let us sacrifice ourselves to God'. Salvation is repentance towards God that saves human beings so that they might serve Him.

b. On the Holy Spirit

On his work titled *On Pentecost*, Gregory of Nazianzus recognises the coming of the Holy Spirit as a historical event. 'The Holy Ghost always existed, and exists and always will exist' (Pentecost IX). Even though the day of Pentecost may be regarded as a historical day where the Holy Spirit inspired the disciples and the church was born, the Holy Spirit exists forever from eternity. Gregory of Nazianzus maintains that the Holy Spirit does not have a beginning and does not have an end. He was everlastingly ranged with and numbered with the Father and the Son. It means in divinity and in glory the Holy Spirit is on the same level with the Father and the Son.

Salvation was a means for human beings to come closer to God. God was in Christ Jesus bringing the world to Himself. For human beings to be in a position to sacrifice themselves as part of glorify God they must have resources. The kind of offering that is acceptable has to be holy and that is what happens when a person is saved. The Holy Spirit brings Himself as Mediator between the Saviour and the saved one.

How does the Holy Spirit relate with both the Father and the Son? On the *Fifth Theological Oration 31:III* Gregory says 'the Father was the true light which lightens every man coming into the world. The Son was the true light, which lightens every man coming into the world. The other comforter was the true light which lightens every man coming into the world. They were three lights which make up one light'. He continues to say, 'as the Father and the Son there was never a time when they were not, so is the Holy Spirit'. In creation the Holy Spirit was there together with the Father and with the Son. Peter, James and John, they are all males and they are human beings, but they can never be one and on the same level as the Trinity. Gregory of Nazianzus in the (Fifth Theological Oration 31:XXVIII) says 'this is my position to worship God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, they are regarded as three persons in one Godhead, undivided in honour and glory and substance and kingdom'. But the three are one God, not three gods and none is not a copy of the other. Gregory of Nazianzus sums up the Godhead this way: 'the unoriginate is Father, and that of the unoriginately begotten is Son, and that of unbegotten proceeding or going forth is the Holy Spirit'.

The Father is viewed as the source of both the Son and the Holy Spirit. One is begotten by the Father which is the Son and another proceeds from the Father – the Holy Spirit. But that does not mean there was a time when they originated. The terms begotten and proceeding are used to describe the relationship within the Trinity. Gregory of Nazianzus (oration 31:XXXII) gives the example of the relationship of the sun, ray and light. He says 'neither the ray nor the light is another sun, but they are only effulgence's from the sun, and qualities of essence'.

According to Gregory of Nazianzus in his second theological oration (28) God is viewed as a mystery. He states that it is difficult to conceive of God but to define Him in words is an impossibility (Gregory of Nazianzus oration 28:1V). According to Gregory of Nazianzus it is impossible to express Him adequately, and yet more impossible to conceive of Him. He describes talking about God as a great subject. One of the reasons for the difficulty of comprehending the whole of so great a subject, is that 'the darkness of this world and thick covering of the flesh', plots a way of how to approach the unfathomable subject of God. God will forever be a mystery which human beings cannot come to a point of solving. Human beings will forever realise how limited they are when they try to look into the understanding of who God really is. He had to be forever a mystery because without that element of mystery God is not there, He would no longer be God. Gregory of Nazianzus uses the term that God is the self-existent meaning, He is who He is without a maker. No other exists that is above Him or who can begin to define Him.

Gregory of Nazianzus in *Oration 28:X* says 'God in His nature has no beginning, He is unchanging, He is present, but not visible'. No one can claim He is not there. Gregory of Nazianzus understood that if God is somewhere, He must either be in the universe, or above the universe. He continues to argue that if God is in the universe, then He must be in some part or in the whole. It is Gregory's understanding that there can never be a space and time that captures God. He transcends the transcendent. Therefore God cannot be discovered, but He reveals Himself. In creation at the beginning God was revealing Himself as the Creator. In salvation God revealed Himself as Jesus Christ the Son as the Saviour of humanity.

2.3.3   Gregory of Nyssa

Meredith (2002:2) claim that Gregory of Nyssa was born about '335 AD, in the Roman province of Cappadocia, north east of Turkey (Asia Minor). He was a younger brother of Basil of Caesarea and both brothers and their friend Gregory of Nazianzus. Most of what he stood for was already being covered by Basil his brother and Gregory of Nazianzus. Just like his brother they are from a Christian family which was blessed with ten children, five boys and five girls. Macrina the Younger was their sister and it seems she was influential in the lives of the two brothers. According to Meredith (2002:3) 'apparently Gregory of Nyssa attended none of the great universities of the day, and was entirely dependent upon Basil of Caesarea for his cultural and philosophical training'. Von Campenhausen (2000:115) further says that 'by nature, he was not cut out to be a bishop, but he was a thinker and a philosopher; he had a sharp, observant eye and unusual talent for systematic thinking'. Even though he was dependent on Basil yet Gregory of Nyssa was his own man who never became a monk when his brother and friend became monks. Nevertheless his work is worthy of examination, because each person is unique in approach, point of departure and in emphasis. This section serves to investigate his work on the Holy Spirit, his response to Eunomius (Book11) and concludes with his work 'on the Christian mode of life'.

a.   Response on the Holy Spirit.

Unlike other documents of the Church Fathers, '*the Holy Spirit against the Macedonians*' does not have chapters or verses or any numbering. Gregory of Nyssa's work may be regarded as a process of the consolidation of Basil of Caesarea's and Gregory of Nazianzus' perspectives. He was not shy to pick theological confrontations in theological debate and discussions. He introduced his work 'A*gainst the Macedonians*' by asking 'what then is the charge they bring against us? ' He reveals his two points of reference 'in following the teachings of the Fathers' and also 'we say nothing different from that which Scripture says'. Thus the question to be asked was about the teaching of the Fathers and the teaching of the Scripture about the Holy Spirit. Confession that the Holy Spirit is of the same rank as the Father and the Son, so that there is no difference between them in anything, to be thought or named - that devotion can ascribe to the Holy Spirit, a divine nature. From the Holy Scripture the Church Fathers learned that 'the Holy Spirit is divine'. Gregory of Nyssa

believed with his whole being that they portray nothing that departs from what the Scripture says.

Gregory of Nyssa also suggests the place of 'common sense' which stands for reason or logic, in arguing for the equality and unity within the Godhead in relation to the Holy Spirit. Drawing upon the example of fire, he claims that the heat of the fire is the same at all levels, for no part of it has more intense heat than the others. ' In quality the fire exhibits an invariable oneness with itself in an absolutely complete sameness of activity'. He claims that when fire loses heat, it can no longer be called fire, resulting in a change in name. Just like fire, water is water in all its forms and is never the less, that. ' So deity, as long as it possesses perfection throughout all the properties that devotion may attach to it, by virtue of this perfection in everything good does not believe its name. But if any one of those things that contribute to this idea of perfection is subtracted from it, the name of deity is falsified in that particular sense, and does not apply to the subject any longer' (Gregory of Nyssa's; A*gainst the Macedonians*).

Based on what the Church Fathers and Scripture thought, the Holy Spirit must be accepted as divine because He is 'absolutely good, and omnipotent, and wise, and glorious and eternal'. (Gregory of Nyssa's; A*gainst the Macedonians*). Gregory of Nyssa proclaims that there was never a time where the Trinity was separated. We are not to think the Father did ever part from the Son, nor to look for the Son as separate from the Holy Spirit. According to Gregory of Nyssa 'the Father is called so because of the Son and therefore no one can say Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit'. God is a unity that must never be divided, but in recognising this unity, the plurality needs to be affirmed. This means that the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit had to be known only in a perfect Trinity. Gregory of Nyssa believes that 'the three persons are in closest consequence and union with each other, before all creation, before all the ages, before anything whatever of which we can form an idea' (Gregory of Nyssa's; A*gainst the Macedonians*). This close consequence and union can be supported by the following passages: John 6:44 (NIV) 'no one can come to me (Jesus) unless the Father who sent Me draws him'. The force that pulls people to Jesus is from God the Father. Jesus does not work by Himself, but with God the Father. In John 14:6 (NASB) 'No one comes to the Father but through me (Jesus)". As the Father pulls the people to Jesus, in return Jesus is

the way towards the Father. On the Holy Spirit 1 Corinthians 12:3 (NASB) proclaims that no one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except through the Holy Spirit. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit shall glorifies Him (John 16:14). 'So for this reason the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are part of the one and must never be considered in parts but as a unity' (Gregory of Nyssa's; A*gainst the Macedonians*).

The Cappadocian Fathers concluded that anyone calls himself or herself a Christian must be in a position to worship the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Gregory of Nyssa (Gregory of Nyssa's; A*gainst the Macedonians*) explains that 'he who believes in the Father and receives the Son, but sets aside the majesty of the Spirit, has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel, and belies the name of Christ which he bears'. Then he says 'the Christian is marked by his belief in the Father, Son and Holy Ghost' (Gregory of Nyssa's; A*gainst the Macedonians*).

b. On the Holy Trinity

The Cappadocian Fathers were not advancing their position and suggestions without considering what their opponents were saying. Their opponents charged that they were preaching three separate gods. Gregory of Nyssa indicates that those who contradicted them were 'not supported, by the Scriptures'. Even within his work *On the Holy Trinity* Gregory of Nyssa calls upon the authority of the Scripture as his judge. Here Gregory of Nyssa emphasizes the operation of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit within the community. He states that 'the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit alike give sanctification, and life, and light, and comfort, and all similar graces'. (Gregory of Nyssa *On the Holy Trinity*) The identity operative in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit shows plainly the undistinguishable character of their substance.

In his work, *Not Three Gods,* Gregory of Nyssa gives more evidence of the plurality and the unity of the Godhead where he declares about the operation of God. Firstly, what needs to be recognised is the community of persons within the Godhead and secondly, to recognise that there is never a time when the Godhead was separated. Each person of the Godhead operates within and in the presence of the other persons. But concerning the divine nature, Gregory of Nyssa continues to say, we do not similarly learn that the Father does anything by himself in which the Son does not work conjointly, or again that the Son has any special

operation apart from the Holy Spirit but every operation which extends from God to creation, and is named according our variable conceptions of it, has its origin from the Father, and proceeds through the Son and is perfected in the Holy Spirit. Because the action of each concerning anything is not separate and peculiar, but whatever comes to pass, in reference either to the acts of His providence for us, the universe, comes to pass by the action of the three, yet what does come to pass is not three things (Gregory of Nyssa on not three Gods).

When Jesus was in the world He was both human and divine, but He was never alone. Thinking of Him as having been apart from the divine community pauses the danger of presenting a fragmented God. Jesus is God the Son who is part of the divine triune community, the same with the Holy Spirit that He is divine. Therefore the work of God in salvation was not the work of Jesus Christ apart from the divine community. The oneness of God does not convey singularity, but unity in plurality.

c. Against Eunomius (Book Ц)

The investigation in this work is to see how Gregory of Nyssa continues to reflect on the relationship within the Trinity. His explanation in *Against Eunomius Book 11:2* is that God is 'one and yet not one' nor alone; with regard to essence He is one, but with regard to the attributes indicative of the persons. (*Against Eunomius Book 11*) He also refers to God as being 'divided without separation and united without confusion'.

In *Against Eunomius Book 11:4* Gregory of Nyssa interrogates the words used by Eunomius, 'we believe in the one and only true God, …. one God in nature and in glory, who is without beginning eternally, without end, alone'. When one reads these words without looking behind them or their historical context, there seems to be nothing wrong with them. However Gregory of Nyssa challenges support for the words 'believe in the one and true God' from Scripture. The baptism is in the name of the Father, the Son and in the Holy Spirit, so for Gregory of Nyssa it is wrong to use 'in the one and true God'. It may be concluded that these words were used as a confession during baptism. Gregory's point is that the use of 'the one true God' says nothing concerning the relationship of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. There is truth in the Father, in the Son and in the Holy Spirit. For Gregory of Nyssa, the use of the word one in that context does not refer to unity but denotes the singular.

In *Against Eunomius Book 11* chapter 6 he then shows the unity of the Son with the Father and Eunomius' lack of understanding and knowledge in the Scriptures. Gregory of Nyssa states that Eunomius, in his own words 'having no sharer in Godhead (meaning the Son), no divider of his glory, none who has lot in his power or part in his royal throne, for He is the one and only God, the Almighty, God of gods, King of kings, Lord of lords' reveals that lack f understanding and knowledge of the Scriptures. Gregory of Nyssa notes that Eunomius does not use the title Father or Son or the Holy Spirit but prefers to say God. Gregory of Nyssa makes it clear that it is true that according to the Scriptures that God does not share His glory with anyone. Having said so, the Scripture refers to idols, when it comes to worship.

God has a plurality of persons, but He is one God. That is to say each is part of the unity which admits no other, and recognises no other than the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. During worship, Christians cannot worship the Father, without the Son neither the Son without the Father and the Holy Spirit. Having recognised this plurality of persons, Christians cannot bring anyone else into the service of the Godhead for He is a jealous God. Gregory of Nyssa explains that the Trinity is not a plurality of Gods, but of the persons within the one Godhead. He draws upon Scripture to clarify his point that it is not a partnership, but a unity. For example John 17:10 (NASB) which says 'All things that are mine are yours, and yours are mine…', John 10:30 (NASB) 'I and the Father are one', John 14:9 (NASB) 'He who has seen Me has seen the Father…. '

Gregory of Nyssa argues from Colossians 3:1 (NKJV) that says 'seek those things which are above, where Christ is seated on the right hand of God'. When Eunomius (*Against Eunomius Book 11* chapter 6) lays claim to that God 'having no sharer' found in the passages of Scripture already mentioned above, Eunomius' claims are on shaky ground. The Scripture points to Jesus' words saying 'all things that are Mine are Yours and Yours are Mine' (John 17:10 (NASB). Therefore Jesus is one with God the Father in nature. The glory of the Father is one with the glory of the Son. According to Gregory of Nyssa's (*Against Eunomius Book 11* chapter 6) position 'the Son does not divide the glory of the Father but has the glory of the Father entirely, even as the Father has all the glory of the Son'.

In Colossians 3:1, as already mentioned, Jesus shares the throne with the Father in heaven. Christ is seated at the right hand of God, that is a position of power, and therefore God the

Father shares his power with the Son and the Holy Spirit. There can never be indwelling within the unity without the sharing of everything.

d. The Christian Mode of Life

The articles play an important role in giving some insights about how the Cappadocian Fathers viewed Christian life in relation to God and to other human beings. Gregory of Nyssa (1999:127) explored how a person begins to have a relationship with God. He explained salvation as 'the knowledge of the truth', the 'saving medicine for our souls' that 'humans had given, by the grace of our Saviour'. Gregory of Nyssa's understanding of salvation is not just being born in a Christian home, but something that each human being had to accept or reject. Christianity is not just joining a community of faith, but it is when the illusion beguiling man is dispelled, the dishonouring preoccupation with the flesh is extinguished. In addition salvation is perceived as 'the light of truth where the soul receives the knowledge and makes its way to the divine and to its own salvation' (Gregory of Nyssa 1999:127).

Christianity is life lived in search of the good and acceptable and perfect will of God. For an individual to be able to find the Christian mode of life one needs to understand that it is not just an event, but also a process. In this endeavour it is important to recognise the kind of road leading to this end and to recognise that there are others on that road as well. According to Gregory of Nyssa's (1999:128) explanation this is not an easy road, 'there is some suffering to be endured by those who are going to ascend to the peak of virtue and make their own souls worthy of the reception of the Spirit'. Gregory of Nyssa emphasises the need for the right dogma of faith. By the right doctrine he meant the teaching of the church Fathers, the right interpretation of the Scripture and without doubt, he also meant the confessions of both the Nicene Creed of 325 AD and Constantinopolitan Creed of 381 AD. Since the Cappadocian Fathers were opposed to heresy, it can be concluded that they regarded heresy as poison to the soul. Heresy was also regarded as a plague that kills the soul. For Gregory of Nyssa (1999:128) the right dogma of faith is 'the one that holds the Godhead of the blessed and eternal Trinity, never changing in any way, one in essence, one in glory, known by its will and worshipped under three substances'.

Gregory of Nyssa emphasises the role of baptism in the life of a Christian. He says that 'they make their confession by means of the Spirit which washes us in the stream of the mystery'.

It seems that there were some developments in the interpretation of the meaning of baptism. Gregory of Nyssa (1999:129) seems to insinuate that water baptism and the work of the Holy Spirit in a believer is one and the same thing. He says 'by means of the Spirit which washes us in the stream of the mystery through baptism to those who are worthy'. It seems that the Evangelicals' interpretation of baptism, i. e. dying with Christ, was not emphasised or had not yet developed, but rather it was understood as washing that symbolised sanctification. A person had to confess the Creed as a confession of faith and then be baptised at that very moment. Evangelicals today emphasise the sinner's prayer at the end of the ritual and then declared the person saved. But for the Church Fathers the emphasis was the confession of faith 'I believe in God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit', then came the baptism and after that the person was declared saved and one with the community of faith.

The salvation of a person is defined as a new birth. As stated before no one is born into Christianity but it is a decision a person takes. The question is: How does one continue as a born again person? Gregory of Nyssa (1999:130) advises that 'it is necessary for the soul which has been born again by the power of God to be nurtured by the Spirit in proportion to its age of intelligibility, refreshed by water of virtue and the abundance of grace'. There is a process of growth of the new born baby as the new child is nurtured.

The new birth is also viewed as a process of restoration to a former state of beauty and back to health that was destroyed by sickness, which comes because of disobedience. Like any human child there must be growth from childhood to adulthood. Growing to what kind of adulthood? The born again child does not grow in isolation but along with others. A desire to attain the unity of faith is a sign of growth. Gregory of Nyssa (1999:130) underlines that with the words of Ephesians 4:13-15 (ESV) that say, 'until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the deep knowledge of the Son of God to perfect manhood, to the mature measure of the fullness of Christ'. Growth is towards the knowledge of Christ. The unity of faith is also emphasised. A Christian does not grow in isolation but with others and the unity is found in the head (Jesus is the head of the body the church) to whom the entire body is joined. As the child in faith grows towards Christ, there is also a movement away from the world of sin and disobedience.

Christians live their life of Christianity in a world that does not agree with everything they have become. For that life to be lived victoriously, the Lord from on high enters into an alliance with Christians. Gregory of Nyssa (1999:132) pleads that it is necessary for them to focus their hope on and make their goal the will of God. Going through Gregory of Nyssa's article, one does realise how the role of each member of the Trinity connects with each other for the salvation of human beings: The confession of Jesus Christ as Lord, equal to God, the work of the Holy Spirit in baptism and growth towards the will of God for transformation. For effecting the work of salvation in a believer no member within the Trinity operates in isolation.

It seems that the Cappadocian Fathers believed the goal of salvation was to become divine. Since the Lord from on high enters into an alliance with the born again soul, who was changing who? The process of salvation is the coming together of human beings with God through Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. Since God is above all and all powerful human beings are in a process of change by the power of God, God was in Christ Jesus reconciling the world towards God. The Cappadocian Fathers understood salvation as a process of becoming like God. As human beings are reconciled to God they are empowered to be free from all sinful acts and thoughts to be filled with God and to become the bride of Christ.

Gregory of Nyssa continued using the bride and the bridegroom metaphor, saying to be ready for the union in matrimony the garment had to be changed. He said 'the goal of the soul which honours virginity is to be filled with God and to become the bride of Christ is to enter into an agreement with Him of a lifetime' Gregory of Nyssa (1999:132). For the one longing to be the bride of Christ it is necessary to be like Christ in beauty through virtue as far as possible. The reason why terms and conditions had to apply is because nothing can be united with light unless the light shines upon it. According to Gregory of Nyssa the union between a Christian and Christ, using the bride and groom metaphor (the union in matrimony as the two become one), is a process of ascending to (the Christians are married to Christ) the divine. Changing of the garment is to do away with sinful acts.

The act of changing towards divinity is for the soul not for the body. The body must be looked after because it is God's temple but the soul needs intense guarding more than the

body for the body is regarded as earthly as oppose to spiritual matters. Gregory of Nyssa (1999:137) likens the guarding to be of a general calling to his men and giving orders. So the body needs to be under control and submission. Jesus dwells in the heart through faith. It is not only Jesus who dwells in a human being. The Holy Spirit (1999:142) dwells in a pure and blameless soul that is removed from evil, wickedness and shamefulness. Gregory of Nyssa (1999:142) indicates that the soul that hates sin, becomes united with God, and is transformed and receives the grace of the Spirit. All these activities are work done by God to a believer. Human beings with faith in God turn to God. It is the turning towards God that gives an individual the power to turn away from sin. Gregory considers the word of God to be a holy sword, powerful enough to fend off the devices of the enemy.

A Christian who is indwelled by God has a responsibility to love and serve his/her fellow Christians. Gregory of Nyssa (1999:146) argues that Christians need to 'put aside all hatred and stubbornness towards your brothers'. Christians have 'to continue to admonish and encourage one another and must be in a position to bring medicine for the need of each other like a good physician'. In that regard, Jesus is pictured like a good physician and Christians are to resemble Him. Paul recommends in Philippians 2:4 (KJV). 'look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others'. This kind of life for the Christian community where there is what Gregory of Nyssa (1999:147) calls simplicity and harmony will be like living as angels, serving others with humility as to the Lord.

It is Gregory of Nyssa's (1999:148) understanding that this kind of love is not of this world. It is the love that a person obtains from having communion with God. Deuteronomy 6:5 (KJV) says 'thou shalt love the Lord thy God…. ' How does one love the Lord? Gregory of Nyssa (1999:148) points out Proverbs 2:4-5 (NIV). A person needs to search for God with all his or her being, and understanding the fear of God will make it possible for one to love one's neighbour. He says the first and greater need (that of loving and fearing Him) is obtained through suffering, and the second and the lesser need (loving one's neighbour) follows the first with less toil. Without loving God and fearing Him, a person becomes a victim of Satan and his tricks and may become too weak to love his or her neighbour.

 A saved, born again person is a praying person. According to Gregory of Nyssa (1999:153) 'the zeal for prayer brings much grace and that the Spirit itself dwells in souls'. When a

person is indwelled by God it becomes easy for that individual to pray because God gives utterance. Gregory of Nyssa (1999:154) maintains that 'the harvest of pure prayer is simplicity, love, humility, strength, lack of evil, and that harvest is for this present time and the one to come'. In addition prayer 'gives a believer more oil in the lamp as the church waits for the bridegroom'. Christianity is not only waiting for something to happen somewhere in the future, but it is also about producing fruits in the present. So Christianity is not just to exist, it is also living a life with Jesus and with others in this present.

CHAPTER 3: REFLECTION ON THE CAPPADOCIAN FATHERS AS A LINK TOWARDS ATR

This section begins with an evaluation of the opinions of Beeley (2010) and Crisp (2005) in comparison with the way Africans debate the Trinity of God. Kombo (2009), Nyamiti (1996) and Ogbonnya (1994) have attempted to wrestle with the topic of the Trinity, from an African perspective.

Beeley (2010:90) in his article titled T*he Holy Spirit in the Cappadocians: Past and Present*, was concerned that many of the twentieth century theologians focused overwhelmingly on Christological projects at the expense of the Holy Spirit. Some of the reasons stated by Beeley (2010:90) are the 'lack of sufficient attention to the Holy Spirit and the overemphasis on church structures and authority over individual charisma and grassroots religious movements'. But he took notice that the rise of Pentecostalism and also the move of the Holy Spirit within the mainline churches had called new attention to the work of the Holy Spirit.

Beeley (2010:91) argues that most theologians of this age have continued to make two serious mistakes when reading the Cappadocian Fathers. The first one according to Beeley (2010) is the little attention that is paid to the historical context and the second limitation is that of viewing Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa as a tight knit group engaged in a common theological endeavour. These two 'mistakes' influence one another. According to Zizioulas (1995:45) the historical context is important to put one in a position to understand the contribution of the Cappadocians to the doctrine of the Trinity.

3.1 Reflections on the theology of the Cappadocian Fathers

Beeley (2010:91) points out that Basil was associated with Eustathius of Sebaste, who was Basil's spiritual mentor in the 360s. Around the 370s Eustathius played an influential role in a group called the Pneumatomachians. The Pneumatomachians were a heretical sect which began to have an impact during the latter half of the fourth and the beginning of the fifth century. Macedonius is regarded to have been the founder of this heretical sect. Macedonius denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit. The Nicene Creed defended the Homo-

ousios of the Son with words like 'from the substance of the Father, God of God, Light of light and God of God'. But of the Holy Spirit the Creed just said 'we believe in the Holy Spirit', without any qualification. In the absence of any qualifying words for the Holy Spirit, the Macedonians took advantage, claiming that He was not divine. Athanasius in 362 AD as well as Basil in 374 AD condemned the Pneumatomachians. Both Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa wrote against this sect. From Basil's time to the present time theologians have debated whether Basil did move away completely from the Pneumatomachians, or not. The shift would be from being a *homoi-ousian* to being a *homo-ousian*. Of course the side taken may depends on one's own intention; people may fabricate their own interpretation rather than extracting a sound interpretation. Around 360 AD Basil had to deal with the 'radical subordinationalism' of Eunomius (Beeley 2010:92). Eunomius claimed that the Holy Spirit was third in nature to the Father and that the Son and was a creature. Thanks to the Cappadocian Fathers who clarified the position of the Holy Spirit within the trinity. The Cappadocians were able to refute those who regarded the Holy Spirit lesser in status. Beeley (2010:92) says that Eunomius agrees that the Spirit is third in rank in dignity of the Father and the Son. Basil denied that the Holy Spirit is third in rank and a creature. Basil, as observed by Beeley (2010:92), concluded that the Spirit was divine in nature, infinite in greatness, mighty in works and good in blessings. Not only was the Spirit holy and good in Himself, but just like the Son He was in communion with both the Father and the Son and they were all together before the beginning of time. This communion is described with words like 'which dwells with', 'inseparable' in 'union' and 'unity'. However Beeley (2010:93) noticed that Basil 'does not say that the Spirit possesses the same nature as the Father and the Son'. Basil does not share the *homo-ousian* ontology of Athanasius, still less that of his brother Gregory of Nyssa or Augustine. Basil is also construed by Beeley (2010:94) to be stating the Spirit's divinity chiefly in itself – subsistent goodness and life rather than in its possession of the goodness and life of God the Father.

Beeley (2010:95) has some problems and limitations about Basil's position as stated above: He is 'not clear about the Spirit's nature and divinity'. Another pitfall is that when the Son is compared to the Holy Spirit, it seems as if Basil puts more emphasis on the Son than on the Holy Spirit. Basil deliberates more on the communion between the Father and the Son, while only indirectly implying the presence of the Holy Spirit is. He is blamed for his choice of the

language of 'essence' for the Spirit that 'unlike the Father'. This kind of language is regarded to be *homoi-ousian*. Words like begotten are used readily in reference to the Father and Son but not to the Holy Spirit. Beeley (2010:95) observes that in *De Spirito Sancto* Basil argues that it is better to say the Spirit dwells 'with' the Father and Son, rather than 'in' them. Thus Basil said too little about what he made of the Spirit's origin and relation to God the Father.

Beeley's (2010:97) reflection on Basil focuses on his work on sanctification and asceticism. Basil perceives the Holy Spirit as more of a helper with Christian sanctification than the actual cause thereof. The Spirit is referred to as some catalyst/agent which mixes with the soul like dye in wool or heat in iron, which causes sins to manifest and the iron to be purified. Though on the other hand Basil turns around and states that the Spirit will not mix with the unworthy, only with those who have already been purified.

Reflecting on Gregory of Nazianzus, Beeley (2010:99) observes that Gregory specifically articulated the divinity of the Holy Spirit. Beeley (2010:99) makes it clear that his readers have to notice how Gregory of Nazianzus differs from Basil, especially in regard to the divinity of the Holy Spirit. Beeley already revealed about their friendship (between Basil of Caesarea and Gregory of Nazianzus) and they were not automatically identical or in agreement in all matters. Beeley (2010:99) continues his evaluation and states that Gregory of Nazianzus' pneumatology is distinct from Basil's in several key aspects, as their famous disagreement on whether or not to call the Spirit God reveals.

Gregory of Nazianzus, as recognised by Beeley (2010:101) believed that the divinity of the Son and the Spirit is the same as that of the Father. Gregory of Nazianzus is credited with deeming more that the Godhead was monarchical rather than a generic. Because the Father eternally conveys His divinity to the Son and the Spirit in generating them, Beeley (2010:101) points out that Gregory of Nazianzus affirmed that the Spirit is consubstantial (*homo-ousios*) with the Father. We can therefore conclude that Gregory of Nazianzus was persuaded of the idea of consubstantiality (*homo-ousios*) with the Father. We can further conclude that Gregory of Nazianzus was enthusiastic about the consubstantiality of the Holy Spirit with the Father and that that is what distinguished him from Basil. Beeley (2010:102) credits Gregory of Nazianzus with being the first to define the Spirit mode of generation specifically as a 'procession or going forth' from God the Father, as distinct from the Son's begetting.

Gregory of Nazianzus preserves the words 'only begotten' for reference to the Son, and when he uses the term 'procession' from the Father, it refers to the Holy Spirit sharing His divinity with the Father. According to Beeley (2010:102) Gregory of Nazianzus uses 'procession' or 'going forth', to distinguish the Father from the Son (because their generation is different).

As Beeley states, the Cappadocian Fathers must not be regarded as a unit because there are some distinguishing factors. Beeley (2010:104) argues that the difference between Gregory of Nazianzus' theological method and that of Basil and Gregory of Nyssa, who believed that the Biblical proof of the Spirit can be objectively foundational, is significant and far-reaching. Basil insinuated that purification depended on the ability of human beings fighting for purity, but Gregory of Nazianzus insisted that purification was based on the power of the Holy Spirit alone. Beeley (2010:104) regards Gregory of Nazianzus as having a clear and more robust doctrine of grace, and that suggests that his pneumatology is more clearly soteriological.

Beeley (2010:104) draws the conclusion that Gregory of Nazianzus offers the strongest and most comprehensive doctrine of the Spirit among the three Cappadocians, and that Gregory of Nazianzus had a stronger sense of the reality of the knowledge of God and the Holy Spirit than any other fourth-century theologian.

Beeley's (2010:105) judges Gregory of Nyssa's pneumatology on the whole as less substantial than either Basil's or Gregory of Nazianzus' pneumatology. An evaluation of Gregory of Nyssa marked him as being more closely associated with the Antiochian network of Mellitus than with either Basil or Gregory of Nazianzus. The link with the Antiochian had an influence on Gregory of Nyssa's Christology. Beeley (2010:106) indicates that Gregory of Nyssa paid little attention to the definition of the Spirit's procession. Another important reflection is that after the death of Basil, Gregory of Nyssa confessed that the Spirit was God and consubstantial with the Father. Beeley (2010:106) also points out that Gregory of Nyssa departs from Basil in confessing that the Spirit exists and works along with the Father and the Son.

3.1.1   The Cappadocians and the future of Pneumatology

Beeley (2010:108) gives preference to Gregory of Nazianzus. He claims that he stands out as the premier theologian of the Spirit in the fourth century and as one of the main authorities in all of Christian Tradition. Beeley views Basil as more Trinitarian and ascetically more robust than both the Gregory's. He judges Gregory of Nyssa's pneumatology as having been diminished due to his Platonist metaphysics and spirituality. As stated above when one engages with Cappadocian pneumatology, and Beeley (2010:108) recommends, it is best to start with Gregory of Nazianzus and to complement that with 'harmonious' elements from Basil and Gregory of Nyssa. Beeley (2010:108) also notes that the Nicene/Constantinopolitan Creed affirms that the Holy Spirit be worshipped and glorified with the Father and the Son, but it was silent on Him being God, or of one being, consubstantial with the Father. Therefore, Beeley's view is that the language of the Creed reflects the doctrine of Basil and Gregory of Nyssa more than that of Gregory of Nazianzus or that of Athanasius.

3.1.2   The Union of God and Man in Jesus Christ

Wesche (1984:83) focuses and reflects on Gregory of Nazianzus' engagement with the two natures of Jesus Christ. The challenge that faced the church Fathers was 'the matter of duality of natures in one person; the section in the analysis of Gregory of Nazianzus of the union of the divine and human natures of Jesus Christ and the theological insight which is evinced in his solution forms the subject of this study' (Wesche 1984:84). Gregory of Nazianzus was responding to Apollinarius and the Antiochians. For Apollinarius the term *hypostasis* is the same as *prosopon* and he preferred *prosopon* when dealing with the Trinity. Thus Apollinarius holds that the concept of nature governs the concept of person.

In Moses' time God wanted a tabernacle so that He might dwell among his people. In Jesus, Who is one with the Father, God came to human beings as a human being and dwelt with them as a human being. It was God reaching out to his people to reconcile the world to Himself. The question is whether the nature or the person of Jesus Christ was more influential in this. In the article by Wesche (1984) it seems that Gregory of Nazianzus was changing the terms used by Apollinarius to give a more accurate account. Wesche (1984:85) points out that Apollinarius' notion of the relationship between nature and person, the significance of which lies, not so much in that they are improperly distinguished than but in

that the essence or nature possesses the individual person. The problem is that the person subordinate to nature becomes constrained within the limits of nature. The interpretation of Apollinarius by Wesche (1984:85) is that he can only conceive of *prosopon* as being composed of one *ousia*, one nature, precisely because *prosopon* was derived from *ousia*. If Christ had two complete natures, He would be two *prosopoi*, two *hypostases* and two persons. In the previous chapter a lot has been said concerning Apollinarius. In this section the interest is on Wesche's (1984) reflections, especially regarding the response of Gregory of Nazianzus.

It seems that the main argument is to use philosophical concepts, and categories which are appropriate for the nature and person of Jesus Christ. The suitability of the terms employed needs to be aligned with the purpose of the incarnation. The incarnation was God's way to deal with the enemy called sin. Sin as a plague had infiltrated the entirety of humanity. Thus salvation is not simply revelatory to correct an essential ignorance, but it is a cleansing which must touch every aspect of human nature, especially the mind (Wesche 1984:89). God did this in the incarnation, when divinity and humanity met. Christ had to assume the entire nature of being human in order to save entirely. The debate between Gregory of Nazianzus and Apollinarius was based on the matter of incarnation. Apollinarius suggested that salvation is only the liberation of the mind 'from the flesh'. In Wesche's work (1984:91), he argues that for Gregory of Nazianzus the mind too needs salvation.

Jesus was fully God and fully human. The two natures accommodated each other, for that reason neither nature was denied the space of expression at the expense of the other. Being confronted by the reality of human sin and the incarnation, the Church Fathers had to respond to the reality of the two natures (divine and human) and what impact they had on the person of Jesus Christ. Wesche's (1984:93) discernment of Gregory of Nazianzus on the two natures of Christ is that His relationship with God and man at once means that at the deepest ontological level there can be full communion between God and man. Jesus Christ, who is one with the Father in the incarnation, is the one in whom the two natures converged in one person in order that God may bring humanity into His oneness. Jesus is from three *hypostases* of one *ousia*, to one *hypostasis* of two *ousia,* yet his being a person did not subordinate his divinity to human nature. Therefore Wesche (1984:94) perceived that

Gregory of Nazianzus on the ontological level set *hypostasis* as being in agreement with the philosophical distinctions made in the sixth century that *hypostasis* was not a product of nature. It is that in which nature exists, the very principle of its existence.

3.1.3 Problems with Perichoresis

Perichoresis (or *circumincessio*) according to the Catholic Encyclopaedia (www.Newadvent. org/fathers) is the term that was used by the Church Fathers, first by Gregory of Nazianzus and later John of Damascus explored the term further. The word perichoresis (*circumincessio*) refers to the mutual inter-penetration and indwelling within the threefold nature of the Trinity, God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Catholic Encyclopaedia (www.newadvent.org/fathers) explains the word as based in *homo-ousia* which refers to inter-communication and unconfused and inseparable nature. But the word must not be confused with co-inherence, because co-inherence refers to the two natures of Jesus Christ.

Perichoresis can refer to the Trinity and to incarnation. Crisp (2005:119) in his paper says that '*perichoresis* is the notion that the two natures of Christ and the persons of the Trinity somehow interpenetrate one another, yet without confusion of substance or commingling of nature'. Crisp's (2005:120) paper is an attempt to make sense of these two applications of the doctrine of *perichoresis* to the incarnation and Trinity. Crisp (2005:120) notes that it is impossible to have a precise analysis of *perichoresis,* with regard to the *hypostatic* union, or the ontology of the Trinity, because the Trinity and incarnation are divine mysteries. For this reason the issue needs to be approached with respect and humility.

3.1.4 Nature-Perichoresis

Crisp (2005:130) says that 'nature-perichoresis involves an asymmetrical relation between the two natures of Christ'. Thus the divine nature of Christ interpenetrates his human nature without confusion and without being mingled with it. The human nature does not however interpenetrate the divine. Just as the divine nature interpenetrates the whole of creation, sustaining it and upholding it at each moment of its continued existence, the divine nature of Christ interpenetrates the human nature of Christ, upholding and sustaining it at each moment of its existence.

3.1.5 The role of Philosophy

Historical events, especially the Exodus, the journey to the Promised Land, the receiving of the Law and the covenant made between God and Israel, created a way of thinking and specific vocabulary for Israel. These historical events also set out a way of life for Israel. For this reason Israel did not speculate about the being of God because the beginning of all wisdom was to fear the Lord. According to Pryor (2005: online mp) Israel in that context did her theology by way of worship. The highest form of worship is to study the law that God commanded in order to obey Him. Although Africans do not have the historical aspect of God's revelation, they too do not ask if God exists. It is an uncontested given. Many years after the Exodus, God was still saying to the Israelites: that He was the God who took them out of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. (Judges 6:8; 1 Samuel 10:18 and Micah 6:4) The church at the beginning from its Judaist background was able to articulate the event of Jesus Christ based on the historical background of Israel. But when the gospel moved away from the Jewish setting to a Hellenised world, the same truth had to be told but in a Greek setting.

The Hellenised world was the world of Roman and Greek gods and philosophy. Christianity took the Jewish God out of the holy place in Jerusalem to the ends of the world. Christianity had to respond to a new setting of many gods and philosophy. Zizioulas (1995:50) argues that a careful study of the Cappadocian Fathers reveals that they were as obsessed with Greek philosophy as the heretics were. He continues to explain that the doctrine of the Trinity offered the occasion to the Cappadocians to express their distance from Platonism both explicitly and implicitly and thus introduce a new philosophy.

The Cappadocians used terms like 'the cause of divine existence is the Father', and developed the *homo-ousios* further to emphasise the position of the Father as the cause of divine being. Zizioulas (1995:51) points out that 'by making the Father the only cause of divine existence the Cappadocian Fathers aimed at understanding freedom in ontology, something that Greek philosophy had never done before'.

Zizioulas (1995:49) analysed the term (Of the essence of the Father) used by Athanasius in the Nicene Creed with that of Gregory of Nazianzus in the Creed of Constantinople (Being of

one substance with the Father), especially on the substance or essence of God the Father one with the Son. The English translation of the Nicene Creed says:

Of the essence of the Father

or

Of the same substance as the Father

The translation of the Constantinopolitan Creed is:

Being of one substance with the Father

or

Of one essence with the Father

Zizioulas (1995:51) indicates that Gregory of Nazianzus, who was chairperson during the Council of Constantinople, changed the wording of the Creed of Nicene where it says 'from the substance of the Father (*ek tes ousias tou patros*) to 'from the Father' (*ek tou patros*) In other words the Son is not from the substance but from the person who is the Father.

The other term that was employed by the Greek Fathers in the explanation of the oneness of God is *monarchia*. Zizioulas (1995:52) explains that 'the one *arche* in God came to be understood ontologically, that is in terms of origin of being, and was attached to the person of the Father'. Zizioulas, as pointed out before, says, 'one God' referred to the person of the Father rather than to one substance. It is clear that the emphasis of the Greek Fathers is on the 'person'. Zizioulas (1995:52) adds that 'if we wish to follow the Cappadocians in their understanding of the Trinity in relation to monotheism we must adopt an ontology which is based on personhood, that is on the unity or openness emerging from relationship, and not of substance, that is of the self-existent and in the final analysis individualistic being'.

Zizioulas (1995:52) regards the Cappadocian Fathers as 'revolutionary thinkers in the history of philosophy'. The Greek philosophers gave priority to the one over the many. Zizioulas explains that on the theological level the predominant pagan Greek philosophy, namely Neo-Platonism, at the time of the Cappadocian Fathers, had identified the one God Himself. Considering the multiplicity of beings, the many were understood to be emanations of a basic degrading nature. So the return to the one God through the recollection of the soul, was thought to be the purpose and aim of all existence. Before Philo and the influence of

Platonism and Neo-Platonism concerning the priority of the 'One' over the 'many' one needs also to consider the Shema where there is the 'One' of Judaism. In Jewish Theology there is only one Holy God and beside Him there is no other. The Cappadocian Fathers had to harmonise the 'Jewish oneness with what the Christian had done in worship of that one God alongside Jesus in that oneness with the philosophical interpretation answering philosophical questions and re-appropriating that oneness of God in the light of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit'. They re-appropriated the one by giving priority to the person rather than to nature. The 'One' was regarded as the cause and the source of the 'many' (Trinity). Zizioulas (1995:53) remarks that instead of following the classical Greek thinking 'where human in all diversity and plurality of persons was subject to nature because nature or substance always preceded the person' the Cappadocians were writing their own philosophy. In the philosophy of the Cappadocians it is the 'One' who gives human beings their significance in their existence. That may also mean the life of a human being cannot be based on the interpretations of the stars but on the relationship with God. That is freedom.

3.1.6   On the Anthropological Consequences

Human beings were created by God the Father in the image of God. Because humans have been created they live life within the limitations of a creature but that life is lived according to the will of God. There is the being as nature and the being as a person, this is related with the way human beings are. Zizioulas (1995:55) gives clarity that 'the distinction made by the Cappadocians Fathers between nature and person or mode of existence needs to be considered in order to understand the imago Dei'. One had to consider that nature stood for what human beings live for and the person stood for the how of life. The human nature was regarded as passing, leading an individual to decomposition and to death. But the person was regarded as God's image to live life being free from the substance being united with God. The kind of life one lived was based on the person not nature, as an image of God living as God's will leads towards glorification.

Paul might have been influenced by this understanding when writing the letter to the Romans while he was at Corinth 'O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of this death' (Romans 7:24). He continued to state that those who are in Christ Jesus must not walk according to the flesh but after the Spirit. The emphasis is the freedom of the

person from nature because the person precedes nature. It's free from nature because the person is united with the Father by the Spirit.

Zizioulas (1995:56) draws the following conclusion from the discussion and reflection on the philosophical approach by the Cappadocian Fathers.

- The person is not a secondary but a primary and absolute notion in existence the person cannot be sacrificed or subjected to any ideal, to any moral or natural order, or to any expediency or objective even of the most sacred kind. Human being as a person must assume absolute freedom from the environment. Human being was not created for the environment but the environment to serve the person.

- The person cannot exist in isolation. God is not alone, He is in communion. God is not singular because no one can love without an object to love. God is love and love is not a feeling, but it is a relationship. In the words of Zizioulas (1995:56) love is a free submission to the will of another. He continues to say it is the other and our relationship with Him that gives us our identity, our otherness, making us to be persons, for by being an inseparable part of a relationship that matters ontologically we emerge as unique and irreplaceable entities. As a person you exist as long as you love and you are loved. This has a similar understanding of the African concept of Ubuntu (humanity) that says 'I am because of others'.

- The person is something unique and unrepeatable. Nature is never unique only when nature is hypostatic or personal, as is the case with God, does it exist truly and eternally.

The following insight can be drawn from Harrison (1991:64) as his contribution on *Perichoresis* in the Greek Fathers. The mutual indwelling indicates that the persons of the Trinity give themselves to each other in love. He says they are united to the other in mutual self-giving. There is also emphasis on the relationship among the persons in eternal rest with each other but also an eternal movement of love. Thus Harrison is in agreement with Zizioulas (1995) about focus on the relations of origin which constitute the Trinity and that the *hypostases* are truly personal and also that God is truly love.

3.2   The Role and Position of the Bible in Africa

The Scriptures played an essential and profound role in the formation of the church as a fulfilment of scripture and the worship of Jesus together with the Father in relation to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The study of the Church Fathers recognised the writing of the apostles as the authority over their theological speculations. The Church Fathers preserved the New Testament as it is today. One may say they were trying to find coherence and consistence within the Jesus of faith and the Jesus of history. The writings of the apostles were a necessity to the Church Fathers and the church at large because they saw Jesus in His human form and in His glory after the resurrection. When Christianity, Church and the Bible were introduced in Africa, how and what role did Scriptures play?

Most theologians who have written about the African church and Christianity warn that one has to recognise the reality of the African context to do theology there. The term 'African context' is a loaded term, because it includes culture, religion and socio-political realities. According to Isichei (2004:4) where culture is concerned one has to recognise that 'African languages had no word for religion after the closest synonym was something like "the way of the ancestors"'. One may ask how true the statement is because religion and worship is as old as the history of human beings. Maybe it could be argued that the meaning of religion may differ from one nation to the other. The difference had to be based on the objects of worship. Isichei (2004) also recognises that all converts to Christianity in Africa have allegedly come from 'Traditional Religion'. When she says all converts to Christianity, is it at the time of the first arrival of missionaries, when black preachers like Tile and others started their black churches or with the formation of Pentecostal churches in Africa? Another observation by Isichei (2004:4) is that African religions have much in common with the culture of the Bible, including an emphasis on spiritual paths for physical and mental healing, and on dreams and visions. The specific examples given are the detailed prohibitions of Leviticus where there are parallels in the ritual restrictions typical to African cultures. One notes with interest that the commonality is based on issues of culture without trying to locate the main emphasis on the Bible as God's self-revelation.

Ukpong (2000) points out that some foundation in the church was laid through the historical names especially in Alexandria, Yet there were some changes as developments from

allegorical interpretation to historical-critical hermeneutic in the eighteenth century took place. This development was followed by literary approaches of the twentieth century. But Ukpong (2000) also observes that even in Africa there was a move from Origen's allegorical method to postmodern and postcolonial periods. He notes that Biblical scholars in Africa have been able to develop a parallel method of their own. The Christian movement did not spread to spread far enough by the agency of Early African Fathers to have influence from Alexandria down the Nile River to the south of Africa. Christianity came via Europe and North America, mainly, by missionaries. When Ukpong (2000) speaks about Africans devising a method of their own it is not in reaction to the Church Fathers of Alexandria but against the methods of Europe and North America. One may ask 'what is this African method? ' According to Ukpong (2000:4) the particular characteristic of this method is the concern to create an encounter between the Biblical text and the African context. Here the context is that of African communities interpreting the biblical text through their experiences. It suggests that the communities bring their experiences into the text, in other words they bring their interpretation rather than taking the interpretation out of the text. It seems as if African theologians and scholars may have moved away from their fellow Africans who were at the forefront of grappling with the Christian doctrine of God during the Early Church. Instead of searching for how the Early Church especially Africans dealt with the Scriptures they responded to Western missionaries.

Ukpong (2000:4) points out that in Africa, academic reading of the Bible, has development in three phases. Phase one was from 1930 to 1970, during the time when African culture was being condemned as demonic and immoral. As stated in the first chapter the blame for the demonization of African culture has been directed towards European and North American missionaries. Ukpong (2000:5) indicates that this was done by way of comparative studies carried out within the framework of comparative religion. These comparative studies were based on studies of the rituals and cultures of people in the Old Testament. One needs to be aware and to take notice that these theological discussions, reflections and deliberation took place without identifying God as the main character of the discussion.

The next phase took place between the 1970s to the 1990s. Ukpong (2000:7) regards this as the most dynamic and rewarding of Biblical studies in Africa. Here also the African context

was central with the introduction of terms likes (enculturation) and liberation. First there were some encounters and confrontations between African and European cultures when African religion meets Christianity. Then African culture was regarded as 'praeparatio evangelica', (here was an attempt to draw some similarity between the relationship of Judaism and Christianity with ATR and Christianity). African culture and religion became fertile ground for Christianity. Ukpong (2000:7) further indicates that a desire had been generated to make Christianity relevant to the African religio-cultural context and gave rise to the enculturation movement in theology. Enculturation, he says, is about Africa-in-the-Bible studies and evaluative studies on the role that was played by Africans and Africa towards the development of Bible studies. This became the centre of studies. Moses who became the most powerful leader was born in Africa and was educated in all the wisdom of Egyptians. For first 40 years of his life, Moses was known as a prince in Egypt.

In his work, Ukpong (2000) discusses inculturation in reference to Black Theology, feminist hermeneutics, and liberation hermeneutics. Some of these approaches to theology in Africa have been mentioned already in the first chapter. Then theology began moving towards phase three which is regarded to be from the 1990s onwards. Here the discussion is focussed on what is known as contextual Bible studies. Black Theology and African Theology are part of contextual Bible study. The emphasis as explained by Ukpong (2000:15) is that 'the Bible is read against a specific concrete human situation. The human situation is that of racial oppression and poverty in South Africa, within the context of faith, and with a commitment to personal and social transformation and may have a political motive without a spiritual motive'. Within these discussions people became the driving force of the transformation. More clarity on enculturation or inculturation as a driving force to theology is essential.

3.2.1   Cultural Anthropology

It is proper at this point to make some comments concerning culture and Christianity from an anthropological Christian perspective. Grunlan and Mayers (1988:38) states that 'culture is one of the features that separate humans from lower animals. Of all God's creature's only humans are cultures bearing. ' That means humans occupy the highest level in the animal kingdom. According to Berger (1990:3) society is a product of man (human beings). He

continues to say that society was there before the individual was born and it will be there after he or she has died. While Grunlan and Mayers (1988:40) view society as a social organization made up of a group of people who share a geographical area and culture. Society and culture are part of each other. Grunlan and Mayers say that 'society and culture are interdependent concept. There can never be society without culture and society needs culture to make a living, both culture and society are human products. ' For Berger (1990:4) human beings are 'unlike the other higher mammals, who are born with an essentially completed, organism, but are curiously unfinished at birth'. A human being is born as a human being but also needs to be trained and made to learn how to be a human being. According to Berger (1990:4) 'essential steps in the process of finishing man's development, which have already taken place in the foetal period for the other higher mammals, occurs in the first year after birth'. How do other mammals enter the world compared to human beings? Berger (1990:5) says 'the non-human animals enter the world with highly specialised and firmly directed drives'. That means there is a world of animals and another world for human beings. There is a world which human beings are born into it and another world that is made by the humans.

It is the human activities that produce the human-made world. Berger (1990:5) insists that man (human) must make a world for himself or herself. As a human makes the world he or she builds up relationships with that world and other world builders. Berger (2990:5) says 'human beings' existence is an on-going balancing act between human and his or her body, human and his or her world'. That world is culture.

According to Grunlan and Mayers (1988:39) Culture is composed of cultural traits and cultural complexes. Cultural traits are the smallest units of culture, individual acts such as a wave, a smile or saying hi.

3.2.2   Enculturation

From an anthropological perspective Grunlan and Mayers (1988:71) assert that 'human infants do not possess culture at birth. They have no conception of the world, no language, nor a morality. They are uncultured, unsocialised persons'. The process, by which an individual learns the traditional content of a culture and assimilates its practices and values, is called enculturation. Grunlan and Mayers (1988:72) say 'society does whatever is

necessary to aid one of its members in learning proper and appropriate behaviour for any social setting and in meeting the demands of any challenge'. Some writers on the African interpretation of scripture use the word enculturation. According to Tlhagale (1998:1) 'enculturation in the context of Christian religion denotes the use of African culture as a medium of communicating the gospel message. It seeks to give a purified meaning, in conformity with Christian truth, to African practices'. Ukpong (1996) wrote an article titled '*Rereading the Bible with African eyes'*, in which he proposed that reading the Bible in a way determined by context is the way the Bible is to be interpreted. He calls it enculturation, which is making the Word of God come alive and become active in contemporary African society and in the lives of individual Christians within their socio-cultural context.

It has been noted that sometimes there is a confusion concerning terms like inculturation, indigenization, and contextualisation. Costa (1988:IX) advanced that 'inculturation, indigenisation, and contextualisation are distinct and related concepts. Because they are related and because they point to dynamic cultural and social phenomenon, they are often used synonymously'. So Costa (1988) titled his book, *One Faith, Many cultures, inculturation, indigenisation and contextualisation,* he used the words (*inculturation, indigenisation and contextualisation*) as a unit. He gives some example where Paul a Jew who is a Pharisee quoted Greek poetry as the Word of God to help the Greeks. Yet Costa (1988:XII) tries to explain each word when he says, 'inculturation, indigenization, and contextualisation are evangelistic-apologetic concepts; inculturation and indigenisation are apologetic methods focused on the translation/interpretation of a received text for a given culture, whereas contextualisation sees this translation/interpretation as a dialectical process in which text and context are interdependent'.

The other word that is utilised is Africanisation. According to Martey (1994:63) word Africanisation was coined in reference to political activities in Africa during the era of liberation struggle, not to church activities. That means the word has some political connotations and motivations. Since the church was politicised in Africa the church began using terms like liberation, to confront political realities facing the African people. But it seems there was a different meaning and approach between African Catholics and African Protestants. Martey (1994:67) argues that 'adaptation and later incarnation had been the

main preoccupation of African Catholic theologians in their Africanisation efforts; in Protestant circles the common expression used had been indigenisation'. With the development of time and through discussions and debates 'by the mid-1980s inculturation was accepted as a theological concept in Africa and is used generically to embrace what is both known as incarnation in Roman Catholic circles and indigenisation in Protestant circles. Inculturation has therefore become the common expression among African Catholics and Protestants, as well as among Francophone and Anglophone African theologians to pursue the phenomenon of Africanisation.

There is a call for especially African theologians to engage with African social and cultural contexts for the purpose of biblical interpretation. Ukpong (1996) urges that, African theologians must make the Word of God alive and they must make it active in contemporary African societies and in the lives of individual Christians within their socio-cultural context. He terms that process an enculturation hermeneutic. But it seem as if it is more about making the African context come alive than the Word of God because the Word of God is always alive. It draws its existence from the revelation of God and what God has done through Jesus Christ His Son.

> *Every interpretation process has these components of interpreter, context, text, conceptual frame and procedure. Making a particular socio-cultural context the subject of interpretation means that the conceptual framework, its methodology and the personal input of the interpreter are consciously informed by the world-view of, and the life experience within that culture (Ukpong 1996:5).*

The reader of the Bible, reads within his or her own context which must never be taken for granted. The socio-cultural context of the reader or interpreter is the point of departure. Enculturation hermeneutics must be done by someone who has acquired knowledge, experience, and the insights of the culture and is also skilled in viewing it critically. The world of the interpreter must evaluate the world of the text. The two worlds need to interact.

The emphasis of an enculturation hermeneutic is the context of the interpreter, not of the writer. The understanding is that words have to be read as if the author was writing within

the context of the interpreter. It seems as if the context of the author, his or her culture, and his or her world are not a point of focus but that of the reader. This approach seems to ignore the fact that the content of the Bible is what God said to the reader within the context of the writer and what He is saying to the reader now. The writer wrote in a language that was understood by the people of his or her time. What Christians read today is a translation, but they want to hear God speak to them in a language that they understand. The context and language of the reader must never alter what God said because of the change of human culture, but what God said must be the authority to judge human behaviour and thoughts.

Most Christians accept the Bible as the Word of God. There is history in the Bible of some individuals and nations and their cultural background, but the main issue is for Christians to find out what God said within that history. God used their history to bring His Word to the entire human race. Reading the Bible, Christians in their private devotion can hear God speak into their lives about personal issues. And since God speaks to believers, they also speak to Him through His words in their prayer life. But with this approach of enculturation it seems culture is what primarily speaks to believers. Culture becomes the standard and the Word of God loses its authority.

Grunlan and Mayers (1988:80) introduce another term, 'acculturation'. Acculturation is the learning of the appropriate behaviour of one's host culture. Their book seems to be a handbook to help missionaries when working outside their cultural context. That is why Grunlan and Mayers (1988:80) say 'effective acculturation allow us to maintain our principles, and yet cope with all the challenges and opportunity of the new culture'. They also compare acculturation with assimilation. 'Assimilation is the more extreme process. It comes from the realisation that one will never return to the society of origin. ' (Grunlan and Mayers, 1988:81). Just like in a marriage where one party joins the other to the extent of even changing surnames.

Grunlan and Mayers (1988:251) have some suggestions of how to view culture in light of biblical authority and cultural relativity. For cultural relativity Grunlan and Mayers (1988:252) say that it is 'the position that ideas, action, and objects should be evaluated by the norms and values of the culture in which they are found rather than by another culture's

norms and values. Also the norms and values of each culture should be evaluated in the light of the culture that they belong to'. Grunlan and Mayers (1988:253) recognise that 'while cultures vary, humankind is one and is responsible to God'. We all belong to the human race. God has revealed Himself to humankind through creation, through the spoken word (prophets and apostles), through the written word, and pre-eminently through the incarnate word, Jesus Christ'. In other words the revelation of God can move from Jerusalem to Samaria and from Samaria to the ends of the world. They give the Bible a very special position above culture. Grunlan and Mayers (1988:258) say 'the Bible as God's word rises above both cultures that are its teachings are superculture'.

The African approach seems to take the position of cultural absolutism or ethnocentrism. The approach takes the position that the African context and African culture is the authority. That approach according Grunlan and Mayers (1988:261) is 'the cultural absolutist or ethnocentric person, while claiming to remain faithful to the bible is actually remaining faithful only to his or her own culture'. In most instances in ATR culture had become point of reference. They view the biblical principles as being acceptable in all the cultures. 'The fact that biblical principles can find their own expression in each culture is another evidence for the inspiration of scripture' (Grunlan and Mayers, 1988:261)

3.2.3   A Biblical Theology in African Context

West (1994:15) understands 'attempts to construct a Biblical Theology', should start by trying to locate the centre or trajectory of the Bible. He is aware that theologians have never agreed on the centre or trajectory whether it is law and grace, or liberation and salvation. Not one theology but many different theologies have been proposed from the Bible. As West (1994:15) confessed, there is no easy path from the Bible to theology. West also regards as a problem theology that arises from outside the Bible. The context of South Africa and the history of the Bible pose a question and dilemma for doing theology. West refers to the well-known story amongst blacks that 'when the white man came to our country he had the Bible and we had the land. The white man said to blacks, let us pray'. After the prayer, the white man had the land and blacks had the Bible. According to West (1994:16) this story clearly points to 'the central position that the Bible has occupied in the process of oppression and exploitation'. The Bible in the hands of the oppressor and in the hands of the oppressed may

suffer by means of manipulation. Each group may try to use the Bible as a means to qualify their ideologies. Within that context the Bible's position was questioned as a tool for doing theology. The historical facts are there and cannot be denied. Many black people in the townships grew up being told that they are born to serve because they are from the generation of Ham. There is a perception that black is bad, Africa as a continent is not poor but Africans continue to be poor. The miracle that needs to be recognised is that no matter how badly black people were oppressed even if it was by white Christians, blacks still became Christians in numbers. The Bible in their hands was not written by the oppressor and was not written with the aim to oppress them.

West (1994:16) argues that the cry of many Christians is that the crisis in South Africa impels us to return to the Bible and to search the Word of God for a message that is relevant to what we are experiencing in South Africa today. He realises that the Bible is important in South Africa no matter what history says. West (1994) began to investigate the role of the Bible in the daily lives of ordinary people in South Africa. West (1994:16) began to explore how Biblical scholars and theologians can work together with ordinary people in doing theology in their South African context. That word again comes to the table 'context'. The article was written in 1994 but it is not clear if it is before or after democratic election. If so, then the context may have changed from apartheid South Africa to a new democratic South Africa. What happens when the same people encounter the same Bible, but in a different context? Do the words change their meaning? If the context of black people in South Africa has changed, will the story still have any significance in the new South Africa where the liberators have become worse than the original oppressors? Too much emphasis on the context may make the massage of the Bible vulnerable to outside influence.

How is the South African context? West (1994:17) explains that there are many different realities within the South African context and many readings of the Bible from these differing realities. Those different realities apply to him too. West is a white, middle-class, Western-African, male Christian. In his mind the South African context may be one where race played a part to divide. Other realities may be a poor church in a township or rural place and another church in town, city or suburb where there are enough resources. But West (1994:17) clarifies that the contextual Bible study process has decided to read the Bible from

a particular perspective within the South African context, the perspective of the poor and oppressed. By the poor and the oppressed he meant those who are socially, politically, economically or culturally marginalised and exploited. Since God is the Father to the Fatherless and a Husband to the widows that may prove that God is concerned with the poor. The challenge is that when the focus is determined by a socio-political agenda it is difficult to discuss the problem of sin and how an individual needs to relate to God. West (1994:19) further deliberates and argues from the gospels that 'Jesus himself was born among the poor and oppressed in Palestine and that he chose to remain with and work among the poor and marginalised and that he died the death of the poor and oppressed on the cross'. It is true that Jesus was among the poor and marginalised but his focus was not based on a social, political, economic or cultural agenda. It was to set the captives free spiritually. For Jesus the poor and the marginalised are evidence of the separation between God and human beings. Jesus came to be the Redeemer by being a ransom.

3.2.4   The Bible as a 'Poison Onion'

Draper (2002) investigates the language that is used when Africans deal with the Bible. Because the missionaries came to Africa after the Reformation, the Bible as a symbol of authority played a significant role both in evangelising and judging actions. But as blacks began to arise and to speak for themselves missionaries were unable to control how blacks used the Bible for themselves. According to Draper (2002:41) 'the Bible dissolved itself into a thousand streams and rivulets of oral tradition and interpretation beyond the power of missionaries and colonial administrators alike'. The indigenous people began to view the Bible as an icon, like a powerful and magical book. There are those who put the Bible under the pillow when they sleep, and others use it as a prophetical tool just like a *sangoma*'s bones. But the same can be said about those who participated in the Great Trek. 'The Bible as an oracle it was repeated, sung, danced, preached, acted out, the Word became African and was experienced as liberating' (Draper, 2002:50). Most of Draper's investigation was based on the AICs like amaNazaretha as they found their own spiritual identity away from white influence.

3.3   Out of Africa

The following names, Origen, Athanasius, and Clement of Alexandria may have been known as Church Fathers who wrote in Greek but they were also Africans. There were also Latin writers like Tertullian, Cyprian and Augustine they were first and foremost Africans. In addition Heisey (1998:35) states that cities like Alexandria were a field of Biblical studies a place where the Old Testament was translated from Hebrew to Greek. The contribution of these African Church Fathers became the foundation and backbone of Christian doctrine. The most remarkable contributions by the Church Fathers from Africa are the two natures of Jesus Christ and the Trinity. There are so many documents that had been preserved by the church both East and West. One wonders why Christianity did not spread down by agency of those north African Church Fathers to their fellow Africans in the south. With all the contribution by Africans, why did the gospel have to come to Africa through European and American missionaries?

Amanze (2001:282) notes how Africa and Africans played a significant role in the Bible. From the time Israel became a nation; in Egypt; to Moses' Ethiopian wife. In Numbers 12:1-10, the Nubian/Cushite soldiers who helped David to capture Jerusalem from the Jebusites and the Sudanese that Joab sent to tell David about the death of Absalom were Africans. There is also the well-known visit of the Queen of Sheba a black African from Ethiopia who visited King Solomon. Amanze (2001) points out that during the reign of King Hezekiah of Judah, around 751-656 BC which was a time when Egypt was governed by Nubians; there was a close alliance with Egypt. Amanze (2001:283) also mentions that during the time of the prophets Jeremiah was once saved from death under King Zedekiah by a Sudanese court official called Ebed-Melek. The reason why the prophet Zephaniah is called son of Cush according to Amanze's speculation, was because his mother was an African. Most of the Wisdom Tradition of the Israelites was borrowed from Egyptians. In the New Testament on the day of Pentecost there were people from Egypt and Libya as recorded in Acts 2:10.

African scholars such as Amanze (2001:286) came to the conclusion 'that in view of the affinity that exists between the cultures of the African people and the culture of the Old Testament it seems plausible to maintain the view that ATRs are a *praeparatio-evangelica* in

their relation to Christianity'. From this background most theologians are in agreement that the missionaries found fertile soil for planting the gospel in Africa.

It is an open secret that the missionaries who came to evangelise Africa were neither from Cyrene, Libya nor Egypt but were from Europe, Britain and North America. That means the gospel for some reason failed to come down from North Africa to the South of Africa. When the missionaries presented the gospel, culture played a certain role in the presentation of the gospel and receiving it. From what has already been discussed in Chapter One, Africans blamed the attitude of the missionaries towards Africans. The response by African theologians and scholars failed to judge the missionaries based on the work that was done by the African Church Fathers both Greek and Latin. Africans failed to recognised the contributions made by African Church Fathers like Athanasius, Clement of Alexandria and Augustine, due the means that were used to bring Christianity in Africa. It seems Europeans and North Americans appreciated the African Church Fathers more than Africans. There is a lot that can be mentioned about the failures of Western missionaries but most of the blame rests on cultural and political agendas.

The challenge for African Traditional Religion is that Africans want to continue with the veneration and worship of ancestral spirits and they still regard ATR as *praeparaetio-evangelica.* Because of the attempt to contextualise the gospel or Christianity, the ancestral spirits have taken the central discussion in theological debate in the name of African culture. The approach has been applied even to Biblical studies and interpretation. The challenge is concerns the discussion about God especially when dealing with the Godhead. How do Africans do theology based on doctrine? It is not that clear what is meant by the assertion that ATR played the role of *praeparatio-evangelica*. The bad attitude of the missionaries and the role of ATR may have both failed to live up to the work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

The understanding is that African Theologies do not want to build a pie in the sky theology but rather to be real to African challenges. That results in a more horizontal rather than vertical approach to theology. The challenge is that when one approaches a theological debate horizontally one may have the challenge of how to account for the vertical view. But the vertical has a way of influencing life on the horizontal level.

3.3.1 Talk about Trinity in Africa

The African perspective of the Holy Trinity is formulated without a clearly defined role and position of Jesus Christ. The human context plays a significant role when doing biblical study, so sin is not viewed in terms the Africans' standing in relation to God but the wrongs that were perpetuated by colonisers and oppressors upon Africans are the focus. Maybe that is the reason not many African theologians attempt to discuss the Triune God. In that regard the study will turn to an investigation of three theologians, namely, Ogbonnaya (1994), Nyamiti (1996) and Kombo (2009) in this section.

3.3.2 Ogbonnaya Communitarian

The work of Ogbonnaya (1994) is titled '*On Communitarian Divinity'. An African Interpretation of the Trinity.* He seems to have attempted to apply his mind to the community which is the basis of relationships for Africans and he makes some links with the plurality of God within the Trinity. According to Ogbonnaya (1994:1) 'communality, relationality and fundamental interconnection underlie the African mode of seeing and being in the world'.

Ogbonnaya (1994), attempts to approach the Trinity from the position of 'many', as in community. The challenge that Ogbonnaya had to face was what kind of community he was discusing. He picked up the concept of relationship from interacting with other scholars. Ogbonnaya (1994:2) speaks of 'rural communities where personal relationships are characterised, explained and guided by traditional rules'. There are face to face relations which are spontaneous. There are also some who view community as events that join people together, not in social groups. Individuals may be connected by the spirit, Ogbonnaya says (1994:4) pointing to a common human nature. There is no community without the past and the future. Historical events are shared by the community which anticipates a common goal for the future, paying attention to an African-centred perspective on community and interpretation.

Ogbonnaya (1994:6) contends that 'it can be seen in terms of levels of activity to be part of the community as understood from an African-centred perspective and there had to be an experience of belonging which is a primary activity'. What it means for an individual and the

community at large is that it is a second level of communal activity. Africans live their lives in continuous contact with the spiritual world. Ogbonnaya (1994:8) acknowledges that 'in the context of African people they are surrounded not by things but by beings the metaphysical world is loaded with'. The implication is that all of humans' activity and realities of life is connected with spiritual beings. In the African context the relationship goes beyond the material world. There is recognition of the extended family and the community, but the relationship transcends geographical boundaries. African life is lived in recognition of the ancestors daily.

The relationship between human beings and their ancestors is recognised as openness to the divine. Ogbonnaya (1994:9) explains further that the community is not just a state but a process of being in the world, a process that includes the past, the present and the future. He states that it is within the context of the community that revelation takes place.

Ogbonnaya (1994:13) in his discussion of African divinity introduced a debate about 'the one and the many'. On the nature of the African concept of God the question is 'does ATR conceive of the divine as an absolute, singular, personalistic God (monotheism) or whether it is conceived of in separatist (polytheistic) terms'. Based on the African concept that says 'I am because we are, and since we are therefore I am', Ogbonnaya (1994:14) conveys that 'the divine in the African context (is) a community of gods'. While it is true that there are two predominant positions in the debate, Ogbonnaya (1994) believes there is the third option. The first position deals with monotheism, the second deals with polytheism. He draws out a third which he calls a community of gods.

Ogbonnaya (1994:19) argues that there is no such thing as 'monotheistic radicalism in ATRs'. He regards that any African who holds the monotheistic position has been influenced by the west. He believes that those scholars with Western influence accept the concept of God as absolutely personalistic and they continue to speak of the high or great God. It is clear that Ogbonnaya (1994) does not believe that ATR follows the worship of one God. He considers the term monotheism to be foreign to ATR. He appears to be dismayed with many African scholars who try to present the existence of an absolute monotheism of a singular personalistic deity in ATRs. He attacks the idea of the Supreme Being because it has a reference to one Superior Person. The use of the name Supreme Being can be used for any

other being based on experience and it does not reveal the character of God. Some kinds of experiences may cause a name change for that Being. Ogbonnaya (1994:18) believes that the greatness of any particular God depends on the experience of the individual addressing that God. He reflects on names like Supreme God, Most High God, Father of all and great ancestor, that are employed as a means to prove monotheism.

This idea of a Supreme God has a negative influence on the worship and recognition of other gods. It seems to be unable to relate and communicate feelings. Since names like Supreme God 'can convey an idea of a God who is incapable of having children or incapable of being in close familiar relationships', according to Ogbonnaya (1994:20) such a one cannot be truly God. He continues to say that 'a god incapable of working within a community of beings of similar substance would be highly suspect'. From the African perspective to be alone is regarded as a sign of being cursed. Hence the understanding from ATR that God cannot be alone or singular because He had to have a community. In trying to avoid the word polytheism Ogbonnaya (1994) uses the term 'a plurality of gods'.

If ATR recognises the worship of other gods is that not the same as polytheism? According to Ogbonnaya (1994:21) 'polytheism is that which separates the divine nature into many disparate parts'. He also suggests that the term polytheism is a Western concept. For Ogbonnaya (1994) the use of the terms monotheism and polytheism does not do justice to ATR. Because monotheism and polytheism are inadequate, Ogbonnaya (1994:23) introduced a third category of 'divine as community', as a more adequate way of conceiving of and explaining divinity in African contexts. He further explains that 'divine communalism is the position that the divine is a community of gods who are fundamentally related to one another and ontologically equal'.

According to the information so far given the two terms, monotheism and polytheism, are inadequate and cannot do justice within ATR. The names that are used like Supreme Being, Holy One, Father of all cannot properly define the African understanding of God and have come about as an influence from the West. To move from monotheism and polytheism the term that seems to define African understanding of God is divine communalism. By bringing in the concept of communalism Ogbonnaya (1994), attempts to bring an understanding of the relationship among the gods and the gods with humanity. Ogbonnaya (1994:24)

indicates that 'plurality is not in opposition to the concept of oneness but it is inclusive of all of the gods'. He says among the gods there can be one who seems to take a significant position but whoever it is must be regarded as part of the many, not in isolation. He says a god does not cease to be of the same nature with other gods even if that god has been chosen to represent the rest; because one god is inextricably related to the other gods by virtue of a divine nature.

The divine community may sound attractive but it may not mean anything. In polytheism the gods are many but their identity seems to be known. Time and space may not be enough to deal with gods from the Middle-East and Egypt and their names. The three monotheistic religions (Judaism Christianity and Islam) have an identity for their god, but the divine community seems to have unidentified gods. Because Ogbonnaya (1994:26) says that 'there may be a great god among the gods is unquestionably African, but that this god is the only true god is not African'. The question is, who are the others, what are their names, what is their historical revelation?

Africans also accept the concept of oneness but it is in the context of others. The names used for the recognition of the one amongst the many is, *Mulungu, Nzambi, Nkulunkulu, Modimo, Xikwenbu* and so on. Obgonnaya (1994:26) is concerned that the problem is that the views of how these two concepts (one and many) are related to each other have not been thoroughly examined. For him the oneness is the power which he calls 'a single all pervasive power'. Ogbonnaya (1994) also maintains that the ancestors are never considered gods. Who then are these gods?

3.3.3   Nyamiti: Ancestor and Descended

At this point it is appropriate to bring Nyamiti (1996:38) into the discussion because he also discusses the doctrine of the Trinity from the perspective of the African Traditional concept of ancestors. We will mention a few points about the cult of ancestors in black Africa, even though there is no uniform system of beliefs nevertheless the cult belongs to the majority of the African people. Nyamiti (1996:39) claims that the reason Africans desire to have many children is 'because by naming a child after the name of an ancestor the spirit continues living within that family'. The link between the living and the dead is the continuation of the relationship because no one can be an ancestor of another family they are not related to. By

death an ancestor entered the life of sacred superhuman status, but the power of the ancestor is only linked to the family where the living enjoy the benefit of the dead as long as they keep on venerating that ancestor.

Nyamiti (1996:44) views that 'the concept of ancestors conveys the understanding that the worth of any human or religious value transcends time and place'. Drawing from African culture Africans live their lives linked and connected to one another beyond the limitation of time and space.

Nyamiti (1996:44), advices that, 'Africans should be taught to consider any authentic cultural values from any African society as belonging to him or her'. Nyamiti (1996) seems to put more emphasis on African culture than Ogbonnaya (1994). He speaks of African Theology founded on common cultural elements, but that does not lead to uniformity in African Theology. Scholars will always have different approaches in their reflection theologically.

The question is how does one link God and the ancestors? Ogbonnaya (1994) focused on the community of divinity but Nyamiti focused on the family and culture. In a family, one is born within a relationship. Already the person is given a name that belongs to one of the ancestors. In other words the Trinity according to Nyamiti (1996) can be regarded as a family where memories that are related belong. Since there is communication among individuals within the family Nyamiti (1996:48) speaks of 'the communication being through begetting the only form of mutual contact between these two persons is that which takes place through the Holy Spirit'. Nyamiti (1996) continues further to state that 'both the Father and the Son begets Him through spiration and communicates Him to each other as an expression of their mutual love'. Those who love each other give themselves to the other.

Another point that distinguishes Nyamiti (1996) from Ogbonnaya (1994) is the acknowledgement that the ancestors are closer to the Supreme Being. For him there is a realisation of one Supreme Being which contrasts to that of community of divine favoured by Ogbonnaya (1994). One Supreme Being is viewed by Ogbonnaya (1994) as a western influence of monotheism which he argues is as inadequate as is polytheism. Nyamiti (1996) reveals the closeness of the ancestors to the Supreme Being. That is also contrast with Ogbonnaya's (1994) position who does not accept that Africans do worship the ancestors. In

addition Nyamiti (1996) says thanks to their superhuman condition and nearness to the Creator, the ancestors are sometimes considered as mediators between the Supreme Being and their earthly kin. In some communities the Creator is regarded as an ancestor.

The confusion is when Nyamiti (1996) says that unlike the Supreme Being human ancestors are not adored (venerated?) in African societies. This confession is made after stating that living families benefit from their ancestors, protection from sickness, long life, great wealth or many children. In return the ancestors expect the faithfulness from the living relatives, prayers and rituals. Nyamiti (1996) further says that the living relatives only turn to the Supreme Being as a last resort.

Taking on the category of the relationship between the living relatives and the ancestors Nyamiti (1996) explores further, investigating the relationship within the Trinity. Nyamiti (1996:49) says that the Father and the Son communicate the Holy Spirit to each other with ancestral gifts and oblation as a token of their mutual love, homage and gratitude. He says that God the Father is analogically speaking, the ancestor and ancestress of his son and this latter is his true descendant.

3.3.4   Kombo: African Names

Kombo (2009:133) starts his article by investigating the work of Idowu, Mbiti and Setiloane, where he asks a question about African gods before the arrival of missionaries. He argues that the missionaries ignored the African pre-Christian experience of God. This approach brought questions about the relationship between the African God and the Christian God. He suggests the notion that ATR prepared Africans for the acceptance of Christianity. When the Bible was translated into African languages local names were used for God. According to Kombo (2009:133), the true significance of this kind of conceptualisation is the view that the god of the African pre-Christian tradition has turned out to be the god of Christian worship. He juxtaposes with the way *YAHWEH* took the name EL the Canaanite god. When *YAHWEH* took the name EL he was able to penetrate the Semitic world. So in Africa God took the African world and their world view. In Africa God took names like Modimo, *Nyame, Nyasaye, Ngai, Mulungu, Xikwenbu a*nd so on. What seems not to be clear is whether Christianity was a way to help Africans to discover the God of pre-Christian history or to make Africans repent towards the God of the Lord Jesus Christ?

Kombo (2009:133) concludes that when Africans use African names for God the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit are included in that name and that is a way to Christianise the African God. In that way the African religious heritage obtains a Christian meaning. Just like Nyamiti (1996), Kombo (2009:135) recognises monotheism in Africa. He noticed that pre-Christian Africa had a form of monotheism that has been called primitive monotheism or diffused monotheism. But he denies that the concept of polytheism Kombo (2009:136) maintains that 'pre-Christian African religious consciousness had no place for polytheism meaning that there was no worship of many gods'. His argument is based on the fact that there had never been a temple for an idol or an image that was worshipped in Africa, and he says spirits are spirits of the people who have died not gods.

Kombo (2009:136) proposes 'a modified monotheism where Christ and the Holy Spirit shall be situated in the centre of primitive monotheism'. Kombo's (2009) standpoint appeals more to the western evangelical position. He does not adopt too much terminology and categories from African Traditional Religions such as ancestors and other divinities but recognises the role and position of the Son and the Holy Spirit. Africans in their worship of God continue to experience God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

All scholars writing from an African perspective view their work with an African perspective on the Trinity. So far there seems to be different approaches, the Trinity as a community of divinity not monotheism or polytheism by Ogbonnaya (1994). Nyamiti (1996) recognises God as an ancestor having an ancestral relationship with the son while Kombo (2009) approaches the recognition of the names and languages employed which are African and claims that in those African names the Trinity is implied. They have all avoided using Jesus as a means towards the doctrine of the Trinity. Kombo (2009) who can be regarded as a new comer to the debate tried not to involve the ancestral category while providing for a very insignificant space for the incarnation.

The focus here is how the three African theologians close their discussions. Beginning with Ogbonnaya (1994), one can recognise that he is strong on the matter of the relationship within the community. Ogbonnaya (1994:68) considers 'the term *dispositio* being closer to the African concept of intergenerative interconnection based on a never ceasing belonging within the community that fosters a continual and unbroken communication'. In defining the

term *dispositio* according to Ogbonnaya (1994:68) it can be taken as a reference to the internal personal relation between the various dimensions of a person, the body, soul and spirit, which are in continuous interaction with one another. The explanation of the word *dispositio* suggests the incarnation rather than the Trinity, because it is internal personal relation between the various dimensions of a person the body, soul and spirit. But, if the dimension of a person is only body and soul due to the dualism approach of the church Fathers, what about the spirit?

Nyamiti (1996) using African categories, regards the Father as an ancestor who begets a son calls him a descendant and the Holy Spirit a gift between the Father and the son. Nyamiti (1996:50) argues that 'all this is due to the fact that in the African mind ancestry and descendancy are necessarily and immediately connected with sacredness, an ancestor is always conceived as one who is in a super human state which enables him to have a sacred or mystical relationship with his earthly kin'. From what has been pointed out between the relationship of the living family and the departed ancestor it implies that one of them had to be in the world of the living and the other one in the world of the dead. If God the Father had to be regarded as an ancestor He had to die first. In reality it is the Son who died. The relationship of a descendant and the ancestor suggests a form of hierarchy which was the position of the heretics during the time of the Church Fathers. During the time of the Church Fathers when the Holy Spirit is regarded as a gift or an oblation, as an expression of the love between Father and Son makes the Spirit just a property or an object to be used. Both the Son and the Holy Spirit, lose their position of equality with the Father, which the Cappadocian Fathers advanced.

Towards the end of his paper Kombo (2009:139), discusses the incarnation; he says God endured to be born to become man, and to suffer. Kombo (2009:140) continues to say that 'the uniqueness of Christ must mean that He is not just a *friend, liberator, elder brother, king/chief, healer, master* of initiation and so on. He says Jesus is God. One can realise that Kombo's work is only African because of the title 'the Trinity in Africa'. He has moved from the approach of Jesus as an ancestor and liberator to being God according to the Scriptures. Kombo (2009) departs from the African position that says that salvation and deliverance belong to God. He declares that the Bible seems to say salvation and deliverance belong to

Christ. If Kombo (2009) was one of the Cappadocians he was going to use the Father rather than just God and he was going to say salvation belongs to the triune God. It is true that Jesus is God but he is God within the Trinity united to all members of the triune God.

On the Holy Spirit Kombo (2009:141) holds the position that pre-Christian Africa perceived God as a spiritual being without a material body, to say God is a spirit is first and foremost scriptural. Kombo (2009) is of the opinion that the African conceptual framework also has spirits as a special category. The challenge is the interpretation and translation from English to African languages of words like spirit, wind and breath. In English the wind is not spirit, *moya* is the word used by most South African languages. The spirit is *moya,* the wind is *moya* and the breath is *moya*. The Holy Spirit is also called *moya* but they add Holy (*Oyingcwele, Okwetsima*) to qualify it. There is also the challenge of how to convey the meaning of Holy because it is similar to pure.

3.4 The Worship of Ancestors

Earlier there was a discussion on the question and position of the ancestors or ancestral spirits. Some African theologians like Seoka (1997) and Mtetwa (1996) argue that the concept of ancestral worship is not African. Their arguments are based on the terms used in Africa when the event or rituals are directed to the ancestors. The language used by Africans employs terms like *Ukuhlabela amadlozi*, a Zulu term and *Gopaasa badimo*, a Sotho term. Both mean the same thing. *Ukuhlabela* is a term that refers to slaughtering an animal and blood being shed. But the Sotho term *Gopaasa* does not have the word equivalent to 'killing' in it but the term refers to the entire event which includes animal killing. The Zulu word for Ancestors is *Amadloz*i and the Sotho is *Badimo*. The Sotho word *Badimo* when translated literally means the gods because God is Modimo. The Zulu term *Amadlozi* can also be used in a singular form as *idlozilami* meaning my ancestor.

Seoka (1997) and Mtetwa (1996) prefer to use terms like the 'service of our father' or 'mother'. Zulu (2002) questions the use of the term 'worship'. How can Africans worship a human being? It is proper that the worship and its contents be investigated in order to understand the use of terms like `Worship` and `Service`. Kiernan (1995:22) explains that 'the living communicate with the dead by regular ritual sacrifice and invocation, the priest or

official which is the family head or the senior group representative, while ancestors of large groups are being addressed by the term ritual sacrifice has an idea of an animal killing'. Kiernan (1995:23) claims that 'the type of an animal to be slaughtered varies according to economic circumstances which will be accompanied by a beer or grain offering'. These rituals according to Mndende (2006:161) 'revive relationships within the community and between the living and the ancestors'. It is also a way to revive the relationship between the physical world and spiritual world.

Chidester (1992) seems to be one of the few who have written in detail about the process of ancestral ritual. Dealing with the event in whatever way or form there had to be a diviner who in other African languages may be referred to as a `Sangoma` or traditional healer`. Chidester (1992:9) explains that 'the person is a specialist expert in communicating with the ancestors and who may also be able to pass a message to family members'. When an animal is killed the sacrifice has to be chosen by the ancestor or one that may be acceptable to them. The animal has to be killed by the eldest man in the lineage. There are parts of the animal that symbolise something. According to Chidester (1992:9) who explains that 'the bellowing of the sacrificial animal is crucial to the ritual because that cry opens up communication with the ancestors'.

The families in most cases have a hut, a room or an altar where they communicate with the ancestors. If it is a house, Chidester (1992:10) says that 'it is in that room or hut where ova, a piece of fat from the slaughtered animal is placed by the ritual elder on the fire, to be wholly consumed for the ancestors'. Chidester (1992) wrote his work from research carried out in the Eastern Cape but the order may differ from one family to another and may differ from a Xhosa speaking family to a Tsonga speaking one. The differences may be based on emphasis or points of departure such as the act of killing the animal and its accompanying rituals, for instance, which will differ in some nations such as the Zulus who put the skin of the slaughtered animal on their wrist for protection and good luck. The meat is shared among the family members in a festival communal meal, and sometimes the food is served with African beer.

Chidester (1992) continues to say that the ritual concludes with the burning of the bones of the animal. In other African families or nations there is the cutting of hair to symbolise a new

beginning. In Shangaan families, the ritual is accompanied by a celebration of dance and the sound of drums to welcome the spirits of the ancestors. During the dancing and the noise of drums someone is possessed with ancestral spirits and begins to act in a way that the audience will be made aware that a certain spiritual presence of an ancestor is about to communicate with the gathering. Those who work with that particular person or family member put some garments on that person that are symbolic of the occasion and the possessed person then dances and sings. The song that the person sings to the audience reveals who the ancestor that has possessed the particular member is. After dancing to that song the possessed person speaks and the audience is aware that they are speaking to someone from the dead.

The question of worship has also arisen in the work of Chidester (1992). Chidester (1992:11) says that `the answer to this question has turned to large extent on what might be understood by `worship`, but some commentators argue that ancestors were not worshipped but were treated with the same kind of attention that was owed to living elders'. But no one can deny the fact that there is a sacrificial offering which is a ritual that is offered to the gods from the history of human race. Zulu (2001) is uncomfortable about human beings being worshipped by other human beings. In the book of Acts chapter 14 at Lystra when Paul prayed for a sick person, who was then healed and the people brought some oxen to offer sacrifices for Paul and Barnabas because the people regarded them as gods; Jupiter and Mercurius. It is also known that in ancient times some of the kings were elevated to a position of a god, as reported by Moila (1989). In Egypt Moses was regarded as one of the gods by the Egyptian priests because of the miracles that he performed. Chidester (1992) says although some rituals were performed out of respect for the ways of the ancestors. In a sacrificial offering ritual there are some activities or symbols which are interpreted according to each nation, clan or family. This was also hinted at by Chidester (1992:12) when he said that 'in the history of religions, sacrifice has been interpreted in a number of different ways, depending upon which aspect of the ritual has been emphasised like in the passages of life, just after the birth of a child or giving a child a name, or is it for circumcisions. Whatever the event by the family whether it is called *ukuhlabela amadlozi* (sacrificing for the ancestors) or *gopaasa badimo (*same meaning) but the activities are loaded with activities that signify worship.

Mbiti (1969:1) says 'Africans are notoriously religious so much so that religion permeates permanently into all departments of life so fully that it is not easy or possible always to isolate it'. Mndende (2006:161) is in agreement with Mbiti (1969) when he said `religion is part of the fable of society; 'it is deeply ingrained in social life, and it is impossible to isolate and study it as a distinct phenomenal, therefore when members of a family clan gather together in a sacrificial ritual for the ancestors that is a religious activity in honour to an ancestor or ancestors'. It may be regarded as a service to the ancestor or remembering them but all the activities within that event make it a religious event. The slaughtering of an animal, the pouring down of beer or water and the dancing all are done with the focus on the ancestors.

Another point to be considered is the position of the ancestors between human beings and God. First Moila (1989) gives us some names that are used by Africans in reference to God. In addition to the known names like *Modimo Xikwembu, uNkulunkulu* Moila (1989:23), includes others like '*Kgobeans, Lebepe and Khutsoane'*. These names are largely used by the people who speak Northern Sotho especially those who are from Sekhukhune. Moila (1989) further explains that *Kgobeane* comes from *kgobe* meaning son of *Kgobe.* He says it is not clear what *Lebepe and Khotsoane* mean. God is also known as *Mmopa-Batho*, (the creator of human kind) and *Motlhodi* (Creator or the Initiator). According to Moila (1989) these names of creators are an influence from Christianity. Moila (1989) and most African theologians and African scholars are in agreement that the ancestors have a position of power higher than human beings and which is closer to that of God. Donders (1986:11) says that all Africans' ideas of God as the creator are not the same as Christian's ideas about God as the creator. Setiloane (1995:59) says 'Africans believed that human beings came out from a hole in the ground, maybe this is the reason why sometimes the ancestors are being referred as the ones from below or ground'. When praying to the ancestors Africans pour water, beer or blood on the ground and claim it is for the ones from the ground. For this reason Moila (1989) is correct to say to worship God as creator in Africa, is an influence from Christianity.

From the discussion above it is arguably true that Africans believe that they originate from other sources other than God. That may have some implications on the relationship between God and the African people. Turaki (1999:86) is aware of the fact that even though

Africans generally have an awareness and belief in the Supreme Being, the truth is, this Supreme Being is not known to have been exclusively worshipped by traditional Africans. He says Africans are aware of the existence of the Supreme Being but being aware does not mean Africans have a relationship with God the Supreme Being. A person may be aware about other political parties but that does not mean that people votes for those parties. Africans are aware of the Supreme Being yet he is too remote or transcendent. The reason why God is remote according to Turaki (1999:162) 'is that human beings had done something which offended God'. There are some scholars like Turaki (1999) who argue that Africa never had altars or temples for the Supreme Being. Some argue that since Africa has names for God this suggests that there is worship directed to the Supreme Being. But the means to approach the Supreme Beings is through what Turaki and others call intermediate directions. Mbiti (1969:68) says 'it is a widespread feeling among many African people that man should not or cannot approach God alone or directly, but that he must do so through the mediation of a special person or other beings'. Mbiti (1969) explains further that the living-dead occupy the ontological position between the spirits and human beings and between God and human beings.

Africans are notoriously religious in all that they do in life but being religious does not reveal anything about God but more about African rituals. It seems Africans do not question the reality of God, because it is given. The question had not been asked, therefore the answer has not been given. Without the question of the reality of God, it created a vacuum for the discussions of who God is and how to relate to him. The vacuum created a lack of ideas of who is God. In African languages there are names for God or Supreme Being but there are no historical events that inform the names Africans have for God. There seemed to be no historical event of God's revelation. But maybe Africans are not looking at the right object. The African perceived a distance between them and God or the Supreme Being. The ancestors are closer to the African people while the Ancestors are regarded to be closer to God. It is not clear what the implications and functions are of the closeness of the Ancestors to God. When Africans offer sacrifices and prayer to the ancestors it suggests that the ancestors have the ability to hear prayers but it is not clear what the prayers mean to the ancestors. The implication is revealed in Khathide (2003:14) who notes that 'deeply committed Christians faithfully attending church services on Sunday, praying to God who

revealed Himself in Jesus Christ, but in time of need or existential crisis, they turn to the local Shaman, *Inyanga* for healing, a diviner for guidance and to an exorcist, traditional or spiritual that is, for deliverance from spirit oppression'. Once more the words of Khathide (2003) suggest the closeness of Africans to their ancestors rather than to God or Supreme Being.

The evidence in the discussions suggests that Africans have a closer relationship with the ancestors than with God or Supreme Being. The involvement of ancestors in African life may imply that God has a lesser role in influencing African life. Yet some perceive that ATR is a preparation for the Gospel. This is the historical background of Africans who moved out of the missionary churches to churches that accommodate their African culture. It was like they were going back to what they were before encountering western missionaries, but they were going back as Christians. Yet it is not clear what it means, whether Africans would justify ATR using the categories and resources from Christianity or they would interpret Christianity using the ATR resources and categories of thinking. This raises the question of the relationship between the Early Church Fathers and Africa.

3.4.1   Historical Setting

The connection of Jesus Christ and Africa may be based at the time when Herod wanted to destroy the life of Jesus. When the parents had been advised about the plot to kill the infant they went to Egypt and according to the writer of the book of Matthew this historical event was a fulfilment of the scripture. Jesus was an asylum seeker in the continent of Africa to fulfil the scripture. At a time of going to the cross a man from Africa helped Jesus to carry the cross. From these two incidents it seems whenever Jesus needed help Africa offered Him a hand. The connection goes further than that.

From the work of Hildebrandt (1990:1) it is clear that 'Egypt played a very important role due to good farming and a highly developed form of irrigation and also that it was a learning centre and that the Library at Alexandria was famous throughout the world'. Apart from Cyrenaica there was also the Roman Provence of Africa which was called Carthage. It was a country which benefitted from farming due to fertile land. Today that place is called Tunisia. Hildebrandt (1990:2) points out that 'further west another Roman Provence was situated which was called Numidia, which today is the Eastern half of Algeria. Then the rest of the Western side from that was called *Mavritania*. Down South there were two powerful

kingdoms Nubia which today is known as Sudan. Close to that it was Abyssinia, according to Hildebrandt (1990:3) this is 'the old name for Ethiopia'. He also adds that there was a large concentration of people around Lake Chad at the time of Christ. These people were Negro by race and spoke what is called the Eastern Sudanic language. According to this information, by the time of Jesus, there were known kingdoms in Africa which were not far from the control of Rome.

Way after the day of Pentecost, according to Acts 8:26-38 God made an arrangement for the Gospel to go further south through an Ethiopian eunuch, who was a government official. Hildebrandt (1990:6) indicates that 'although the Bible calls him an Ethiopian, it is generally agreed that he was a Government official in Nubia'. He says because the name Ethiopia did not apply to the country that it refers to today.

Hildebrandt (1990) continues to locate places where Africa is mentioned in the Bible. In Acts 11:20, the people from Cyrene were involved with the leadership of the church of Antioch. In Acts 18:24-28 Apollos of Alexandria visited the city of Ephesus. He also went to Corinth. The church in Egypt was established by John Mark the Evangelist. According to information by Hildebrandt (1990:8) 'evangelism continued so that by AD180 there was a well-established church in Egypt'. The first converts in Egypt were people of Greek origin who lived in the city of Alexandria. But the gospel also spread to the Copts or Egyptians of Hamitic origin.

It is a well-known historical fact that the Roman Empire persecuted many Christians during the first half of the Early Church. Africa suffered the same and twelve Christians were killed for their belief in Jesus Christ in the city of Carthage in AD180. Hildebrandt (1990:9) points out that 'around AD300 there were more than 80 Bishops in Egypt'. Another development was that during the second and third centuries there was a Christian school in Alexandria, which was called the Catechetical school of Alexandria. The school's main focus was to teach Christians about Jesus Christ. Hildebrandt points out that this was the first such school in the world, and for that reason he says Africa gets the credit for having the first Bible Institute or theological college in the history of the Church. Some of the people, who were involved with the school, were Clement, and Origin. In Cyrenaica in North Africa there were seventy

Bishops around AD 220. By 250 AD their number had increased to one hundred and fifty Bishops.

Hildebrandt (1990:10) indicates that 'by the end of the second and the beginning of the third century AD in the city of Carthage lived one of the Church Fathers by the name of Tertullian'. Hildebrandt claims that Tertullian was the first to use the term Trinity. Cyprian also lived at Carthage and had been elected as a Bishop by 249 AD, and died for his faith in 258 AD. The debate about the nature and position of Jesus Christ started in Alexandria when Arius challenged his Bishop Alexander. Athanasius from Alexandria contributed a lot towards stamping out the Arian heresy and fought for the recognition of the Nicene Creed. If Tertullian is the first person to use the term Trinity, then Africa owns the term and the development of the Doctrine.

The study is too limited by time and space to continue with other historical figures like Augustine who contributed towards the development in the church and its doctrines. Africa was in the forefront of the developments of the church and Christianity in the Early Church since some of the well-known Church Fathers were Africans. To suggest that Christianity is a European product may not be supported by historical facts. It can be concluded that Africa was at the fore front of theological reflection during the period of the Early Church. To connect Christianity to Africa by the contribution given from the Early Church Fathers justifies and is evidence that Africans played a significant role.

3.4.2 Point of Departure

When Peter, Phillip and Paul moved out of Jerusalem to Samaria and to the ends of the world, they were also encountering a new world that was totally different from their world. They were taking God from the isolating room of the Holy of Holies to the world of other gods. It was monotheism face to face with polytheism; it was 'the foolishness of God' confronting 'the wisdom of man'. From historical records it can be noted that the church faced the most excruciating persecutions the church had ever seen. Workman(1980:24) states that 'the imperial idea that Christianity was a danger to the state and civilisation itself, an anarchist institution, was maintained with varying insistencies, some modification in detail and occasional intervals of toleration, from the days of Nero to the final victory of the

church under Constantine'. There was a time in the history of the church when it was a crime to be a Christian.

The first missionaries preached Christ from a background of not being recognised in their own kingdom. Yet they preached the one from above. Paul and Barnabas were at times misunderstood as gods and later the same people stoned Paul.

Even though these historical events were essential towards the development of Christianity, they can never match the faith in Jesus and the relationship the Church Fathers had. They could have decided to do their theology based on their life experiences, based on political and economic situations yet they decided to base their theological reflection on the experiences they had with Jesus Christ. They had a context which was important especially after the achievements and contributions of philosophy and science. Instead of saying too much about the greatness of the Greeks they used their background to uplift Jesus Christ. The process of contextualisation by the Church Fathers was not at the expense of Jesus Christ. Jesus was their point of departure in their process of contextualisation.

Tiênou (1991:3) asked *which way for African Christianity: Westernisation or indigenous authenticity?* The question is based on the crisis of identity. As it was stated before that the *'African Church Fathers'* of AICs were searching for a place where their culture was going to be accommodated. There was not a question of misunderstanding on issues of doctrine, about who God is or how to relate to Jesus as Africans. When cultural identity precedes theological identity, culture becomes an authority. When culture becomes an authority the debate is confined to the level of African culture versus European culture. Tiênou (1991:3) further indicated that it is well known that the question of identity for Africans is often posed in terms of an alternative between Westernisation and authentic Africanness. From this discussion one can sense the contrast between the questions by theologians and the Cappadocian Fathers. Young (1986:70) says African theologians want to produce Christian theologies that incorporate certain traditional religious concepts.

The quest for an African identity and socio-political emancipation made Africa avoid the meaning of the real historical event of Jesus Christ. It has been pointed out that historical events of the exodus, the journey to the Promised Land and the receiving of the law, gave

Israel and the Church in Jerusalem a way of thinking and a language to speak about God. It is believed that all those events were initiated and empowered by God not human beings. Zizioulas (1995:50) states that 'the Cappadocians were as obsessed with Greek Philosophy as those who were heretics'. In other words they were contextualising the gospel yet their contextualisation was based on what happened to Jesus in Jerusalem. In both the Nicene and the Constantinople Creeds they could not avoid 'speaking' about why Jesus came. *Who for us men and for our salvation came down from Heaven, and was incarnate and was made man.* To make it more historical in the Constantinople Creed they added after `Incarnation`, *by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary`.*

When the Church Fathers wrote, `*we believe in one God'*, they were setting a standard for their faith, and therefore they were also setting an agenda for their theological debate and reflections. The agreements or disagreements were based on the discussions about the positions and nature of Jesus Christ in relation to God the Father. Just like what Gregory of Nazianzus in Oration 28:1 said in his opening words *On Second Theological Oration*

> *Let us now enter upon theological questions, setting at the head there of*
> *the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost of whom we are to treat, that the*
> *Father may be well pleased, and the Son may help us, and the Holy ghost*
> *may inspire us, or rather that one illumination may come upon us from*
> *the one God, one in diversity, diverse in unity, wherein is a marvel.*

It may have been a difficult time for the Cappadocians, yet the time and the challenges gave them time to enter into discussion about God. The way they conducted their discussions *was for the Father to be pleased, and the Son to help them and being inspired by the Holy Spirit.* It was these discussions that benefitted the Church about the knowledge of God. In the same Oration 28:ΧΙ on the discussions about God the Gregory of Nazianzus, makes the church aware that he was not trying to be Daniel because the focus must not be on him but on God. And the more one goes further into knowing God the more one realises that indeed God is a mystery. For Gregory further said that the divine nature cannot be apprehended by human reason, and that we cannot even represent to ourselves all its greatness. One can realise that the kind of talk by the Cappadocians about God is beyond culture. It is not according to

culture but the revelation of God. Culture has become a tool yet it is a tool that is weak, because it is a human product.

The perfection of God makes it difficult for human beings because of the lack of perfection. The God who has no limits has to be approached by human beings who are limited in all levels of their lives when compared to God. Yet He is the God who relates and he has created the whole of creation that it may relate to Him. Gregory of Nazianzus in the third theological Oration 29:1 gives advice, 'to rely on the Holy Ghost, to bring forth to the light our own conceptions about the Godhead'.

It should be noted that what started the discussion and debate about the Godhead was the question and position of Jesus Christ within the oneness of God. It was revealed to the church at large that when Jesus was born it was God becoming human. It is from the Cappadocians that the church believes in Jesus` birth, the process of incarnation. They realised that Jesus was the one from eternity come into contact with time, He was the creator of nature become one with nature and that He was the one without a beginning come into contact with a beginning when He became a human being. They contributed towards the understanding that there never was a time when He was not the Father, or when He was not triune or not wise, or not powerful, or devoid of life, or of splendour, or of goodness.

The Cappadocians regarded the incarnations as the work of God, not human but for human beings. Gregory of Nyssa in his book against Eunomius speaks about Jesus becoming a servant to accomplish the mystery of redemption by the cross. What he said is consistent with both the Creed that *for the sake of human and for salvations he came down from heaven and was incarnate and was made man (human)*. As for redemption by the cross the Creed says `*He suffered on the third day he rose again, and ascended into heaven.* Out of this action Christians are able to say *for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son.*

One cannot speak about redemption through the cross without revealing or questioning the what; meaning, redemption from what? The Cappadocians were aware of what the scripture says as Jesus said the Son of man came to seek and save the lost. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ

for salvation was for the entire human race not just for an individual. Human beings sinned by an act of disobedience against God, they need redemption and God had prepared a way to save them. It took the work of the Trinity, together, to save human life. That is why the scripture says, how we shall escape if we neglect such a great salvation? If human beings do not take the provision of salvation which God provided, is there any means to escape from the wrath of God in judgment day?

With the full understanding of, the work of Jesus Christ on the cross and the resurrection, and that He is God and comes from God, the Early Church believers were able to worship God the Father and God the Son in the power of God the Holy Spirit. This is confirmed by Basil in *De Spirito Sancto* (1:3) when he said, `when praying with the people, and using the full Doxology of God the Father in both forms, at one time with the Son together with the Holy Ghost and at another through the Son in the Holy Spirit'. Jesus by going to the cross became the Priest and the Lamb at the same time, a Redeemer and a Ransom. Following Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus in *Oration 45: 1Ҳ or the Second Oration on Easter* said, `He (Jesus) came forth then, as God, with that which He had assumed; one Person in two natures', Gregory the Nazianze (45:X,III) continues to say that Jesus became a perfect victim, giving an example when Israel on the eve of the Exodus each family provided a lamb but in Jesus God gave one lamb for the world. In celebration of the Passover and resurrection during Easter Gregory the Nazianze (45:ҲҲIV) said `worship him who was hanged for you, even if you yourself are hanging; make some gain even from your wickedness; purchase salvation by His death; enter with Jesus into paradise'. He also said `let us hold aside the first veil; let us approach the second, and look into the Holy of holiness'.

When Jesus is the foundation and point of departure it is easy to say like Gregory Nazianze (Oration 38) 'Christ is born, glorify Him Christ from heaven, go out to meet Him. Christ on earth; be ye exalted'. From this foundation one is satisfied that Jesus offered one sacrifice and therefore there is no more need for another sacrificial offering. This blood that speaks better things than the blood of Abel that has been offered is one perfect sacrifice one and for all. In Genesis 4:10 the blood of Abel cried for revenge but Jesus asked the Father to forgive those who crucified Him. If God in Jesus Christ received that offering and God is satisfied why must there be other sacrifices. Does it mean that those who continue with the

ritual of slaughtering disapprove of the one that God had already approved? If the ancestors are closer to God can't they realise that they are not in line with God by accepting sacrifices? In Jesus, God had provided the Lamb; can the ancestors offer a lamb coming from them? This may be hard if not impossible.

Without the approach of the Trinity with Jesus as the point of departure African theologians are battling to find a way in, or forward. Christianity is the recognition of Jesus Christ and therefore there cannot be Christianity without Him. Theology can philosophise about any reality of life yet the foundation of Christian Theology had to be Jesus Christ. When African Theology claims through theologians like Donders (1986:30) that God is considered to be far away and that the vacuum is taken by the ancestors then it is difficult to come to conclusions and an understanding of God like the understanding the Cappadocians had.

Ogbonnaya (1994) approached the theological discussion on the Trinity from the foundation and concept of one and the many; he is not comfortable with terms like monotheism and polytheism because they contradict his approach of 'the one and the many. As it has been pointed out he introduced the concept 'a community of gods' as the point of departure and avoided having Jesus as his point of departure. Nyamiti (1996) describes a relationship between ancestors and their descendants where they share mutual love and benefit one with another through gifts. In that situation God is regarded as an ancestor and Jesus is a descendant and they both share the Holy Spirit. From the understanding of the Cappadocians there is nothing on this side of time that can come close to comparing who God is to relate to Jesus as a descendant. This conception has an underlying meaning that Jesus is lower, not equal with the Father. And for God to be an ancestor He would have to die first. It is a well-known fact that the Son Jesus not the Father is the one who had to experience.

Kombo`s (2009) work is based on the terms with an African origin used to refer to God. He examines names like *Modimo, Nyame, Nyasaye* and others that were present in African cultures to denote God, before Christianity arrived. The challenge is that there is no proper documentation regarding information about the usage of these African names before Christianity arrived in Africa.

It is clear that the Cappadocian Fathers and African scholars have no common point of departure. In the study of Cappadocian one is ushered into the use of Greek philosophy and culture for the revelation of who God is and how they related to Him. It is not about the justification or continuation of Greek religion and philosophies using Christian terms. Young (1985:70) says 'African theologians won't produce Christian theologians that incorporate certain traditional religious concepts. But their approach seems to be more apologetic and to clarify concerning some rituals and sacrifices. It seems the African theologians were trying to find a way which ATR can find space within the Christian faith unlike the Cappadocians who were defining God. When Peter stood up to speak on the day of Pentecost they regarded themselves as a continuation in worship of the God of the Old Testament in the light of the event of Jesus Christ, especially the death and resurrection. But ATR had brought in the ancestors and therefore lacks a figure in the mode of Jesus Christ. There may be a lot of similarities between Judaism and ATR, Chinese and Indians may say the same, but Jesus was born to fulfil the Jewish scriptures and He spoke His word through those scriptures.

So the Cappadocian Fathers were not using philosophy to justify continuation (adaptation) with Greek religious activities but they were in search for the truth about God. Instead Pryor (2005) argues that they preserved the truth of the gospel away from being contaminated by heretic teaching using philosophy. He says they cited the Scriptures and their point of departure was Jesus which entails a high form of Christology. In Christ they had found a truth that is 'worth living for and if needs be, it is the truth to die for'. The Cappadocian Fathers can stand like Paul and say `and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung (KJV), that I may win Christ, and be found in him. ' (Philippians 3:8-9).

In Acts 17:15–34 Paul was confronted by the Epicureans and Stoics philosophers of Athens, a city given to the multiple gods. Ferguson (2003:610) points out that 'Christianity did not enter a vacuum but had to find its path in the world of Greek mysteries and Eastern Religions and was also confronted by the world of pagans' religion and philosophy. ' The same can be argued concerning the arrival of Christianity in Africa but here it was the world of ancestors. Some of the religions were state-led and according to Workman (1980:20)

'polytheism could not be dethroned without a struggle, nor mankind regenerated without a baptism of blood'.

Since Christianity was established based on the sufferings of Christ the Early Church was well prepared to absorb all the punishment the world would throw at them. Workman (1980:15) points out 'the murder of Stephan and James, the persecutions at Damascus and elsewhere, and the early imprisonment of Paul were the results of Jewish hatred'. After some time the persecution changed hands from Jewish hatred to the more dreaded enmity of the Roman Empire. According to the explanation by Workman (1980:15) scholars are now fairly agreed that by the time of Domitian's reign it had become the settled policy of the Roman Empire, and of the wonderfully efficient police administration which the empire used to treat Christianity as a crime. The issue of suffering and pain was not a new experience since in Christ, God also suffered.

Earlier in Chapter One the Western missionary and their dubious enterprise was discussed. The missionaries and their activities coincided with the process of colonisation. They were seen to have joined forces with colonialism, racism and capitalists. Dickson (1984:15) defines theology as 'an important assumption is that theology is done meaningfully only in context, or with reference to situation or set of circumstances'. Even though theology is done in context, the question is about the relationship between that context and theology in relation to authority. Doing theology in context for the Cappadocian Fathers meant dealing with heresy while for Africans it has meant dealing with the past and venerating the ancestors. For the Cappadocians it meant responding through the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, while ATR has employed the authority of African culture.

It seems as if the point of departure for African Theology is about the human experiences of the African people within a certain context. Much contribution by the African theologians has been made and welcomed when Africans began to give clarity and to set the record straight about ATR and the evils and short-comings of Western missionaries. It was an evil attitude for Western missionaries to undermine African culture in the name of civilisation and also for them to collaborate with colonisers in some instances. In South Africa theology had to respond to the oppressive apartheid system. When theology is built on the agendas of socio-political context of a community, when that context changes, especially if that

change is not influenced by Christianity principles and values it loses its point of reference. It becomes like a salt that had lost its saltiness. The Church Fathers were interested on how God is and how He relates to human beings in order to influence life in whatever situation or context.

It has been stated that the formal inauguration of the All Africa Conference of Churches in 1963 marked the official beginning of African Theology. I'll repeat what Muzorewa (1985:61) said 'the timing of the inauguration of AACC in 1963 placed the church in the midst of the independence era: and the theme was freedom'. The human situation or context has a way of changing. The context and situation of suffering may change from white oppression to black oppression. As strong as theology was against white oppressors can it be as strong towards black oppressors. After fifty years of independence, can Africa still base its theology on the evils of missionaries, colonialism and apartheid?

The Early Church went through suffering too, but that was no reason to return to their former religion. But because of their experiences of suffering they found God. They became apologetics and martyrs for Jesus. It was better for them to go through suffering for Christ than to live a peaceful life without Him. The Cappadocian Fathers were regarded as enemies by others for holding the conviction that Jesus and the Holy Spirit are equal to the Father. As Gregory of Nyssa *on the Christian Mode of life* says 'faith is in the life of God alone, because it sees clearly that where there is faith, reverence, and a blameless life, there is present the power of Christ, there is flight from all evil, and from death which robs us on life'. Gregory of Nyssa continues to say that for 'the Christian who has advanced by means of good discipline and the gift of the Spirit to the measure of the age of reason, after grace is given to him, being hated because of Christ, being driven, enduring insult and shame in behalf of his faith in God, experiences glory and pleasure and enjoyment that is greater any human pleasure'. For such a person whose entire life was centred on the resurrection and future blessing, every insult, scourging, persecution and any other suffering leading up to the cross are all pleasure and refreshment and a surety of heavenly treasure.

The context of the suffering of Jesus Christ is an inspiration to those who face trials and tribulations of the moment. When the theology of suffering is based on the cross of Jesus Christ it is easy to say `the suffering of this present time is not worthy to be compared with

the glory that shall be revealed' (Romans 8:18). It is very easy to remember the pain and evils of the missionaries but possible to fail to respond to the suffering like that which took place in Rwanda, Sudan and in Somalia.

When life changed for the Early Church due to the change of attitude by the Roman Empire, the church was never shaken because she stood on solid foundations. They continued connecting what God had done through Christ on the cross and what the apostles said with how they lived their lives.

When doing theology in Africa there is a question about how theology can be developed especially while facing the challenges of globalisation and while ATR is holding the church back somewhere in the past. One of the best contributions by Mbiti (1969:16) is about the concept of time in African life. Mbiti says 'the question of time is of little or no academic concern to the African people in their traditional life'. He further explains that for an African 'time is simply a composition of events which have occurred, those which are taking place now and those which are immediately to occur'. About the future Mbiti (1969) points out that it is regarded as a potential time.

How is time explained or conceived of in African life? Answering that question Mbiti (1969:17) says that 'time had to be experienced through events'. Most of the older generations in an African community tell their date of birth through some historical event such as, the year of much rain or the year of locusts. Others may say ten years after the Anglo-Boer war or II World War. Most Africans are given names based on some event when they were born. Another contribution is that time is a two-dimensional phenomenon, with a long past, a present and virtually no future. The reason Mbiti says the future is virtually absent is because events which are in the future have not yet taken place. For that reason time is understood as what is present and what is past.

The evidence can be observed within African culture. In the past when there were no facilities African boys in most African nations were circumcised somewhere in the woods or in the mountains away from the eyes of other people. The practise was based on the resources that were available during those days. It was also an opportunity for the older generation to pass their knowledge of life to the younger generation. Today there are better

and safer facilities but some African nations prefer the old system that was practised in the past. How does the issue of time affect African Theology in the same way? The search for African identity is understood as going back to ATR which include ancestral veneration. ATR is regarded as a religion that was there before the arrival of western missionaries. Doing theology in Africa starts with the evils of the missionaries and abuse by colonialism and apartheid, for some theologians. But if African time is based on the events of the past Jesus can occupy that time more than the ancestors because every year the world celebrates Easter and Christmas.

3.5   The African Response to the Creeds

The Creeds are officially a product of the church and are therefore part of Christian tradition. The African Christian community of faith needs to take ownership of the Creeds especially the Nicene Creed. Historically the debate of the nature of Jesus Christ, His position and relationship with the Father began here in Africa. When the debate and question started to emerge around 311AD Arius, Bishop Alexander and Athanasius were in Egypt at that time. Even when the council of Nicaea of 325 AD the debate continued beyond 325 AD, Athanasius spoke from Egypt in Africa. It has been stated that even the term Trinity came from one of the sons of Africa Tertullian. The question is what resources and categories of thinking can African theologians use in ATR?

> *'We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible'*

African theologians and scholars like Moila (1989), Kombo (2009) and many others use African terms for God like *Xikwembu, unKulunkulu, Uthixo* it is assumed that it is the same God as the Cappadocian Fathers; the God of Christianity. Mbiti (1969) and others have testified that Africans believe in that God, the debate is on the issue of how Africans relate to Him and how close He is to Africans or how they perceive His involvement in their life. Some like Ogbonnaya (1994) have a problem with the term Supreme Being because it doesn't seem to be African.

The challenges may be, in the words `we believe in one God`. The title of Turaki's (1999) book is *Christianity and African gods*. The title itself highlights the challenge for Africans to

talk about their belief in one God. The term Supreme Being may suggest other beings closer to the supreme one. This may also be the reason why Ogbonnaya (1994) says that these concepts of monotheism or polytheism are inappropriate in the African context. In the context of Ubuntu and community which is an African concept one may have suggestions that there are negative aspects to it. The concept of Ubuntu cannot be outside others or be regarded in isolation. Turaki (1999:250) came to the conclusion that 'the fundamental difference between ATR and Christianity lies in the belief of the plurality of gods or divinities accompanied in religious practices'. Ogbonnaya (1994) talks about the community of the divine while Turaki (1999) says this plurality of gods/divinity is indeed polytheism. He continues to argue that the concept of the hierarchy of beings is contrary to the biblical and Christian theology of the Triune God. To approach the oneness of God as a unity in plurality may fit well but the question will be the idea of the members who form that plurality.

The Father almighty may fit into the discussion of Nyamiti (1996) about ancestor and descendant. One cannot be a Father without any relationship. Nyamiti (1996) put forward ideas that the link between the living and the dead is the continuation of the relationship because no one can be an ancestor of another family they are not related too. The challenge is how to apply that to *the maker of all things*.

Moila (1989) made a contribution that holds that God as creator of human beings came about as a result of Christian influence. Chidester (1992:6), Kiernan (1995) and Turaki (1999) give evidence about why God cannot be regarded as the creator in the understanding of ATR. According to Turaki (1999:116) 'many traditional African myths and legends attribute the creation of the world, nature and humans to a lesser being'. He says that the myths and creation stories are full of stories of how the lesser being contributed to making of the world to be less than perfect. Human beings in some parts of Africa are known to have come from a hole not created. But the reality of visible and invisible reality does exist within the conception of the African people. When and if an African accepts God the Father as the creator it is easy and possible to link God with the visible and invisible reality through the ancestors. Africa has an active a link with the invisible world. The challenge is to explain how the ancestors and God the Father relate in that invisible world. When God the Father began

the creation, the ancestors were not there yet but the Father was with the Son and Holy Spirit.

> *and in one Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God, the only begotten of His Father.*

There are several ways that we may follow to persuade Africans to be more open to Jesus Christ as a means of relating to God the Father. Through the historical event of Jesus Christ as a human being, as the Cappadocian Fathers already indicated, the best of both the worlds of the divine and the human were brought together, i. e. the visible and invisible; eternity and time; heaven and earth. In His human life Jesus tasted African life in his infancy. Jesus experienced the ritual of circumcision and baptism as a human being.

An African person is used to talking with the ancestors. Similarly the New Testament records that Jesus talked to his Father, and prayed to Him. While on earth Jesus was heard and seen by Peter, James and John talking to two individuals who once lived their lives on earth, Moses and Elijah. Kudadjie (1995:77) argues that 'sickness and healing are one area where the practise of spirituality is very often evident both among Christians and traditionalists'. Physical sickness is often seen as an indication of the ill health of the inner being. Just like Mark 2:1 – 10 instead of healing the man who was sick, Jesus, 'when He saw their faith said your sins are forgiven'. It seems Jesus was not only interested with his physical body but his entire being and his environmental. Again the similarity with Africa can be observed in Mark 7:31 – 37 where Jesus heals a man that was deaf and dumb by putting His finger into his ears and spat and touched his tongue. Then Jesus said '*Ephphata'* (be opened). Cunningham (1990:21) explains that 'the westerner finds in the use of saliva something unhygienic and repugnant'. He further indicates that saliva in Western culture is consistently associated with negative connotations; in African culture saliva can also be associated with a positive value. According to Cunningham (1990) in traditional African society saliva is used by healers to symbolise authority and power.

Another factor that may bring Africans closer to Jesus Christ is the sacrificial offering. Chidester (1992:12) points out that 'in the history of religions, sacrifice has been interpreted in a number of different ways, depending upon which aspect of the ritual has been

emphasised'. Africans have been involved with ritual and continue to be even today. According to Chidester's explanation, sacrifice can involve the killing, offering, expenditure, or consumption of something with highly charged symbolic value. That value may lie in the having, the being or the consumption of that object. In Jesus, Africans do not just have a Priest but they also have a lamb that was offered as a sacrifice. He understands the penetration of a sharp object into his body and can also communicate better about the function of the blood. The challenge is about the next line of the Creed

Of the substance of the father God, light of light, very God of very God begotten not made. Being of one substance with the father by whom all things were made, both which be in Heaven and in earth. Who for us men and for our salvation came down and was incarnate and was made man. He suffered and the third day he rose again, and ascended into Heaven and He shall come again to judge both the quick and the dead'.

This part of the creed is taken from the Nicene Creed, based on the relationship between the Father and the Son and about the nature of the Son in relation to that of the Father. The Church Fathers held the conviction that God the Father the maker of all things visible and invisible; had to be above his creation in nature. They believed that the creator cannot have the same substance with nature, for His should be superior. Therefore if Jesus was never created He is not part of creation but part of the creator. And if Jesus is part of the creator He should be of one substance with the Father, light of light, very God of very God begotten not made.

Theologians like Ogbonnaya (1994) may argue for the point of the same substance from the position of `Divine as a community`. The emphasis may be on the relationships within the community, especially on the concept of Ubuntu. Ogbonnaya's perspective (1994) of the `community` includes human beings, African divinities and the Supreme Being. What is lacking is a category concerning `being of one substance with the Father'. It would be an uphill and exhausting challenge for Ogbonnaya (1994) to attempt to bring the other divinities to the level of `being of one substance with the Father`. In the discussions about the concept of God in relation to ATR it is clear that nothing is ever mentioned that the divinities are part of the process of creation. It is accepted that God as the Supreme Being is the creator, therefore it can be assumed that other divinities are just part of creation and

therefore cannot be spoken of as `being of one substance with the Father only Jesus is` Light of light, very God of very God, begotten not made'.

Ogbonnaya (1994) is too general and broad in content, while Nyamiti deals with family relationships; especially between a father and a descendant. In Nyamiti (1996) God the Father is an Ancestor and the Son Jesus is a Descendant. Nyamiti (1996) regards the Holy Spirit as the love and the gift between the Father and the Son. One can speak of the shared surname or a clan name in that regard. In a family a father may have descendants who are girls or boys. The concept is more comparable when the father has only one descendant who is a male. In this category there was a time when the father was alone or was still a boy without a wife, because within a family the father needs to have a wife to have a descendant. Nyamiti (1996) ignores the fact that there can never be a descendant without a mother or a wife.

Kombo (2009) does not attempt to deal with relationships and substance within the Trinity but focuses on the language that is used by Africans when talking about God. He claims that in Africa God have names like, *Nyasaye, Ngai, Xikwembu* and many other African names. He concludes that these African terms of identity for God were also used for Son and for Holy Spirit.

The challenge for this view is also on the following term; `*who for us men and for our salvation came down and was incarnate and was made man*`. The question is how does 'theology from below' which has more emphasis on the horizontal approach based on the African context interpret the coming down of Jesus for human salvation.

3.5.1   Contextualising salvation in Africa

The theological approach to the teaching of salvation in Africa is similar to that of Christianity in Africa. First it is the identification of the mistakes and the attitudes of the missionaries from European and Western cultures. It is done in order to introduce an approach that is not influenced by western culture but by being more African in approach and content. Brand (1999:193) pointed out in his work that 'although Soteriology, or the Doctrine of salvation, has always occupied a central place in Christian theology, the shape of soteriology has changed many times as Christianity's centre of gravity shifted to a new

cultural context'. As Jesus told his disciples to be His witnesses from Jerusalem to all Judea, to Samaria unto the end of the world. The gospel moved away from the Jewish context where it was influenced by Judaism. It was observed how the nature and the position of Jesus Christ needed some clarity for the Gentile world, outside of the Jewish context. Same as in Africa the western missionaries had to encounter a new cultural context. Brand's (1999:193) understanding is that the doctrine of salvation 'entered into the ways in which is being conceptualised in the new contexts which are often vastly different from more traditional western approach' in addition Maimela (1990:43) says that 'the concept of salvation and how it should be understood is not as simple as we might suppose'. He states this because throughout the history of the church, theologians in different situations have proposed a variety of understandings of what salvation means.

3.5.2   The Concept of Salvation

According to Brand (2002:58) 'the definition of salvation is challenging for the word is ambiguous'. The reason, Brand claims, for the ambiguity of the word salvation is due to the use of words such as 'happiness, well-being or beatitude' to refer to certain states of affairs. While Freligh's (1994:11) emphasis in his teachings is that 'salvation represents all that was purchased at Calvary'. He continues to say that it covers every phase of our need and reaches from eternity to eternity. He explains that there are present and future aspects of salvation. It means it is not only about going to Heaven but also about life today in the now.

Salvation in Christianity seems to be described by several processes that take place from the moment a person becomes a Christian. This idea is represented by Horne (1991:1X) when he says 'the salvation planned, executed, and applied by the Triune God is manifold in nature. ' He says it is comprehended in a series of biblical concepts: *election, calling, regeneration conversion, justification adoption, sanctification and glorification*. Brand (2002:58) feels that 'salvation can be the equivalent of reconciliation or sanctification or liberation'.

When it comes to Christianity in Africa or the African context according to Brand (2002:59) 'the concept of salvation had to be stretched beyond the confines of conventional Christian usage in order to encompass elements from widely divergent religious frames of reference'. He argues against the suggestion that it is a concept only from Christianity but that salvation

is often taken as a key to the very heart of all religions and views of life, and as a fruitful basis for comparisons between them. Brand (2002:60) explains that 'the word salvation does not have its origin in Christianity be that as it may Christianity found its roots from Judaism. Jesus was a Jew, He came to fulfil the Jewish Scriptures and He responded according to the Scriptures. The name Jesus is a Jewish name that of Joshua. According to Easton's Bible Dictionary Joshua is a Hebrew name which means 'Jehovah is His help or Jehovah the Saviour'. In many passages in the Old Testament God was regarded as the Saviour; 'the Lord is my rock, in him will I trust; He is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my saviour; to saves me from violent men' (2 Samuel 22:3). Israel knew their God as a saviour and a stronghold in the days of trouble, the God of Israel regards Himself as a saviour as in (Isaiah 43:11) 'I even I am the Lord, and besides me there is no saviour' (Isaiah 45:21 and 49:26). The understanding of Israel even from the Old Testament is that God is the saviour and Jesus was born to be a saviour. The New Testament introduces Jesus as a saviour, 'for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour', which is 'Christ the Lord` (Luke 2:11). The Church also testified that, God has exalted Him to His right hand to be a prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

Brand (2002:60) may be correct to suggest that 'the word Salvation does not have its origin in Christianity', but in Christianity the word salvation found the most perfect definition in Jesus and that there is no better story that defines and explains the word like that of Jesus the saviour.

3.5.3   Salvation from Below

Brand (2002:89) has an opposing view from that of theologians who concentrate on the `sins of the sinner`. He proposes an approach that concentrates on the victim of sin. The view seems to be moving away from the Christian tradition that says all human beings are born sinners. Brand (2002) claims that God takes the side of the victims; who are the poor and the oppressed. He recognises the role of Jesus in salvation but Brand (2002) regards it as a spiritual aspect of salvation. Instead of emphasising the repentance from sins only, Brand (2002:92) moves that 'the repentance that is preached must be named; it is repentance for our share of the guilt for the suffering and oppression in South Africa'. If the point of departure is concerning those who are victims of sin then how does one view the issue of

sin, in relation to suffering? For Jesus suffered and died for both the poor and the rich and for the oppressed and the oppressor.

3.5.4   African Worldview to Salvation

A lot has been said about the holistic approach from an African perspective. Maimela (1991:4) adds to that discussion that

> *African is made fully aware that the individual's life and the pursuit of life are not attainable in isolation and apart from one's fellows because life is communal and is possible only in a network of mutual interdependencies between an individual and his or her community; life in Africa and for African is viewed as a pursuit of the maintenance of relationships.*

As stated in many ways and forms that these relationships include extended family, clan or tribe, ancestors, God and nature.

An African is introduced to these relationships through a process that is called rites of passage (Cox 1998). These rites and rituals are subdivided as illustrated by Cox (1998:X), `according to the function, they perform for the believing community. Here are the subdivisions:

- Life cycle rituals
- Crisis rituals
- Calendric rituals

As a person goes through the process of development, they pass through certain phases of life and relationships. The development begins from moment of conception and continues after death. According to M`Passou (1998:16) 'a ritual must be performed as soon as a woman is pregnant, the elders in some communities like the Swatis go to the kraal (*ESIBAYENI*)'. There at the kraal the elders communicate with the ancestors to ask them to safe guard the foetus. Then the event proceeds through the introduction of *an inyanga* (traditional healer) where the pregnant woman is given *muti* (African herbs) to give her strength to cope with the challenges of being pregnant. There are also ceremonies that are associated with the birth of the child and the naming of that child. M`Passon (1998:18)

further gives a list of rituals like the burial of the umbilical cord. This is where the child undergoes ritual washing and cannot be touched by other people for a period after that. After a month another ritual is performed where the child is introduced to the larger community and relatives. Africans need to realise the impact of these relationships and accept being part of them. Maimela (1991:5) adds that

> within these highly charged and dynamic communal interrelationships, for better or worse, an African cannot avoid experiencing and being influenced by the activities of the individual existence of his or her fellows who shape, mould and channels his or her life's` fortunes in certain directions as much as he or she in turn also shapes and influences their lives through the manipulation of certain supernatural forces or spirits.

An African continues living life as part of a community, not in isolation as an individual. Life is lived in connection with those that are alive in the here and now but also with awareness of those who have died, yet who are also present in the here and now. Maimela (1991:5) points out that 'when an African suffers disappointment or frustration, success or failure, when a beloved one falls ill or loses children in succession, he or she is apt to look for the cause, in a context outside that of physical cause and effect'. The realities of life for an African are that there is never a separation of physical from spiritual. To the traditional Africans there is no coincidence or accident. Nothing happens by chance that is the reason Maimela (1991) mentions that the traditional African lives his or her life through the manipulation of certain supernatural forces or spirits. The forces and spirits are also manipulated by the witches and sorcerers with evil intent or by medicine men and women to arrest and cure illness.

When an African lives life outside his or her community and becomes an individual he or she becomes exposed to forces and spirits that can bring misfortune upon his or her life. As Maimela (1991:6) points out, `the traditional African is a victim of anxieties that are born out of the foal of evil spirits and malicious persons, especially witches and sorceress'. He continues to say that against the background of appalling terror and deep revulsion against witchcraft, the traditional African is likely to call every premeditated act of enmity, hatred, evil speaking or any other act directed towards the destruction of the life of others

witchcraft and therefore evil, sinful in the highest degree in God`s sight. Maimela argues that `evil spirits and witchcraft are the greatest injustice and sin against a community. ' Brand (2002:73) adds the category of wrongdoing and affliction as a form of small evil.

Brand (2002:104) suggests that 'salvation is to be understood as wholeness'. He further argues that 'evil is constituted by whatever detracts from such wholeness of black people, or the powerlessness of black people in a social order designed to deprive them of the full humanity that God intends for them'. Imperialism and apartheid were perceived as systems that were designed to deprive Africans of the full humanity that God intended for them. Salvation needs to meet the concerns of the African people as Munyika (2004:246) explains, 'the primary concern of ATR is to realise an ideal life for in ATR healing and cleansing was meant to restore all kinds of broken relationships whether between the individual and the community or with the world of the spirits of which God is supreme'. One needs to realise that Munyika`s (2004) definition is based on ATR while Brand's (2002) is derived from Liberation Theology or Black Theology. Brand stresses the evil of systems that were meant to oppress and to deny blacks their full humanity while Munyika (2004) puts emphasis on relationships. Maimela (1991:10) may be regarded as consolidating the two views he says salvation is understood in terms of relief of help in a time of trouble in this life. He further explains that 'salvation is expressed in acts such as healing, driving away evil spirits, empowerment of the individual self, the promotion of fertility and success in life's ventures'.

There are some concerns about the definition of salvation from the Christian faith outside of ATR. According to Maimela (1991:10) 'the salvation offered through ATR is one which speaks to the heart of the African in a way that nothing else does'. He explains further that any 'religious understanding of salvation which is pre occupied as the Christian faith often does, will remain inadequate to meet the needs of the African world, especially if that salvation does not hold promise also for happiness and prosperity, here and now'. Brand (2002:105) suggests that 'by widening the meaning of salvation to include more than atonement wrought by Christ on the Cross, African theologians wish to open the way towards a recognition that ART was already to some extent salvific, even before the advent of Christianity in the continent'. Brand's (2002) point of departure was the claim that the word

salvation did not originate from Christianity and therefore for Brand (2002:106) concludes that `Christianity came to fulfil rather than to replace the religio-cultural heritage'.

Munyika (2004:247) comes from a position that says 'religions without Christ cannot know the grace of God as shown in Christ, though they may have knowledge about His governance'. He further explains that outside Christ there is indeed a self-manifestation of God, and therefore knowledge of God, but it does not lead to salvation, to a union between God and humankind.

According to the creeds Jesus came down for the sake of salvation and was incarnated by becoming human for that reason. It means the Church Fathers believed that who Jesus was could not be compared to any person on earth. He came to fulfil a purpose that no other human being was qualified to accomplish. The Church Fathers understood God's position that human beings are sinners by birth and no other human can save another because are all sinners; and the punishment of sin is death. The incarnation was God's means to make Jesus the only human being who could attain salvation for all humanity. They believed that Jesus was with God the Father from eternity and that He came down for salvation. There was no need for Jesus to be born for He was already there from eternity. He was made human for the sake of salvation.

Jesus took pain and suffering as a means to salvation. He took a form of a servant and became obedient until His death on the cross. The Church Fathers understood that Jesus suffered for all of humanity. They lived their lives in between the times of what had happened and also anticipating something to happen. African ancestors' graves are still closed and their bones are still in their graves. The grave of Jesus is empty because after three days He rose and ascended into Heaven. Christian worship is to thank God for what He had done through Jesus Christ and also to anticipate what God had prepared for the Church in the future; for Jesus shall come again.

The African approach is not to build a pie in the sky. According to *theology from below* sin is about the hardship of the African people through systems of oppression. Some African theologians advance a concept of salvation that must respond to the context of the African people. The challenge is about the agent or agents of that form of salvation. The question is

directly linked to the relationship between Jesus and African ancestors. To accommodate the ancestors while Africans are aware of the cross but not as an agent to forgive or to remove sins is problematic. The cross and Jesus' suffering are appropriated by some Africans only as a symbol of liberation from systems of oppression. The incarnation and the suffering of the Son of God were about the love of God and that love produced salvation. When God in Jesus became human, he was starting at the root of the problem not the fruits thereof. Human suffering in whatever form is as a result of sin. By becoming human Jesus was penetrating every level of human life from conception to death. The Church Fathers perceived pain and suffering as a result of sin due to human disobedience of God. Systems of oppression and all forms of corruption which undermine human life are as a result of sin.

The ancestors may be part of the 'Life cycle rituals', 'Crisis rituals' and 'Calendric rituals', but they cannot be brought into the oneness of God. They may play a vital part in creating a harmonious life for Africans but they cannot share the same substance with God. Therefore salvation is only through the Lord Jesus Christ who became human, suffered for salvation and who is coming back to be the judge of the quick and the dead.

3.5.5   The Incarnation

The disciples of Jesus experienced Him while on earth in His human form. He became human that He may find all of humanity. Jesus in His humanity penetrated all levels of human life. The woman of Samaria by the well in the gospel of John chapter 4 at first she saw Jesus as a Jew, but as they continued with their conversation she began to change her opinion about Jesus. She began to experience that she might be in the presence of a prophet. Somewhere she began to experience God and all her sins were exposed and she ran back to the city calling people, 'come see a man, which told me all things that ever i did; is not this the Christ? (John 4:29). She moved from a Jewish man who had no dealings with the Samaritans, to a prophet, then to Christ.

The disciples too experienced Jesus as they interacted with Him in a human level as they engaged Him they began to encounter God in the Man Christ Jesus. Brunner (1966: 322) says 'that is why the gospels, the records of the human life of Jesus, are placed first in the New Testament, in order that, meeting the Man Christ Jesus, we may, through this encounter,

come to the knowledge of God'. Jesus was seen as a human being because they wanted to stone Him to death because the Jews realised that wanted to make himself equal with God. The gospels help to demonstrate the man Jesus but from the book of Acts Jesus is in glory as seen by Stephen in Acts chapter 7:55-56. When discussing the doctrine of incarnation what is the appropriate approach? Is it from the human side of Jesus or from His divinity since He was there already from eternity? Brunner (1966:322) feels that the way to the knowledge of Jesus leads from the Human Jesus to the Son of God and to the Godhead. The question was how can a human being be regarded as God? Jesus was both human and God at the same time.

Erickson (2006:753) says 'when we say that in the incarnation Jesus took on humanity, we are not talking about this kind of humanity' (this kind after the fall of Adam and Eve). According to Erickson (1966:752) human beings 'are not true human being, but impaired, broken-down vestiges of essential humanity, and it is difficult to imagine this kind of humanity united with deity'. Erickson (1966:753) claims that Jesus 'was not merely as human as we are, He was more human than we are. He mostly fully reveals the true nature of humanity'. Therefore Erickson (1966) proposes an approach into the doctrine of incarnation as an initiative that came from above not from below. Erickson (1966:753) says that 'part of our problem in understanding the incarnation may come from the fact that we view it from the human perspective'. The danger with Erickson's (1966) approach is how one interprets Romans 8: 3b that says 'God sending His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh' (KJV). If sin had to be removed why should Jesus have a humanity that is not like sinful humanity? One should bring solution where the problem is.

When the term says fully human, that is what it means nothing less and nothing more. Walvoord (1969:110) says 'the humanity of Christ is evident first of all in the fact that He possessed a true human body composed of flesh and blood'. Walvoord (1969:110) argue that 'His body growth was normal like that of other children'. The only difference which Walvoord (1969:111) points out is that Jesus had no sin. He says that Jesus Christ as the Son of God possessed a human body, but it is necessary to view Him as having a complete human nature include body, soul and spirit.

There are those who claim that the divinity of Jesus Christ was a product of the church especially the 325 Council of Nicaea. The meeting of about 318 Bishops decided for the whole Christian Church, how to view the nature of Jesus Christ. Some have spoken of the Jesus of history and the Jesus of faith, since there seem to be differences in theological approach. The question is: How does Africa view the doctrine of incarnation? Chikane (1985:37) points out that the disciples of Jesus were aware of his 'Deity' even before He ascended into heaven. They were also aware of His humanity and historicity. When the word became flesh, God become human to be Immanuel 'God with us' in practice and reality. Because of His becoming flesh, letters like 1 John 1:1-3 were able to say 'that which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled, of the word of life' (KJV). Therefore since they saw Him, touched Him and listened to Him, it means they were convinced about his humanity. John continues in 1 John 4:2-3 'hereby knows ye the spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God' (KJV). John felt so strongly about the humanity of Jesus to a point where He said 'every spirit that confesses not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of anti-Christ' (KJV). Chikane (1985:37) argues that the Early Church was convinced that there was no doubt about Jesus' humanity' and his divinity. Kaiser (1998:221) concludes that the teachings of the Early Fathers and the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creeds were well grounded in the teachings of the Apostles and the New Testament. He asks how Christians should approach the doctrine of the incarnation.

Chikane (1985:38) presents two possible approaches to the doctrine of incarnation; one is a Christology from above while the other is Christology from below. For the Christology from above the approach is to start with the divinity of Jesus Christ. According to Chikane (1985:38) 'this classical way of viewing Jesus Christ is called Theocentric Christology'. He points out that the challenge with this approach is that 'it emphasises the divinity of Jesus; His humanity tends to be suppressed and even ignored', with the implication that the church takes a vertical approach to things. Chikane (1985:58) says 'this vertical view uproot Christians and turns them away from the world, making them pretend to live in heaven whilst they are still on earth'. This approach ignores the humanity of Jesus Christ and

upholds His divinity to an extreme. Therefore the church fails to deal with issues of human realities on earth like hunger, unemployment, racism, and so on.

The second approach to the doctrine of incarnation is Christology from below. Chikane (1985:38) reveals that this approach is called 'Anthropocentric Christology which proceeds from the historical Jesus to the divinity of Jesus'. He says that for this approach to salvation would be expressed more in horizontal categories. The major part of his paper explains incarnation from the anthropocentric Christology.

Kaiser's (1998:223) approach is to deal with both because 'the doctrine of the Trinity and the Incarnation are the twin pillars of Christian faith and life, but they cannot be either derived or properly understood other than on the foundation of the relationship, and hence of the offices of Christ'. We can conclude from this assertion that one cannot arrive at Jesus' glorification without the historical event of Jesus Christ on earth, from birth up to the cross. Kaiser (1998:223) says,

> *the dwelling of God in human flesh was something quite new unprecedented in all the history of Israel. Every human born was never there before, but Jesus existed long before He was born. He created the one who gave birth to Him. He is the creator who became one with the creation and became human in its totality. It is one of the greatest miracles in the history of the human race.*

One needs to be careful not to emphasise one approach above the other. Yet Chikane thinks differently.

In *African Theologies* Chikane (1985:40) says 'in Southern Africa the doctrine of incarnation relate to the question of the suffering of a crucified Christ to the relation to the suffering of blacks'. The Western missionaries presented the Christ of faith who was so divine that their presentation failed to be in touch with the human side of the African people. Chikane (1985:41) saw a need for theology to be de-Hellenised and de-Westernised, so that the black theologian could identify with the humanity of Christ.

Chikane wrote his article in 1985 during the time of the State of Emergency and this essay was edited with the help of Father A Nolan as Chikane was arrested and detained on charges of treason before he could prepare his address for publication. At that time he was the General Secretary of the Institution for Contextual Theology in Johannesburg (which was an institution but not a university) and was still involved with the South African Council of Churches (SACC). The language which was used in his article reflects the situation of that time. Chikane (1985:42) says 'we must examine and re-examine the received images of the Incarnation and reconstruct, in the light of our situation and its dynamics, a better image'. He said so because the received images of the incarnation were developed from the Western philosophical debates about divinity and humanity. One of the limitations of the Western philosophy given to Africa, according to Chikane (1985:43), was that 'the preconceived concepts of divinity subvert the very intention of divinity, that our models and metaphors of divinity are those of a detached God who is not part of created reality, a God who is acting outside his/her people and lives far from them'.

There is no doubt that Chikane (1985:45) believes in and accepts the divinity of Christ but his understanding is coloured by his view of the context and plight of the African people, for Chikane says Jesus was divine and become human. For becoming human he used the term 'becomes flesh' (1 John 4:2). Chikane (1985:45) states that 'to say that Jesus came and died in the "flesh" is to say that He came and died in the state and under the conditions of created physical world and psychical life'. There is a sense that 'Incarnation' is used in the ATR as similar to the concept of contextualisation or theology from below. Specifically it is related to theology that has the context of African people as a starting point. Chikane also wrote from the position of Black Theology. For Chikane (1985:45) says that 'the historical Jesus then entered the whole realm of created reality'. He continues to say that 'Incarnation cannot be confined or reduced to the concepts of Africanisation or adaptation to African culture'. Chikane (1985:45) believe that 'Incarnation' also challenges the politics of a country, its social and economic system and everything else.

Chikane (1985:45) concludes his work with a focus on *the Incarnation in the lives of the people in Southern Africa*. As stated before, Chikane's words reflect the context of that time. He continued to say Southern Africa was under a siege. Chikane (1985:45) explains further

'for some of us who have been victims of Western Colonisation and imperialism, who have been subjects for centuries because of their superior arms, for us, when the South African apartheid army strikes at Matola in Mozambique, at Maseru in Lesotho and at Luanda in Angola, we are only reminded that we are under siege'. Here his tone takes another direction towards Black Theology. In the Black Theology context one cannot mention the definition of sin and righteousness, because the context imposes its own definitions. The theological discussions are about socio-political realities and terms are defined by that context. According to Chikane (1985:46) 'this is the context within which we have to consider the meaning and implications for us of the concept of Incarnation. It is a context of racial, oppression and economic exploitation'.

When Chikane (1985:46) views the incarnation as God becoming human it is intended to mean that the divine took the side of the poor and the oppressed. It does not take into account that all of humanity is under the judgment of sin and need a saviour to die for them. For Chikane (1985:46) the incarnation means identification with humanity. It means identifying with humanity especially in their weakness, suffering and pain. He emphasises his point by asking 'did not the historical Jesus choose to identify and live with the poor, the blind, the sick, and the hungry, thus deliberately associating with a particular class of people in the society' (Chikane, 1985:46). He asks further 'did not the historical Jesus refuse to be made a king? ' (Chikane, 1985:46). There is a feeling that the tools and the resources of the incarnation are being utilised in political battles. Chikane (1985:46) argues that 'for Jesus there was no question of neutrality in the face of evil and injustices for He further explains that in the light of the new understanding of the Incarnate life of our Lord, we are called to abandon the old ideas of neutrality, unity and reconciliation'. Chikane (1985:47) challenged Christians to begin to understand that 'there is no possibility of unity or reconciliation between the oppressed and the oppressor, the exploiter and the exploited, between good and evil, God and the Devil, without repentance and commitment to the truth'. He further claims that in the Incarnation the African people are called to abandon the old theology of reconciliation.

The language of the *Kairos Document* is underscored in Chikane's (1985:47) statements when he says 'If the victims of the inhuman apartheid system are told that God is only

concerned about their spiritual lives, they will have reason to subscribe to, the "God-is-Dead" Theology of the sixties'. The mood of those days was captured in these words 'if belief in God has no bearing on the social, political, economic, if God has nothing to do with my pain, then I do not need such a God. That God is as good as dead'. One may say Chikane (1985:47) here is not challenging the attitude of God towards the poor and those oppressed, but rather the theology that ignores the concern of the poor and the oppressed. Yet there is still the feeling that the tools and resources of the incarnation are misapplied. The weakness of his approach is that he does not ask how the poor and the oppressed relate to God; and whether the poor and the oppressed are on the right standing with God or not. It seems that Jesus is pulled towards the poor and the oppressed, but with what results? Did the incarnation happen to bring transformation into the lives of all human beings and draw them closer to God or did the incarnation take place for political change?

The teaching on the incarnation about Jesus who was born as both divine and human unites. He was fully God and fully human and the church should never over emphasise one nature over another. There has to be coherence and consistency between the Jesus of history and the Jesus of faith.

About the incarnation it can be concluded that 'the insoluble mystery, that at this one point in the world and in history it is true that the borderline between the creator and the creature has been crossed, that from the standpoint of natural knowledge, there is a human creature who is God and that it has pleased God to identify with a definite, localised finite given entity, with the historical person Jesus of Nazareth' (Brunner, 1966:362). The church can also learn from what Walvoord (1969:114) pointed out that 'through the incarnation of Christ, the two natures were inseparable united in such a way that there was no mixture or loss of their separate identity and without loss or transfer of any property or attribute of one nature to the other. The Christians can learn how to accept each other without a desire to destroy others. African notion of Ubuntu can put more light to how a person can fully become a person in the presence of others without losing one's identity.

CHAPTER 4: ONE BODY BUT MANY MEMBERS

So far the research has focused on the relationships within the Godhead, the community and the unity of the triune God. The main question was based on the position and the nature of Jesus Christ within the trinity in relation to God the Father. The debate on these questions led to the 325 AD Nicene Creed and the question on the Holy Spirit led to 381 AD Constantinople Creed. While African theologies have to deal with the context of the African people and to contextualise the gospel, the approach has not aided articulation of the revelation of God through Jesus Christ. The contribution by the Cappadocian Fathers resulted in the theological position of three relationships and one nature within the triune God. Much of African theologies were engaged in setting the record straight and questioning the injustices that dehumanise African people. This section is an attempt to find how far these discussions can benefit and influence the church of Jesus Christ. The research shall explore and analyse the categories that are found which can be utilised to the benefit of the body of Christ, with reference to the notion of Communion and Perichoresis. First the discussion will try to understand the meaning of Koinonia, the move towards theological discussions on the Ecumenical movement. Lastly the focus of the research shall be on communion and its relationship with African Traditional Religion.

4.1 AIC and the tools of ATR in Worship

Although it has been suggested that in the ATR there is a practice to worship the ancestors by Africans, the study accept that not all accept the claim. There may be a counter claim that says Africa do have a credible and substantiated life-affirming historical aspect of God's revelation in human history, which may not be recorded but expressed orally. It is not the position of this study to dispute the revelation of God in ATR but to question the continuation of the ATR within the context of Christianity. This paper accept that ATR is a religions just like Islam, Hindu, Judaism, and that they may be worshipping the same God as Christianity but not through Jesus Christ and for that reason they cannot be Christian in worship and in teaching. The study shall now focus on the worship and objects of worship within the ATR. There is still the ritual of sacrificial offering, what is the implication of the continuation within the church in the presence of Jesus Christ?

It was mentioned in this study that in an African village there are two very important people; the chief who own the land on behalf of the ancestors and the *ngaka* (traditional healer). Nkomazana (2001:96) mentioned earlier that this *ngaka* is regarded as a doctor, in sickness, a priest in religious matters, a lawyer in legal issues, and a policeman in the detection and prevention of crime. If *ngaka* is a priest, what is his/her function and what happens when Africans or Africa are in worship? McVeigh (1974; 104) says African worship is a varied and complex affair. Although he does not point out what makes it to be varies and complex but McVeigh (1974:104) says worship in Africa involves prayer and offering. To King (1986:59) as 'the divine communicates with the human and the human with the divine. It has been repeatedly emphasised about how religious Africans are. King (1986:59) speaks of 'the most common form of African fellowship with the divine as is bodied forth in the mother of the African family waking before dawn and silently saluting, the great spirits of the cosmos and the ancestors of her own and her husband's lineage'.

4.1.1 Sacrifices and offerings

Before one may ask who is the beneficiary of these rituals lets examine the activities themselves. Many historians and theologians had recorded about the practice of sacrificial offerings within the ATR. King (1986: 65) says any observant person will see sacrifices performed all over Africa; perhaps it will be the breaking of a hen's egg against the base of a tree or the use of a sheep's blood to propitiate the soul of a statue in the Ghanaian capital. Perhaps in the Sudan it will be offering on an ox, perhaps it will be the decapitation of a dog in honour of Ogun in Lagos, the capital of Nigeria, or a chicken or two in Kumasi in Ghana or Kinshasa in Zaire (DRC), or a goat in a house lot in Soweto near Johannesburg'. Tlhahale (1998:6) concur with King (1986) about the existence of sacrifices in African culture but he continues to say that 'they were not necessarily accompanied by prayer. Christianity is a belief in the Lord Jesus Christ who offered Himself to God as the greatest sacrifice for humanity once and for all. After Christ Jesus is there a need for another sacrificial offering?

4.1.2 Ancestral ritual

It is clear that the continuation of the sacrificial offering in Africa is directed to the ancestors. Mbiti (1969:58) mentions that 'sacrifices and offerings constitute one of the commonest acts worship among African peoples and examples of them are overwhelmingly many'. Yet Mbiti

(1969:58) further said that 'sacrifices and offerings are directed to one or more of the following: God, spirits and the living dead' (ancestors). The spirits and ancestors are just intermediaries but God is the ultimate recipient of the offering. African theologians may claim that God is the recipient of these sacrifices, but after the one given by Jesus His only Son, is there still a room for other sacrifices?

The rituals and offerings differ from one place to another. According to Ejizu (2008:np) 'family elders make regular offerings of gifts, food and drinks to the ancestors. The Igbo male elder does not normally eat or drink without first offering some portion on the ground, or at the shrine or symbol of the ancestors. The Mende of Sierra Leone avails of the staple food item of rice, and water for their offering to ancestral spirits'. As for Mbiti 1969) the list of example is too much to mention. But here McVeigh (1974:105) says that 'offering are many and varied. Usually the gifts consist of the ordinary articles of daily use items of great value. He mentions things like tobacco, beer, grain, cloth and hoes'. McVeigh (1974:105) mentions that saliva is also tendered not because it is needed by the spirits but because it represents a giving of oneself to renew the bond of relationship between the worshippers and worshipped'. From the moment of conception of an African baby until at the burial of an African person, he or she goes through passages of life and rituals observing them through sacrificial offerings to the ancestors. Amanze (2001:278) says 'it has been generally observed that it is customary among customary among African people to pour, place or sprinkle blood as a symbol of life upon alters, shrines or other sacred places during religious ceremonies possibly intended to please the ancestors and other deities which are concerned with the affairs of human king'.

There is the fact of uncertainty concerning the recipient of the sacrifices between God and the ancestors. According to Moila (1989:78) 'ancestors are remembered, recognised and acknowledged as superiors according to their rank'. This is the point that was mentioned before whether Africans worship the ancestors. The question is why do the ancestors want to be remembered, recognised, and acknowledge through sacrificial offerings? There is a claim among the African theologians and sympathisers that Africans conceive God to be too far away and remote and that influence the approach to worship for the Africans. Because of that distance between African and God the best way is to go through ancestor. Some say

according to Nyirongo (1997:51) 'because God is so awesome the African feels unworthy to approach Him directly. He/she must therefore present his/her needs, and worship through intermediaries'. This suggests that since Africans approach God through intermediaries, that how God is supposed to respond to the Africans.

This distance that is assumed between an African and God may also presuppose unclear definition of the revelation of God. An African become too involve in rituals of blood and sacrificial offering without encountering his or her God because it is assumed there is such a distance between an African with God. According to Ela (1988:21) 'such sacrifices regularly involve a blood offering, with various prayers and invocations; at the end there is a shared eating or communion of the noble parts of the animal'. He continues to say that such sacrifices never continue without consulting diviner. Between God and the African there are intermediaries which according to Nyirongo (1977:53) they have many different types like ancestral spirits, kings, chiefs, prophets, priests, medicine man, diviners, and mediums'. The intermediaries receive sacrifices and then pass them to other intermediaries.

In the world of spirits there are ancestral spirits and other spirits acting as intermediaries. While in the physical world of the living there are other intermediaries like diviners, priests, medicine man, or mediums who are qualified to communicate with ancestral spirits. Because of the perceived distanced distance between an African with their God communication is made through intermediaries or to them. It may mean even though an African is so religious yet he or she spend much of the time communicating only with intermediaries than to God.

Serious questions do arise. It is a Christian position that through Jesus Christ the gap that was there between God and humanity was exterminated. And that Jesus had offered the most ideal sacrificial offering on behalf of human beings once and for all. If God received the best sacrificial offering from His own Son why do Africans continue to offer sacrifices? Within the Christian faith how can one justify the continuation of these rituals without feeling guilty of idolatry?

4.1.3   The Biblical basis and means of Worship.

There seems to be such a close link between Christianity and the church they make look the same. They are both built upon the foundation of Jesus Christ. Moltmann (2006:66) says

'there is only a church if and as long as Jesus of Nazareth is believed and acknowledged as the Christ of God'. If Jesus owns the church it means God the Father and God the Holy Spirit are present. When African in their worship bring along any deity outside the triune God is that an appropriate service in the context of Christianity? Is the worship in the ATR acceptable within the Christian faith or it is idolatry? According to Nyirongo (1997:40) true worship begins with God's opening the heart of the sinner and the sinner's response in repentance and faith in God'. The act of repentance should be due to 'Christ's atoning work on the cross which bridges the gap between human and God' (Nyirongo, 1997:57). Without Jesus human beings may never find a way back to God and may not begin to comprehend who God is. Human beings through Christ are able to approach God then the many of worship is demanded. Nyirono (1997:40) claims that God 'directs the repentant sinner as to how he ought to worship Him. In other words God set the term and conditions of the relationship between Him and humanity.

Afeke and Verster (2004:56) are cautious saying 'if ancestors having actually become spirits, then dealing with them as spirits falls in the category of "familiar spirits". If ancestors function as intermediaries in that they receive prayers, libation or invocation, then dealing with them becomes idolatry as they take the place of Christ who is the only mediator between God and man' (human). Turaki (1999:269) feel at pain that he 'observed that God has been left out almost completely'. He says we need to address a situation where man in traditional Africa is seriously very busy, in everything he/she is religious yet God takes a secondary position or none at all. While Nyirongo (1997:45) points out that 'if idolatry is the worship of created things instead of the true God, and then evidences of idolatry amongst Africans are overwhelmingly many'.

Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:14-20 (KJV) says 'wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry'. Here it's a warning to the church of Christ to flee from idolatry that should be taken very seriously. He talks about 'the communion of the body of Christ, saying 'for we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread'. Should the African church continue to offer sacrifices to the spirits and ancestors in the church of Jesus Christ in the name of African culture? How can an African have fellowship with Jesus if he/she continues to have fellowship with other intermediaries? Etuk (1985:217) argue that

an African Christianity rooted in the cultures and traditions of Africa poses a paradox. Where the traditional cultural and religious practices of the people are clearly polytheistic, shall we place Yahweh with His uncompromising claims on all aspects of life alongside the other deities and make Him co-exist amicably with them, or shall we consider that Yahweh is no more than a Jewish tribal god which they can keep while they keep their fathers' god

Though the formation of the AICs was because of certain needs that were facing the African people but the practice of the ATR within the Christian church was one of the great mistakes of the 21 century church in Africa. The difficulty according to Etuk (1985:217) is with 'the theology of contextualisation and the call for an African Christian theology is that what emerges is neither Christian nor theological, but a capitulation to traditional cultural practices'. The church in Africa should concur with Moltmann (2006:69) that 'the being of the church is described through the activities of Christ, who chooses, gathers, protect and upholds'. Jesus is not present but He is the Lord and should be recognised as such in His church. The AIC should understand that there is no need for sacrificial offerings because 'the death of the Son of God on the cross reaches deep into the nature of God, above all other meanings, is an event which takes place in the innermost nature of God Himself' (Moltmann, 2000:305). When one has experience that revelation then a Christian is able to rejoice in worship of the risen Lord and saviour. And also realise the truth of Moltmann's (2000:306) words when he says that 'the redeeming cross of Christ always pieces deep the eternal divine mystery, and it is only in the crucified Christ, bound to us in solidarity, that the divine mystery reveals itself'.

The study turns to the discussion about what constitute a community of faith within the context of the Christian faith and that of African.

4.2   Defining Koinonia

The definition serves as an introduction to the discussion about the body of Christ on earth. Koinonia deals with some meanings and implications of community and relationships. In community and relationships there are the following implications; communion by intimate

participation and fellowship where there is also sharing. The concept of Koinonia inspired Smith in the 1980s to take white Christians from the Dutch Reformed Church to introduce them to a township outside Pretoria to fellowship with blacks. Smith (1994:69) argued that 'Koinonia made a major contribution towards the reopening of South African society after many years of alienation and estrangement between the white and black worlds, worlds that had been kept apart in a vicious way by the most dehumanising laws, creating a society of alienation, distrust, suspicion and violence. *Wikipedia* gives words like sharing, relationships and community as synonyms of Koinonia. Suggs (1984:352) noticed that 'in the New Testament the word Koinonia occurs 48 times and 28 of those occurrences belong to Paul'.

4.2.1   The New Testament usage of Koinonia

As mentioned above the word Koinonia is represented by several words. On Wikipedia it states that the essential meaning of Koinonia embraces concepts from the English term community, communion, joint participation, sharing and intimacy. Therefore certain translation will have more occurrence than others in this study. Wikipedia detects it 19 times in the Bible and goes further to break it down according to the new American Standard Bible which translates it as *fellowship* 12 times, as *sharing* 3 times and as *participation* and *contribution* twice each, bringing the total to the 19 times the word occurs.

For Wikipedia Koinonia is given meaning in the following manner: for sharing, is to share with one another in a possession held in common. It implies the spirit of generous sharing of the act of giving is contrasted with selfishness. *Koinonein* means to have a share in a thing, human beings can share a common history that holds them together and they may also share an opinion. The story of Jesus Christ is a common story shared and celebrated by all Christians. Brown (2006:168) further adds that '*Koinonos* means one who shares something or being a partner'. He explains that all these words are from the Greek word *Koinos*, meaning that which is shared in common.

Wikipedia brings in the word relationship based on *Koinonos* which includes companion, a partner or a joint-owner. The word partner, which can further imply an association, common effort or a partnership in common has already been mentioned by Brown (2006). The example is found in Luke 5:10 indicating that James and John were partners within Simon Peter. The term can also mean the bond between two people who are joined together in

marriage. The bond could be beyond the human to human one to include a relationship with God and with the Holy Spirit.

Brown (2006:168) reveals that in English translations of the New Testament, the word *Koinon* is translated variously as *fellowship* especially in the King James Version and *communion* and *sharing* in New Revise Standard Version (NRSV).

Wikipedia points out a definition that is based on community. The idea of community denotes a common unity of purpose and interests. It is also pointed out that by giving mutual support friendship and family merge, that both fellowship and community imply an inner and outer unity. Therefore *Koinonia* creates brethren or fraternal bond which builds trust.

4.2.2   Koinonia in the Church

Suggs (1984) discusses the way the word *Koinonia* meant to New Testament writers especially Paul. In reference to Philippians 4:15-16 Suggs (1984:352) says 'it is used in connection with material goods or in ways related to commercial activities responding to Paul's needs'. The focus is on these words 'no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving but ye only' (King James Version) and from the New Jerusalem Bible it says, 'no church other than yourselves made common account with me in the matter of expenditure and receipts, you were the only ones', and then in the Amplified Bible: 'no church entered into partnership with me and opened up (a debit and credit) account in giving and receiving except you only'. Suggs (1984) is using 'you shared with me a debit and credit account' as his point of reference. There is a suggestion of a business transaction between two partners. It is Suggs (1984:352) conclusion 'however metaphorical this commercial expression may be its effectiveness requires that Paul and the Philippian congregation be understood in some sense as related in a business enterprise in which a ledger was kept, and that their early contribution to his material needs in Thessalonica were their payments on account'. Suggs (1984) understood that the metaphor still continues in versus 17-18 where the gift from the church is seen as a profit and Paul is writing a receipt for the whole amount. Paul had shared with them the gospel, he ministered spiritual matters of the gospel they now share with him their material goods. This is also the same situation

according to Suggs (1984:354) in the words of Paul to Philemon where Paul says 'if you count me (Paul) a business partner', and in 18 it says, 'if he owes you anything, put it on my account'. The question might be on the manner or type of partnership because it does not seems clear, but what is clear is that there is a sharing between Paul and Philemon.

In addition to partnership Suggs (1984:358) investigates words like participation, association and fellowship. He points out that some of the passages have a 'vertical dimension like 1Peter 5:1, 11Corinthian 1:7 and Philippians 2:1. This is closer to what Brown (2006:167) calls the Trinitarian character of *Koinonia* where the church shares in the very triune nature of God, sharing with the Father, through the Son, in the power of the Holy Spirit. The church becomes a communion between human beings and also of human beings with the divine. On Wikipedia it is stated that in the New Testament the basis of communion is the community of faith. There is the sameness of the bonds in the power of the Holy Spirit that link the believer with other Christians.

Both Wikipedia and Brown (2006:168) agree with Suggs (1984) that the sharing also includes material resources. They give the passage in Acts 2:44 where the early Christians had all things in common *(Koina)*. According to Wikipedia, Acts 2:42-47, has the first usage of Koinonia in the Greek New Testament. They say it is based more on the life of the local church. This is where communion includes the breaking of bread form of worship and prayer.

Another use of *Koinonia* in scripture especially in Paul's letters has to do with a monetary contribution (*Koinonia*) from the churches in Rome and Greece for the church in Jerusalem when it was in financial need (Romans 15:26 and 2Corinthians 9:13).

4.2.3   People of God, body of Christ and *Koinonia* of Spirit.

Grieb (2005) deals with the church based on the writings or language of Paul in three approaches as 'people of God, body of Christ and Koinonia of Spirit'. It is Grieb's (2005:227) understanding that wrestling with the ethical question of God's unity and identity, Paul has to expand the traditional term 'the people of God' to include Gentiles as a result of what God has done in Jesus Christ and in the Spirit'. Grieb (2005) uses the word the 'people of God' to refer what describes the relationship between Israel and God. But Paul was dealing

with the attitude of the Jews on the Law of Moses in reference to the Christians who were Gentiles. The challenge facing Paul, Grieb (2005:229) points out, was to explain 'why the same God must be God of both Jews and Gentiles and must justify them (Jews and Gentiles) both in the same way' (Roman 3:29-30).

Grieb (2005:229) mentions that the 'oneness of God plays a central role in Paul's theology. The words that were spoken and credited to God in the Old Testament are credited to Jesus in the New Testament. ' Jesus is given a name that is above every name and at that name of Jesus every knee should bow down and every tongue should confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:9-11). This was a means to bring the term 'people of God' from the setting of the Jewish community of Judaism to a new setting and new covenant. Grieb (2005:233) is of the view that 'Paul has taken over not just the linguistic background of the phrase 'people of God' but also most of its theological content'. The theological content includes the story that 'Israel is God's own possession since their election results from the action of God (Exodus 19:4-5). God's election of Israel is rooted in a particular historical event, their deliverance from bondage in Egypt (Deuteronomy 7:6-8) and God's election of Israel as His people calls them into a covenant relationship with God (Deuteronomy 7:9:11). Grieb observe that Paul has made some major theological modifications where the new covenant includes the Gentiles through the blood of Jesus Christ. With reference to Romans 9:11, 15, 24-26 Grieb (2005) regards Paul juxtaposing the Exodus event with the birth, life and death of Jesus Christ as a new event to bring the Gentiles to be part of the body of Christ. Grieb (2005:233) concludes this section by saying that 'the whole people of God, Jews and Gentiles together are called to God's purpose of mutual up building and mission'.

On the body of Christ Grieb (2005:234) points out that the 'argument for Eucharistic traditions as the source of Paul's metaphor for the Christian community rests on the combination of 1Corinthians 10:16-17 and 1 Corinthians 12:12-31. Because they share the cup of communion, being many Christians, they belong to the body of Christ. The source of the metaphor of the body is been explored in 1Corinthians 12:12-31 and Romans 12:4-8 where Grieb indicates that 'Paul expresses the theme of the unity and diversity within the community and to warn against schisms'. The diversity is not based on being Jewish or being

Gentile but on humanity at large. The message is that because the members of the body of Christ are many no particular one is significant and no one is above another, all their services are equal before the Lord.

When John the Baptist preached about the coming of Jesus, he said 'someone greater than me is coming'. In reference to himself, John said 'I am just a voice to prepare the way'. When he was asked about Jesus activities he said 'the one from above is above all'. John the Baptist wanted Jesus to increase while he (John the Baptist) decreased. When Jesus spoke of John He said 'of all born of a woman there had never been a human being greater than John'. They say it is great people who recognise the greatness of others. The point here is that in the body of Christ all members are equal and they all recognise the gift of the other.

The Baptism and the Eucharist which are practises of the community of faith are regarded by Grieb (2005:234) as a 'source for Paul's understanding of the body of Christ'. The Baptism by water of the believer is a symbol of a Christian dying and buried with Christ and resurrecting into the newness of life in Christ Jesus.

The term 'Koinonia of spirit', Grieb (2005) mentions that it was used by Paul on two occasions in 2Corinthians 13:13 and in Philippians 2:1-2. Grieb (2005:236) says that the idea of 'Koinonia of spirit' plays a major role in Paul's theology and ethics. Grieb (2005) gives these 1Corinthians 6:11, 122:3, 9, 13, 14:16 and Romans 9:1, 12:11, 14:17 and 15:16 as Paul's idea of being in the spirit as being under a power. To be in the body of Christ seems to be a process by the Holy Spirit. Being in the body of Christ seems to mean the fellowship or being in partnership with other believers who are under the power of the Holy Spirit. The believers who are members of the body of Christ are also in communion (Koinonia) with the Spirit. Grieb (2005:236) observes 'the variety of Koinonia expressions in Paul's letters both those that deal specifically with partnership participation in Jesus Christ, or the Gospel of Jesus Christ and those which deal more generally with life together in Christ'.

It seems that Grieb (2005) attempted to make some comparison between 'the people of God, the body of Christ and the Koinonia of the spirit' with that of the Godhead (the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit). Grieb (2005:238) speaks of the one God of Israel as mirrored in the logic of the terms, people of God and body of Christ, 'and reflects the complex reality of

the way the community is both Jewish and Gentile on the one hand and both one and many on the other hand'. He says the logic behind the term 'Koinonia of spirit' holds together the term 'people of God' and 'body of Christ'. No matter how correct Grieb (2005) is but to compare the triune God with the trinity of the church as, the people of God, body of Christ and Koinonia of the spirit, may result in a lot of confusion and inappropriateness theologically. For the church universal is neither Jewish nor Gentile. It is based on the belief in Jesus Christ not in nationality.

In the discussions concerning the world *Koinonia* the words participation, partnership, sharing, fellowship and communion have been used more. The relationship, the sharing and communion includes all of the life of a believer. It is a relationship that is not based on a person's nationality but on what God has done through Jesus Christ. The church shares in the story of Jesus Christ and each member is connected to another by being a member of the body of Christ through the spirit of God. The Christian community, share in the Eucharist and Baptism, the unity in the body of Christ. As noted the Christian community was also referred to as the body of Christ. Who can benefit from the community faith?

The African context seems to be too far removed from that of the body of Christ. In the African community the space is shared between the living and the dead. The talk about the ancestral spirits and other spirits when in the church the Holy Spirit is present. The African religion present a space and distance that is there between God and the African people. The gap is occupied by the ancestral spirits and other spirits which are known as intermediaries. The Holy Spirit from the study of the trinity is divine and of the same substance with the Father and the Son. In Koinonia there is participation, partnership, sharing, fellowship and communion, the question is can an African bring along his/ her ancestors. Are there boundaries that define Koinonia? The body of Christ is made up of those who had offered their lives to Jesus Christ as their Lord. They are washed in the blood of the lamb. They worship God through Jesu Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.

An African is involved in two worlds, the living and the dead. In the African community ancestors are welcomed but they are not part of the Koinonia of the body of Christ. An African is welcomed into the body of Christ but cannot bring any deity except the triune God. Ecumenism is how an African looks at himself in comparison with the world.

4.2.4   Ecumenism

The above section was dealing with the relationship and fellowship among Christians and between Christians with their God. Now the research focuses on another word that may be close to *Koinonia* which is Ecumenism. Ecumenism according to Kinimi and Malek (1999:8) is a Greek word, *Oikoumene* which means 'the whole world, 'an inhabited world' and 'humanity'. As a movement and institution Kinimi and Malek (1999:9) explains that 'ecumenism is a worldwide reconciliation in Christian faith to establish co-operation and unity for the proclamation of the gospel to the nations'. Two things need to be noticed from what Kinimi and Malek (1999) said 'the whole world or 'an inhabited world' and 'worldwide reconciliation'. It is a fact that the Church is now regarded as a global or universal institution. The church is the largest religious movement in the world by far. There are about four or five calendars in the world, the Chinese calendar, the Jewish calendar, the Islam calendar and the Christian calendar. The Christian calendar seems to dominate the others especially when the three events, New Year, Christmas and Easter are regarded as global events within the Christian calendar. So the word Ecumenism deals with the 'inhabited world' or 'the whole world' how does the word worldwide reconciliation link to each other. The answer may be found in the words of Jesus Christ 'go ye therefore and teach all nations' (Matthew 28:19) it is a gospel for all nations.

The Ecumenical movement is the means for the church to bring together the different theological reflections of itself. Kinimi and Malek (1999:9) explains that 'the church has to reconcile its different theological understandings and bring them together under one theme or pre-occupation the universal salvation'. He says the reconciliation should deal with the joint confession of Jesus Christ and the unity of His people. Ecumenism is a means to unite the church under the Name of Jesus Christ and to find a way to reflect about Jesus Christ theologically within the traditions that exist in the world today. Malek (1999:14) points out that 'the foundational, undergirding impetus for ecumenical endeavours is the realisation that all Christians have one common and communal faith'. The foundation for unity is the faith that is common and shared. He continues to say 'this faith is an on-going proclamation that the Lord our God is one, and that this oneness is in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour'. The oneness is also emphasised by the prayer of Jesus in John 17. The way for the church to achieve the goal of a universal unity with one common faith of Jesus Christ according to

Malek (1999) is that Christians must dialogue with one another and with the world of today. Therefore Malek (1999:15) defines ecumenism 'as an attempt at self-understanding, an understanding of other Christians, and an understanding of the world and faith'. For that reason Christian theology should not be monopolised by one culture but must be inclusive and plural.

Lombaard (1999:30) pays attention to the relationship between the Bible and Ecumenism and spots the metaphor of the body of Christ in Paul's work, the church constitutes of people who are intimately related to Christ. When people are related to Christ, in a way, they are also related to one another through the blood of Jesus. Lombaard (1999:33) recognised that 'part of the current Christian identity is the realisation of the importance of ecumenism'. He also acknowledges the fact that the 'Bible-moulded, equally the Spirit-moulded, Christian identity leads the church of this time towards an ecumenical consciousness and practise. The main task of the Bible is to inform Christians about their Christianity and how to relate to Christ. Therefore since the ecumenism is a Christian institution the Bible must be accepted as a 'rule of faith and life' (Lombaard, 1999:34).

Africa seems to be a continent of many colours as the identity of the denominations to which one belongs. Most African churches and denominations are identified by the type of uniform they wear. The blacks in the Methodist church are identified by the type of uniform while the whites in the Methodist don't put of uniform. The type and colours of a person's clothing seems to have more value in African churches than the name of that denomination. The clothing in the township churches are part of worship. Darby (1999:64), in dealing with broad differences in worship between denominations mentions that 'the manner of worship may often enable the observer to tell to which denomination it belongs'. He continues to say that the differences in worship have often been the cause of division. Division has been part of the history of the church in South Africa, where the race of a person played a major role. There was a church for blacks and a church for whites. Mogashoa (1999:108) gives evidence that 'the Christian Council of South Africa (CCSA) had to deal with a colour bar within itself, and how to deal with racial laws by the government. Then those racial laws affected and infected the church in South Africa. The Christian council of South Africa was changed to

South African Council of Church (SACC). Yet politics played a role in dividing the church in South Africa and also the approach to worship. '

Darby (1999:66) points out that when the AICs were formed the style of worship was influenced by African culture. He ascertains that the AICs have deliberately cultivated styles of worship which embrace European influences as little as possible. But it must be mentioned that also the mainline churches in the townships incorporated their tradition, music, rhythms and ceremonies from African culture. The truth of the matter is all Christians worship God within the context of their culture. To worship God in one's culture it is not a fault.

Today the world has become a unit through globalisation and the church has been influenced by that. Since Ecumenism is defined as 'the whole world' Africa is been included in that definition. Reconciliation is another word which is included in the definition of Ecumenical. Within the context of the church reconciliation suggests also the definition of salvation. Salvation had to do with what God has done for humanity through Jesus Christ. Therefore the church has to base reconciliation by what God has done for the world. So reconciliation can be concluded as having divine and human activity in it, just as God was in Christ Jesus reconciling the world to Him.

4.2.5   Communion in ATR

The notion of communion in ATR may be viewed within the context of the African people. Yet there is a need to find the building blocks or components of the communion within ATR. It seems the concept of community may give light to the notion of communion. Ejizu (2008) his work is titled *African traditional religions and the promotion of community-living in Africa.* In his view 'the sense of community and human living are highly cherished values of traditional African life'. It was stated in this research paper that Mbiti (1969) has said Africans are notoriously religious in all that they do. Sankey (1994:437) holds the position that 'the church is like an African clan, he says incarnation of the gospel does not only involve a relationship between Christian revelation and culture, it requires a movement towards a transformed culture that is both Christian and African'. At the same time Phelps (2000:673) contribution based on his work titled *'Communion Ecclesiology and Black*

Liberation theology, says that 'the challenge of black liberation theology makes clear that the final goal of liberation theology is identical with the ultimate goal of communion'.

Those who live next to N1 or N3 freeways realise that on Friday afternoons these two roads are busy because of people who work around Gauteng go home towards Kwa-Zulu Natal and Limpopo. Ejizu (2008) argues that for traditional Africans, the community is basically sacred rather than secular and surrounded by several religious forms and symbols. There is so much reference to an African in the context of his or her community. There are communities in the rural areas which many Africans seem to identify more as their place of belonging. The community in the urban area is for economic reasons. The person is more attached to their 'home' in the rural area for spiritual reasons. Ejizu continues to say in modern African urban cities the extended family and village, continue to exert their hold over 'people who live away from the communities of their home-town. The reason why the N1 to Limpopo and N3 to KZN are so busy on Friday afternoons according to Ejizu (2008) is that people generally return to their villages from their residence in the cities from time to time to join members of their village community to celebrate important rituals and cultural events like initiation, title-taking or festivals. The community as a place of belonging based on clans or ethnicity abound in many modern African cities. In other words many Africans do not live their lives outside the context of their ethnicity. Another point which is connected to the issue of community is the land and the ancestors. In most African rural areas the king owns the land and the land owns the people. There are places called, *Ga-mphahlele, Ga-masemola or Ga-sekhukhune*, these places are called by the names of the chiefs and kings because the land belongs to the chief or king on behalf of the people and the ancestors.

4.2.6   African Community as a Unity

Elizu (2008) presents the community as 'a unity of two worlds the invisible and the visible. The visible is the physical world of the living today and the invisible is the spiritual world of the ancestors, divinities and the souls of children yet to be born'. The unity of the invisible and the visible has some indication of human relationships both physical and spiritual. Elizu (2008) says the networks of relationships among human beings are remarkably extended and deep.

Elizu (2008) calls the spiritual world the invisible world because the ancestors are called the invisible members of the family. The relationships within the family of brothers, sisters with a close connection to the parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, nephews and nieces it is known as the extended family. Yet the relationships go beyond the other side of the grave, it is extended to the ancestors, the invisible members of the family. Shutte (2001:29) says that the 'ancestors and spiritual beings are powerful and by far superior to human beings'. Shutte (2001) explains that they continue to exert an influence on the living.

The *Theological Commission of the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops'* conference in 1987 came to the following conclusion that 'there is a deep yearning in Africans, expressed in their traditional beliefs and religious practises, for communion and indeed communication with their departed parents and grandparents and forebears in general'. The Catholic Bishops claim there is a way in which would allow Africans can both love and respect their ancestors and yet follow in Christ's footsteps. Based on the Apostles' Creed which says, '*We believe in the communion of saints, we believe that the living and the dead are one through sharing and the same light and life of God*'. It is a well-known fact that according to the Roman Catholic Bishops in Zimbabwe and in Africa at large, that they had attempted to link the category of ancestors with the category of *saints*. At the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' conference (1987) they declared 'we believe that even death cannot sever the link between the living and those who have departed from this life, since we all, alive or dead, are encompassed by the love one and the same God'. From the Apostles Creed the Catholic Bishops of Zimbabwe with the Catholic tradition of saints called upon ATR for an understanding of the worship of ancestors. The link is weakened by the use of the word saints.

Mogoba and Mekoa (2007) say different churches and religious communities have recognised those persons who have stood out as holy and they respected and honoured them. As stated above Magoba and Mekoa (2007) points out that of all churches, the Roman Catholic Church has developed and detailed a method of recognising and canonising saints. For the canonisation of saints it is reported that there should be proof of a good and pious life and proof of a miracle done. In whatever process, it seems unfortunate that it is in the hands of the living to decide whether the dead person can be canonised or not. The process

may take some years, up to a century for a person to be canonised. There is a possibility that when the Apostles Creed says, 'We believe in the communion of the saints' they meant the entire community of faith. Paul wrote a letter to the church in Corinth saying, 'unto the church of God which is at Corinth to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus called to be saints' (1 Corinthians 1:2). The Christians in Corinth were called saints by Paul the entire church members without any qualifications like in Roman Catholic Church. The key words are to 'to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus called to be saints'. They were called saints because of the work done by Christ Jesus, not by any efforts by them. The letter to Corinthians was written to those who were alive at that time. In Paul's time Christians were saints by God's grace; their death did not add any qualification. It can be assumed that it was the work of Christ and their faith in his death and resurrection that qualified them as saints. Mogoba and Mekoa (2007), claims that the canonisation of the late or the dead would be very meaningful among Africans who are automatically canonised.

Mogoba and Mekoa (2007) hold the position that the category of saints is closer to that of ancestors. The Early Christians saw a need to accommodate sainthood therefore Christianity should equally embrace ancestry. They further say it is for the reason that God came close to humanity through Jesus Christ. Mogoba and Mekoa (2007) conclude therefore that the saints and angels were another way of bringing God into the hearts of the believers.

The more they try to explain the connection between saints and ancestors the more their debate becomes ambiguous. Both the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference and Mogoba and Mekoa cited the Apostles Creed when it says, *'we believe in the communion with the saints'.* Neither of them gave any background to the Apostles Creed in order to fully understand the reason behind the words. The historical background may prevent the interpreter from missing the point. Paul and the Apostles' Creed are closer in background historically because they are from the early Church period. Therefore Paul and the Apostles' Creed meant all Christians and it was not a title one gets after death based on the decision of a panel. And according to Paul to be a saint is based on the work of God through Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The points made here can be concluded as follows: Mogoba and Mekoa (2007) move from comparing saints with ancestors and say just as in the Old Testament times the messengers

of God, the prophets and kings came with authority as they addressed the nation of Israel and admonished them and foretelling the punishment that awaits them, in the same way the ancestors. They give the example of Mangena, Mokone of the Ethiopian church, Mantsopa of Lesotho, Mmakgabea of Thabanchu, Modjadji of Ga-Modjadji, Shembe of KwaZulu-Natal and many others are as those who used to stand in Israel like Moses. Mogoba and Mekoa (2007) regard the above mentioned individuals as divine messengers that should be embraced just like Christianity embraced prophets and saints. They may be regarded as messengers the difficulty is to proof that they were from God and that they were divine. African ancestors are part of God's plan to be in communion and to be with humanity. They had no fixed historical figure (e. g. Mandela or Sisulu) to compare the ancestors with. They compared ancestors with prophets, angels and saints then they moved to kings. According to the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishop Conference the saints are those who have died. God used the living persons among those that were alive in their time not after their death. Therefore to claim that the ancestors are in the same office as the prophets in the bible may have taken the comparison too extreme.

What is common between the veneration of the saints and ancestral worship is the effort of the living to communicate with the dead. The church decides and makes the dead person saints, while Africans offer prayers and sacrifices to the dead. So they both believe that the living can still have an influence on the dead and that the dead also influence the living. The Roman Catholic Church seems to have authority over the saints since the church is the one that decides. While in ATR the ancestors occupy a superior position next to God. A saint is not based on the family one comes from, but in ATR each family belongs to an ancestor who was a member of that family. In the Christian community the church is one big family under the fatherhood of God the Father adopted through the blood of Jesus who is the brother to all Christians.

As true as it is about the communion of African people with their ancestors, it is not in the same category with the communion of saints. Therefore the veneration of saints is not the same as ancestral worship. The process of the veneration of the saints is totally different from ancestral worship; the two cannot be part of one activity. Therefore it can be concluded that there is a difference of meaning of the statement 'the communion of the

saints' between the apostles Creed and the practise of the veneration of the saints in the Roman Catholic Church. The Zimbabwe Catholic Church Bishop conference (1987:313) attempted to bring the sacrament of reconciliation based on (Colossians 1:18 and 1 Corinthians 15:23), to mean that God is going to bring the living, the saints and ancestors together in unity. They argue that 'The Holy Eucharist is the people placed to pray for their ancestors still to be brought home to God since in the Eucharist they celebrate Christ as the first born from dead'. They claim that prayer will transform their relationship with the ancestors from one of fear into one of love and respect.

It is the conclusion of this research the communion of the saints is regarded as a separate category from the veneration and worship of ancestors. Ancestral worship has been dealt with but only in reference to the promotion of community living in Africa.

Ejizu (2008) points out that it is an essential article of belief in ATR's that a fundamental delicate balance and equilibrium exists in the universe between the visible world and invisible one. There is what Ejizu (2008) calls the cosmos as a, 'Three-tiered structure consisting of the heaven above', he understand that it is where the creator and a host of spirit beings ,including arch divinities inhabit the heaven above, other divinities ancestors, and myriads of unnamed spirits dwell in the world beneath, while human beings occupy the physical earth. There is some similarity between Ejizu's (2008) view and what the Bible says in the book of (Revelation 5:3), 'no man in heaven nor in earth, neither under the earth', also in (Revelation 5:13) it says, 'every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth and under the earth and such are in the sea'. In the passage of revelation it is assumed that the readers might be aware of those who are in heaven, on earth and under the earth. In the Christian faith a person relates to the one that is above and below is viewed as death or hell, in ATR the world beneath belongs to other divinities ancestors and myriads. When Africans perform sacrifices for the ancestors their language is about service for those who are from below. The life of an African is lived between those who are above and those from below. If that is so then that suggests a distance between those who are from above and those from below. Ejizu (2008) gives us some understanding about the importance of religion in most aspects of African life. He indicates that it 'pervades and permeates all aspects of life and infuses the social, economic and political dimensions of an African with meaning and significance'. Much

has been written about ATR and ancestors the question is about community and communion. In Africa this understanding suggest that relationships in Africa are so important that it goes further than the grave. O'Donovan (2000:7) states that 'people are held in higher esteem than programmes, projects, plans or schedules'. Writers like O' Donovan (2000:9) say 'Africans tend to be more holistic than analytical and more group-oriented than individualistic'. The above statement seems to bring clarity to some of the aspects that may seem ambiguous that the ancestors are regarded as closer to God and having some form of divinity. But it is also regarded that Africans are between those from above and those from below. The emphasis may not be on the right connection in relationship with those from above or below but on the quality of relationships. The question in Africa according to O' Donovan is, what is good for our community? It is for this community the extended family, the clan or tribe. Therefore what is good for the community is the right thing.

4.3   Ubuntu

Some comments have been made regarding the concept of *Ubuntu* and what it is. Here the discussion is carried out within the context of community and communion. The question is how does the notion of *Ubuntu* relate to ATR and how can it benefit the discussion of the doctrine of trinity. Since *Ubuntu* is about a person depending on others to be a person, does it mean God does not have room to continue making and developing a person? God says to Abraham, 'I will make you…'is there no competition between the making of a person through *Ubuntu* and that of God? To be able to respond there are some issues to be dealt with in order to discuss the concept in greater detail.

Shutte (2001:2) in his book titled *Ubuntu an ethic for a new South Africa*, states that his concern is that the humanity of all South Africans can develop and flourish. For him *Ubuntu* means humanity. He further explains that the concept of *Ubuntu* embodies an understanding of what is necessary for human beings to grow and find fulfilment. Gaylard (2004:266) links the concept *Ubuntu* with humanism which has an impact on western thought. He says that its core idea is that human beings possess a value and dignity in themselves as human beings. Murithi (2007:277) from the position of human rights says

'there are rich traditions on the African continent founded on the notion of human dignity and humanness'.

Shutte (2001:3) views *Ubuntu* as a solution to the results the effects of the apartheid policies. He points out that apartheid is a key idea in separation, separate development, development through separation. *Ubuntu* in the context of the discussion here is viewed as a building block of relationship and can further be a concept that can help to maintain relationships. Ubuntu in times of apartheid kept the oppressed united for a common course. It may also be a concept which can assist in understanding why people are held in higher esteem than programs projects plans or schedules (O' Donvon,2000:7). O' Donovan (2000) explains that within the African context one can be forgiven for late coming for a scheduled appointment, but it is a serious offence to overlook the feelings or sensitivity of another person in a conversation. Therefore any policy or structure which separated a person from his or her community in an African context should be viewed as an enemy or something evil.

4.3.1 Ubuntu in African Philosophy

Some of African opinions and ideologies are based on the life lived on a day to day basis. Not that concepts and ideologies are not valued but because they have to be linked to practical life. Africans don't mind singing a song which has only two lines as long it is informed by their practical life, and they are able to express their feelings through dance. It is expected that each African has to be hospitable. Gathogo (2008:40) maintains the view that in Africa an ideal person is primarily hospitable. And that this hospitability is extended to all friends, foes and strangers.

What is African hospitality? According to Gathogo (2008:42) 'African hospitality can be defined as that extension of generosity, giving freely without strings attached'. History can tell how Africans in most part of the continent warmly accepted missionaries. No matter what the treatment by Europeans by government or by the church, Africans continued to embrace Christianity. Africans stood against colonialism and apartheid yet remained hospitable. They were ready to offer themselves to Christianity in the presence of much hostility based on systems which were evil. The understanding by Gathogo (2008:42) is that 'the hospitality can also be seen as an unconditional readiness to share'. He continues to say

that the sharing has to be social and religious in scope. The practical part of the philosophy is seen in a willingness to give, to help, to assist, to love and to carry one another's burden without necessarily putting profit or reward as the driving force. As a way of life not theoretical, Gathogo (2008:43) says 'the concept of hospitality is too wide and that, like African religion, it permeates all spheres of African life'. In his thoughts African hospitality needed to be considered as a powerful tool for gluing the community together.

Shutte (2001) first viewed an individual as being part of the community. Africans become human or a person because they belong to a community. As the saying goes *'umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* (a person is a person because of others) 'in other words one does not come into fullness of becoming in the absence of others'. It is by belonging to the community that Africans become themselves and where they find their identity. Shutte (2001:9) also explains that the community is not opposed to the individual.

Within the community an individual can be viewed as receiving a gift of personhood from other persons. Shutte (2001:12) says 'community as an interpersonal network of relationships' he believes that reality in traditional African thought, 'is not seen as a world of things but as a field of forces interacting'. Here Shutte (2001) seems to concur with Ejizu (2008) when he talks about the visible and invisible realities of life. He mentions the cosmos as a three-tiered structure where the heaven above that where God the creator is, while in the world beneath is where the ancestors and other spirits are. Between the world above and the world beneath there are human beings. So Shutte (2001:12) says 'in this universal field humanity occupied the central place'.

African worldview assists in understanding this notion of *Ubuntu*. World view in Africa is one of the aspects which many scholars and writers identified as a key to understanding Africa and Africans. World view has been linked to religion, politics even issues of identity. As a result issues of culture, values and customs seem to be building blocks for being an African. All these are viewed as components in developing the self and issues of relationships. Shutte (2001:23) explains that 'because the self exists only in relationship with others there are as many sides to the self as there are relationships'. He says in a relationship an African realises a different part of himself or herself. So the life of an African is within a context of

interacting with forces visible and invisible and continues to make relationships whatever he or she becomes.

When an African is hospitable and accommodating those who are in need and begins to form a relationship within the context of a community then an individual becomes fully a person. Shutte (2001:24) says 'not the will of the majority but the will of the community should be realised even in a classless society, African tradition is still afraid of solitude and close individuality'. There is another view which Shutte (2001) explains, at the beginning of life where the issue of relationships are not yet developed, at that moment an African is not yet a person at all. He says an African only becomes fully human when he or she is included in a relationship with others. This is where the rituals of development of an African play a role.

Each individual member of the community according to Shutte (2001:27), sees themselves in the community as one with them in character and identity. When an African beholds another person especially another African it is like he or she is standing before the mirror. There is so much about each individual in another, for that reason there is no room for separation between the individual and the community, and all the relationships and transactions between individual members and community as a whole remain fully personal. The unity and the oneness is so deep that Shutte (2001) expresses it by using the metaphor of breathing together that Africans have one breath, one spirit and one heart as it were. It can be regarded as a community, a unity of a uniquely personal kind. The picture painted here can be a precious instrument to support Africans to construe the unity and the relationship within the trinity.

O 'Donovan (2000:13) says that when African people begin to embrace western culture and values, they find that these values have the negative effect of dividing and separating the community instead of producing unity and co-operation. The word embrace may not tell the entire story because for some they have had to embrace it to survive. In the context where one had lost the power to determine his or her own destiny, without land the only way for some was to embrace western culture. Saayman (1990:28) observes that 'the nineteenth century missionaries equated Christianity with western culture and civilisation as a result of this conviction South Africa was westernised at the same time as it was Christianised'. O'

Donovan (2000) views Africans as embracing western culture while Saayman (1990) sees it as something imposed upon them through the process of civilisation and colonisation. Yet Gathogo (2008) argues that Africans embraced western culture because it is within them to be hospitable and that this hospitability is ideally extended to all people: friends, foes and strangers.

When Africans embraced western culture they feared that they may turn away from the African ancestors. No matter where Africans go they don't leave ancestors behind. O' Donovan (2000:57) says 'in the cities for an African, life can be of intense isolation, fear, loneliness and difficulty outside the community which is a place of belonging. O' Donovan (2000:58) views the cities as having a negative impact on an African because 'the security of a predictable life among their own people has been replaced by an unpredictable, insecure and often dangerous life among strangers who seem to care only for themselves'. Maybe the life in the cities may become a test to the concept of hospitability and *Ubuntu*. Africans are hospitable even when away from their community of origin. The African belongs no matter where he or she may be. This will be further discussed when dealing with the church. The challenge is that the community has to be close to the land of the ancestors and also close to the graves for the sake of rituals and sacrifices.

4.3.2   Ubuntu and our People

Gathogo (2008:47) states that '*Ubuntu* primarily expresses itself well in the provision of assistance to our people who may mean, '*the members of the blood relatives*, *tribe mates*, *clan mates, political campmates, social camp mates and so forth'*. Gathogo (2008) further says that the criterion in determining who our person is and who is not one of us is indeed a tricky one. O' Donovan (2000:11) is also concerned that this strong sense of community has both a positive side and a negative side. He further argues that while people care for, help and share concern for one another, there is also the potential for tribalism, ethnicity and prejudice towards others' (e. g. Xenophobia) the statements from O' Donovan(2000) and Gathogo (2008) suggest that the issue of belonging may work against the process of relating outside the community towards the world at large. It has been reported that no one can venerate an ancestor outside his or her family or clan. The extended family and the clan unite through the relationship towards their link to their ancestors.

The issue of tribalism was experienced in South Africa before the 1994 elections. Most South African blacks were used to being part of their respective homelands. Villa-Vicencio and Ngesi (2003) point out those blacks were not really South Africans but were identified according to the homeland they came from. From 1976 to 1981 about four of those homelands became independent states within the state of South Africa. These homelands were based according to people's tribe which in a way promoted tribalism. The violence that erupted before the 1994 non-racial election was due to tribalism. Meredith (2006:438) puts it this way:

> *Towards 1994 the first democratic election South Africa was engulfed-in prolonged bouts of violence. He describes it as a mini civil war which broke out between chief Buthelezi's Inkatha Party, a Zulu nationalist movement and Mandela's ANC (the African National Congress was regarded at that time as dominated by the Xhosa speaking people), erupting first in the Kwa-Zulu homeland in Natal, and then spreading to black townships on the Witwatersrand, South Africa's industrial heartland. Somewhere towards the election the Inkatha freedom party formed an alliance with the Afrikaner right wing (AWB), they (AWB) also went to Mangope's Bophuthatswana.*

Even though the violence was experienced between the ANC and Inkatha it was also regarded as violence between the Xhosas and the Zulus. Many Xhosa speaking people moved out of the hostels because it was no longer safe for them.

Another example is the genocide that was in Rwanda. Ngesi and Villa-Vicencio (2003:1) mention that approximately 75% of the Rwandan population of seven million (some say eight million) people were killed displaced or driven into exile by the 1994 genocide. The genocide was known as the Hutus killing the Tutsis using machetes and clubs it was the worst killing spree ever to happen in our time. Even though the genocide stopped in 18 July yet some places the killing continued. Belgium, France, Canada and United nations may have played a role in the ceasing of this slaughter, but the issue of ethnicity in Africa runs very deep. According to the information by Ngesi and Villa-Vicencio (2003:15) is that 'behind the ethnic strife between the Hutus and Tutsis lies a conflict over access to Rwanda's limited

resources'. There are many wars in Africa; it's a country against itself or against its own people.

Gathogo(2008:47) suggests that the *Ubuntu* philosophy needs to address the problem of being' humane' to people of one's ethnic group as opposed to people from another group. Gathogo (2008) calls tribalism the devil and that it is the commander in chief of anti-African forces. Gathogo (2008:49) blames 'post-colonial theology of reconstruction (which) failed to lay more emphasis on tribalism in Africa'.

4.3.3 Ubuntu on Human Rights

First Murithi (2007:277) recognises that there are rich traditions on the African continent founded on the notion of human dignity and humaneness. Some academics such as Gaylard (2004:267) made some comparisons between '*Ubuntu* and Human Rights'. He says that 'the very concept of Human Rights implies that human beings have dignity and value and certain inalienable rights which need to be protected from arbitrary authority of tyranny'. Based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) by United Nation (UN) General Assembly on 10 December 1948:

> *All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights they are*
> *endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards each other*
> *in a spirit of brotherhood.*

Murithi (2007) asks how universal the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is, and if the continent of Africa can observe it or not? There was a question that was presented by Murithi (2007:278) 'whether human rights are truly universal or are they merely representative of the historically dominant western world view? ' The question arises because two schools of thought differ about the UDHR in this regard. There are those who maintain according to Murithi (2007:278) that 'the articles of the UDHR are indeed representative of what we should all universally aspire to as far as the promotion and protection of human rights is concerned for this view the UDHR has no limits and has to be extended to all human beings irrespective of who they are. Yet there is a different thinking that the UDHR is not universal but relative. '

Murithi (2007:278) says there are those who adhere to the view which challenges, saying that the UDHR is Western. They point out that only 18 members of the original human rights commission drafted the declaration. Some countries were not represented especially those in Sub- Sahara Africa and other countries that were colonised at the time when the declaration was drafted.

There is a feeling that since other parts of the world were not represented it means some people's cultures were not embraced and considered. The question needs to be asked, how can Africa contribute towards advancing the cause of human dignity for all? The proposal is multi *cultuvilization* (it seems that Murithi attempted to combine two words which are culture and universal to form c*ultuvilization*, but the word does not exist) of human rights in order to make them truly universal. This then opens up the discussion that all may participate by bringing their views and thoughts about human dignity based on each cultural heritage. Murithi (2007:278) explains that 'by virtue of the fact that these communities were marginalised by colonising forces, they were not in a position to have input and contribute towards the formulation of a global code of human rights'. If there is a concern about the UDHR then how does Africa value the life of an ordinary African?

When the new South Africa was designed Gaylard (2004:267) points out that 'the UDHR's concepts have been embraced by the architects of the country and are enshrined in our constitution'. He further explains that 'in seeking to construct an alternative value system to that imposed on them through colonialism, African thinkers and political leaders have appealed to African humanism in one form or another'. But after independence Africa seems to have committed terrible atrocities when it comes to human rights. What role was played by Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in regard to human rights?

Murithi (2007:279) says the OAU was unable and unwilling to take on the issue of the human rights of individuals and communities when they pitted against states and to address them effectively. Unfortunately, according to Murithi's (2007:279) testimony, this meant that 'human rights atrocities were committed with impurity in the majority of African countries as was the case in other parts of the world'.

A report by Shekhawat (2008), about the causes of the violence that erupted in Kenya was due to the uncertainty of the election results. Most of the people who were victims of the violence were women. There were many women that were raped even though the violence was politically motivated violence and concerned issues of election results. Maregere (2010:11) reports that research has shown that Africa remains a continent with the highest number of people who have been displaced due to conflict. Ensenbach (2010:30) in his turn, reports that internal displacement shows that Africa is the most affected region with a total of 11. 6 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in 21 countries, accounting for 40% of the global IDP population. Sudan has the largest number of IDPs in Africa with about 4. 9 million people displaced, followed by the DRC with nearly 2 million IDPs and Somalia with 1. 6 million IDPs. Another report by Quee (2008:3) says there are as many as 300 000 children under the age of 18 presently serving as combatants around the globe: They are recruited by national armies, terrorist organisations and rebel groups.

Quee (2008:3) continues to say 'the wanton acts of violence that characterises these conflicts includes, summary executions of innocent civilians, forceful amputations of limbs of ordinary citizens, rape of women and children, destruction of property with reckless abandon, cutting open the bellies of pregnant women just to see what sex the child is, and other atrocities that are too horrific to mention'. These human right atrocities are post-colonial events. That means there is no room to blame imperialism and apartheid for the present atrocities in Africa.

The OAU failed to address these atrocities due to its policy. One may ask what the OAU policy says. Murithi (2007:279) explains that 'historically the OAU's record indicates that a policy of non-intervention was applied to the extreme towards African nations, oppressing their people with impunity and doing little or nothing to prevent massive human rights abuse in their neighbouring countries'.

Most of the liberation movements were successful in their fights to liberate the African people from the oppression of colonialism. But Africa has many stories of the failure of those liberation movements in being transformers when governing their countries. The OAU was a toothless talking shop. Murithi (2007:280) claims that 'OAU was perceived as a club of African heads of state, most of whom were not legitimately elected representatives of their

own citizens, but self-appointed dictators and oligarchs'. The same can be said about the silence from African theologians and black theologians concerning the human rights atrocities in Africa.

4.3.4   Ubuntu and UDHR

What is common between the UDHR and *Ubuntu* is that being human gives one the right to be treated with dignity. They both suggest the practise of being generous, hospitable, friendly, caring and compassionate. Gaylard (2004:271) disclosed that '*Ubuntu* or the value associated with it includes the following; warmth, forgiveness, compassion, respect, dignity, empathy, supportiveness, co-operation, mutual understanding'. These values are only active within a community and cannot be realised in isolation. It is about the benefit one experiences in the presence of others. All these values help an African with this realisation of *Ubuntu a*nd the art of being human. An African has these qualities of *Ubuntu* within his or her being because they are acquired or realised them through the process of socialisation. Gaylard (2004:272) says 'after 1994 the New South Africa tried to embark on a process of National Building and *Ubuntu* is mentioned in the final clause of the intern New South African Constitution of 1993 and is one of the values of which a New Democratic Dispensation with its human rights culture is based'.

If what has been mentioned already about *Ubuntu* concept and the community as the 'place' of belonging for an African, therefore Africa was supposed to lead in promoting human rights. How strong is the foundation that *Ubuntu* is built upon? From the information already given we see that in some cases Africa failed to act within the *Ubuntu* concept. Gathogo (2008:50) indicates that 'corruption is one of the enemies of the concept of *Ubuntu'.* He explains corruption, 'which is generally defined as the abuse of public position for private or sectional gain, flourishes most where leaders and officials exercise power without accountability'. It is reported every day in the South African media about many government officials breaking the law, stealing, loading and making themselves rich in an unlawful manner'. Gathogo says the written law may prohibit bribery but everyday procedures are different. Instead of the notion of *Ubuntu* Africans have had to endure the corruption which had been institutionalised in their society. According to Gathogo (2008:50)

'of late *Ubuntu* has been abused by bribery and corruption, which is tailored in many different dresses'.

Many have stated that Africa is not poor it is Africans who are poor. The situation can no longer be blamed on colonialism or apartheid but on the present leaders in Africa. During the writing of this dissertation there was an uprising in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya where the people removed their long serving presidents or prime ministers. The people seemed to have said enough is enough. They were tired of corruption practised by African government officials in high positions. They saw the corruption as a theft from the weakest and poorest of the poor, the old, the disabled, the sick and from the children. Gathogo (2008:51) explains that 'in the early days when *Ubuntu* held society tightly, no one ate unless all could eat. He says the needs of the individual were the needs of society as a whole. Today is everyone for himself/ herself because corruption is viewed as eating while others sleep without food. The question is how can the challenges facing Africa be overcome?

4.3.5   Educating through Ubuntu

Murithi (2007:282) is of the opinion that the world and Africans as well, should be taught human rights through *Ubuntu.* He says because this notion of *Ubuntu* sheds light on the importance of the principles of reciprocity, inclusivity and a sense of shared destiny between people. Murithi believes that it provides a value system for giving and receiving forgiveness that, in turn can advance human rights in war affected societies and countries in transition from authoritarian regimes. Do people care about this notion and concept in their everyday life? The notion of *Ubuntu* lacks certain authority. It is within an individual to practice *Ubuntu,* there are neither rewards nor punishments.

Murithi (2007:282) believes that 'Ubuntu provides an inspiration and suggests guidelines for society and their governments on how to legislate and establish laws that promote human rights'. He proposes that the notion of *Ubuntu* be incorporated in the educational curricula for primary, secondary and tertiary schools. Within this context Murithi thinks that this notion of *Ubuntu* can serve to re-emphasise the essential unity of humanity and gradually promote attitudes and values predicated on the promotion and protection of human rights, including emphasising the sharing of resources and reinforcing a collective commitment to cooperation as the means for resolving humanity's common problems.

What is the basis for the understanding of how *Ubuntu* comes about? There has to be a community which is a place of belonging. Without that community of belonging an African cannot be fully human, because one become fully in the presence of others. As stated, the members of the community include the ancestors who belong to the invisible world and realities. *Ubuntu a*ccording to African scholars is a reality when an African is in the presence of others. To try to educate people about *Ubuntu* may be a fruitless effort because it has to come from within. It is something that Africans inherit through the process of socialisation not as an academic discipline. It cannot be a subject in an institution of learning nor be legislated. There is a possibility that the notion of *Ubuntu* cannot be regarded as something one can be converted to, for example; the community includes the connection with the ancestors of that community. In African Traditional Religion it is precisely like Judaism, because a child is born into that religion, no one can be converted into ATR or adopt another family's ancestors.

Ubuntu should be regarded as a notion that is practised from the heart. Ubuntu can be fully realised within the Christian context and be fully implemented. The Early Church shared all things and they continued to meet daily. According to the book of Acts they shared their food also. Their meetings were done in the presence of the Holy Spirit. According to Paul the church is the body of Christ'. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ' (1 Corinthians 12:12). The members of this one body are baptised into the body by one Spirit. Paul recognised the plurality and the diversity in the body. They are many members, yet but one body (1 Corinthians 12:20). The notion of Ubuntu can be realised in 1 Corinthians 12:26 where Paul says, 'and whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it'. Paul also spoke about love, and said it is the greatest gift. Love is able to hold the community together.

4.3.6   Ubuntu and Black Theology

Lewis (2010:79) approaches *Ubuntu* from the position of Black Theology in Britain. Black Theology in South Africa has a strong connection with the Black Consciousness movement which has its roots in the University Christian Movement. According to Hofmeyr and Pillay (1994:277) SASO (South African Students Organisation) was one of the University Christian

Movements led by Steve Biko who was the most influential leader and custodian of the Black Consciousness Movement. The Black Consciousness Movement strived to change black people's mind-set because the weapon of the oppressor (whites) was the mind of the oppressed (black). Lewis (2010:79) regards the Bible as his point of departure which states that all people are created in the image of God. No matter how true the statement may be that all people are created in the image God, but what does it mean? The truth of the matter is that human beings are not equal before the world. There is so much pain and inequality in the world today. The majority of people in South Africa are staying in informal settlements because they cannot afford a bond to buy a house, it is true that all human beings are created in the image of God yet human beings are not treating other human beings as those created in the image of God. If there was proper recognition that all people are created in the image of God, then human beings are to be viewed and embraced as God viewed and embraced them.

Lewis (2010) explains that when there is a relationship between human beings and God then that relationship shall determine how human beings relate with each other. Lewis (2010:80) says, 'from a Black Theological perspective, *Ubuntu* challenges all people regarding how they embrace others but in the context of what the bible says'. In conclusion Lewis (2010:83) says '*Ubuntu* offers on alternative means of conceptualising black humanity, which is not based on racial classification and skin colour, enslavement, colonialism and neo-colonialism'. These are perceived to have dehumanised people of African descent.

4.4   Church as Communion

The church is a community of faith where people who are supposed to have common benefits come together for worship. Jesus is not only the builder of the church. He is also regarded as the head of the church. This implies that each member of the church is one with another through union with Jesus. The Holy Spirit is regarded as the bond that holds the Christian community in unity with Christ. The prayer of Jesus Christ in John 17 was also a cry for the unity of the Christian community; He said 'make them one'. The oneness Jesus was praying for gave the oneness within the Godhead as an example. Phelps (2000:673) argues that 'the liberation must come first before people pursue unity, and communion is integrity related to commitment to liberation'. It is when the people are free that they may be able to

form a visible community. According Phelps (2000:674) it is 'in this human communion the full humanity, dignity, and equality of blacks and others who have been historically oppressed peoples will be recognised'. He further explains that in ecclesial communion people of all cultures and classes will be recognised as full human beings empowered by the Holy Spirit to be active and participate as agents of the church's mission.

Sankey (1994:440) in his work presented the church as a clan. The clan is based on the understanding of the African community or the extended family. What has been discussed here concerning the notion of *Ubuntu,* and how it relates to the issue of relationship, has to be discussed in the church. Sankey (1994) views relationships in a vertical dimension of communion with God and the horizontal dimension of interpersonal fellowship.

In the discussions about African identity by the community Sankey (1994:440) draws the following conclusion; that 'the African's sense of identity derives from an awareness of being part of a community'. To be human is to be in relationship with others, integrated in community. He further argues that given this priority of community over individual existence, one would expect a very positive and rich understanding of Christian identity as membership of the people of God to emerge in African Theology. There seems to be some similarities in the concerns of the African community and the Christian church, for that reason Sankey says one would expect African Christianity to be able to explore the communal nature of Christian identity from a privileged starting point. Concerning Koinonia Sankey (1994:440) argues that one would also expect 'that traditional clan structure could enrich our understanding of the Koinonia dimension of Christian communal life'. Hospitality and fraternity, a sense of belonging, participation and fellowship, and the common ownership of property are all fortunes of traditional African communal life.

Sankey (1994) is using the New Testament as his reference where the church is regarded as the body of Christ. In the book of Acts the church used to meet daily sharing food and properties. Sankey (1994:441) points out that the 'New Testament envisages a church in which members work together serving one another and creating a similar dynamic network of interaction'. Based on the explanations about *Ubuntu* Sankey proposes that the clan is an aspect of African life that can provide insights as to how such a community can be achieved. He says it provides a model for our understanding of the church. In an African world view the

values of traditional clan life can be enriched by the deeper sense of family, which a common spiritual ancestry in Christ should bring.

4.4.1 The Communion of Saints

The position and the role of the ancestors in African life were discussed within this paper; the question of veneration or worship of the ancestors and which term is appropriate. It was concluded that the practices within ATR qualifies it to be recognised as worship. The other point that was discussed was about, how the African lives his or her life within a community. It was also stated that the community is composed by the living and the dead. *Ubuntu* was regarded as part of the building block for community in African life. The discussion also noted the difference between the worship of the ancestor and the veneration of the saints claiming that the two do not belong to the same category. In this section the discussion is more about the church and how the church relates to African life.

Sankey (1994:442) points out that 'a Christian ancestor cult may enrich ecclesiology in Africa in a number of ways'. He further says that it could reinforce a sense of community unrestricted by death. As stated before, the veneration of the saints and worship of the ancestors do not share the same category yet something can be learned from each tradition. According to Sankey (1994:442) 'the veneration of saints conveys the extension of the people of God beyond the limits of present experience and back through the history of the church'. He further explains that communion with the ancestors in traditional Africa involved two-way communication. The living would pray, make offerings of food and drink, and in some cultures, offer sacrifices. Sankey (1994:443) indicates that 'their ancestors could themselves bless, providing victory in conflict, fertility of the soil, and the birth of children. '

In the African way of life and world-view it is not a problem for an individual to connect to what is called the 'invisible world'. It was pointed out that the 'invisible world' is the level of those outside the life today. The confusion between and ATR and Christianity is the position of the ancestors and that of God the Creator and the ancestors. If it is true that God is somewhere above and the ancestors occupy the world below then there is distance between the Creator God and the ancestors. If there is a distance then it means there is no communion between the ancestors and God the Creator. For that reason Sankey (1994:443) says 'the nature of any Christian ancestral cult would need to be carefully clarified'. Though

the ancestors have some powers to curse and to bless, in the Christian tradition, saints can neither bless nor curse. Therefore the nature of Christian communion with ancestors needs to be carefully defined if it is not to evoke illegitimate prayer to the saints for blessing.

4.4.2   Enhancing the Community Ideal

Ejizu (2008) points out some activities which are practised in ATR in order to enhance the community ideal. He points out the naming ceremonies where the community comes together to give a child a name. Ejizu (2008) explains that 'elders usually try to convey significant life-experiences of parents or community as well as their important aspirations in the names they give to babies during the naming ceremony'. The naming is part of religious practice as is initiation which always takes place within the context of ritual performances. It is known that many traditional African names have meaning and are symbolic. According to Ejizu (2008) 'most of the African names imply values that relate to and enhance community consciousness in traditional African societies'.

Ejizu (2008) points out that traditional prayer equally plays an important role in the promotion of the sense of community. He further indicates that the elder in most traditional societies begins the day by offering a prayer and supplications for himself, members of the kindred and the entire community'. The prayer is directed to the ancestors, divinities and other spiritual beings for his health, that of his family, for progress of members of the lineage, both the young and the old, for peace and harmony, for protection from the attack of evil forces, sorcerers and witches, and finally for the elimination of his enemies and evil doers in this community'.

4.4.3   Towards the Reception of Blessing

Sankey (1994:443) argues that 'the most serious weakness of clan-ecclesiology is its emphasis on receiving, blessing rather than on taking part in God's mission to the world'. He further points out that African Traditional Religions tend to seek as their highest good equilibrium in which all is well, where human beings are at peace with one another and in harmony with the spiritual world. The signs of such equilibrium are adequate harvests, food, peace and fertility. According to Sankey (1994:444) 'the religious practise and belief is oriented towards the preservation or re-establishment of this equilibrium, the search for

blessing'. He argues that the Christian church transcends these aims. Sankey says the church seeks the accomplishment of God's way in the world, the establishment of God's kingdom. He warns that the Christian ecclesiology must not be limited to the good of the Christian community but seek to engage in action to fulfil God's larger purpose. It means the African community is limited in its influence to the world. According to Gathogo (2008:48) 'there is too much influence of tribalism'. He regards tribalism as the devil that has the aim of destroying African life. O'Donovan (2000:11) says 'the negative side of community is the potential for tribalism, ethnicity and prejudice towards others. This may mean the community in Africa gives an individual a sense of belonging, an identity and the fullness of being. The question is what kind of community that may be.

Most of the focus in ATR is on the community which is composed of the extended family, the clan including the ancestors. These imply that the community is a closed type of membership. One has to be born within that community to be a member. Sankey (1994:444) states that 'very little is said about crossing cultural borders to pursue a mission that is anything other than local'. He argues that 'the church is fundamentally a missionary body, it exists for mission'. The challenge for the church in Africa is to find a way to break the limitation of the community based on race and ethnicity to a world based on God who so loved the world. It seems that the cult of ancestral worship has a way to keep a person within the boundaries of the family without any suggestion of going out for missions. Sankey (1994:445) says 'the true community of Jesus Christ is that which takes part in His work, making known His ways in the world through proclamation and action'.

There is much contradiction concerning the subject of a personhood. The African says a person is a person because of others! They say one can fully achieve his or her humanity in relationship with others. Yet Sankey (1994:445) points out that 'Christian identity derives from a new humanity in Jesus Christ, an identity that is more fundamental than that derived from family, clan, tribe or nation. He further argues that the growth of a clan is almost entirely biological growth by procreation rather than by incorporation of outsiders.

When Abraham was told that he was going to be made a father of many nations and that his name would be great, he was also told to come out of his country, his father's house and out

of his clan. When he moved out it was like God was destroying his past to reconstruct his future.

Abraham met God when he was still Abram and he was 75 years old. At that time Abraham was an individual, a product moulded by the environment he came from. He got his identity and everything that he was through a process of socialisation. Human beings are created by God but are made to be human by other human beings. A boy or a girl is born within a family where he or she will continue to learn how to be human and how to be a boy or a girl. Since human beings are without a manual there is nothing that can be used as a measurement to tell whether the process of socialisation is correct. No one knows why a child is born and what purpose they're to fulfil? The community tries its best with the little information they have based on the culture of that community. There is a possibility that what the community does to an individual may differ with God's purpose for that individual. God had to remove Abraham from his place of origin and belonging, so that he could make him a father of many nations.

After the meeting between God and Abraham he left his household, his country and changed his name from Abram to Abraham. There is a possibility of a tension between what the community does to an individual and God's purpose concerning that individual. Paul says he was circumcised on the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews, as touching the law, a Pharisee… 'I count all things but loss for the Excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them but dung (KJV) that I may win Christ' (Philippians 3:5 and 8) Jesus Christ is building a new community of God which is a community of faith, His church. As in the experience of Abraham He may start by destroying the past in order to reconstruct a future, or breaking what others had done to build His own in the life of a person.

4.4.4 The Unity of the Church

Padilla (1982:23) thinks that 'the coming of Jesus Christ breaks down all the barriers that divide humankind and a new humanity is now taking shape in and through the church'. He also talks about God's purpose in Jesus Christ which includes the oneness of the human race and that oneness becomes visible in the church. Padilla argues that the Bible knows nothing

of the human being as an individual in isolation; it knows only of a person as a related being, a person in relation with other people. This category of thinking is not strange to the African way of life and thought. From what is stated already an African becomes fully human in the presence of others and by bonding with others. Padilla (1982:23) says 'the church is viewed in the New Testament as the solidarity that has been created in Jesus Christ and that stands in contrast with the old humanity represented by Adam'. In the church of Jesus Christ human being get closer to God through the process of reconciliation. Christians are reconciled to God and also to other human beings.

According to Padilla (1982) when Adam disobeyed God, he became separated from God and became one with sin. When Adam he was separated from God, he lost his place in the presence of God, where he used to fellowship with God. Human beings were created to love and to be loved by God. When they are removed from God due to sin, they suffer a loss of identity. Being away from God they have to seek the fulfilment of fellowship and identity from other sources. Padilla (1982:23) says 'by means of the first Adam, the kingdom of death was established among humankind, humanity as a whole slipped into the void of meaningless existence out of fellowship with God and under his judgment'. After all human efforts had failed to gain access into God's presence and to fellowship with him, according to Padilla (1982:23) 'by means of the last Adam, a new humanity comes into existence, in which the results of the fall are undone and God's original purpose for humanity is fulfilled'.

Padilla (1982) mentioned Jesus Christ as the second Adam which is the typology used by Paul. The first Adam is the one who took the entire human race away from God. When the first Adam fell into sin the entire human race went away from God. The second Adam came to be the way back to God. Jesus is not just the way to God but all of God is in Him. In the Old Testament a provision was made for Israel to come into the presence of God. But when Jesus came, He moved further than any religion before Him and after Him. He moved further away from the approach of the Jewish community to the world at large. Through Jesus Christ religion or Christianity was no longer the property of any particular nationality or race.

Padilla (1982:23) confirms that with the coming of Christ, to be circumcised or not to be circumcised counts for nothing but a new creation (Gal 6:15cf 5:6). God has brought into being a new humanity in which the barriers that separated the Gentiles from the Jews are

broken down, which he refers to Ephesians 2:11. Padilla (1982:23) continues to explain that 'out of the two large homogeneous units whose enmity was proverbial in the Ancient world reconciled in one body'. Everybody is able to stand before God without referring to one's ethnicity or nationality, but as members of a new fellowship that may be described as a city, a family, and a building. The work of God through Jesus Christ is evident when the church becomes historically visible in a community where reconciliation both to God and to one another.

It is a known fact that in some townships if one wants to survive, he or she should be a member of a gang. In the Cape many young people are members of gangs especially in the Cape Flats. To gain politically one has to be a member of a certain political party. Certain business initiatives are allocated for people of certain colour or family members. The point is that even though a person in Africa becomes a human fully in the presence of others, but the others may be an instrument of destruction in someone's life. Especially where there is corruption and nepotism in the church of Jesus Christ, Padilla (1982:24) makes this point that 'social stratifications are beside the point because in the new humanity the slave becomes his own master's beloved brother, the slave is called to serve the Lord and not humankind, and the free person is to live as one who has a master in heaven'. He claims that in the corporate new humanity, in the new unit that has been brought into being in Jesus Christ the only thing that matters is that Christ is all and in all.

Padilla (1982:24) refers to the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians (12:13) stating that 'members of a community in which the differences that separate people in the world have become obsolete'. In Corinthians from chapter 12 to 14 Paul deals with the church as the body of Christ, claiming that Christians are members of the body for certain functions in the body. These members need each other no matter the size or position. The members are so closely united that when one member suffers pain the whole body feels the pain. True to the saying an injury to one is an injury to all, and so Christ is all in all. Membership in the body of Christ is not a question of likes or dislikes, but a question of incorporation into a new humanity under the Lordship of Christ. All members are joined in Christ as the head. The unity of the body is the head where all the function of the members is controlled since Christ is the head of the body. Padilla (1982:24) indicates that whether a person likes it or not, 'the

same act that reconciles one to God simultaneously introduces the person into a community where people find their identity in Jesus Christ rather than in their race, culture, social class, or sex, and are consequently reconciled to one another'. He explains further that God's purpose is to bring the universe into unity in Christ.

There is a challenge here. The challenge has to do with the reason why a church had been established. Jesus' church with Him being the head was built upon Him and away from the motivation of race, ethnicity and cultural influences. The challenge is when certain groups pursue a church that is built based on the accommodation of their culture. According to 'theology form below' the main focus is the context of the African people, their culture and the reality of life facing them. The African Initiated Churches claim that Africans felt that their cultures were not accommodated within the missionary churches. Therefore Africans went out to form churches that can accommodate their way of life. That means the requirements to be part of that community is to belong to the same culture. The implication is that one has to be a member through birth into that community. Jesus may have a very limited power to influence the community and the individual within that community. In this context the community becomes the authority and religion may serve to fulfil the desire of the community. The concern is that the church may fulfil the cultural needs. It may fail to be the church of Jesus Christ.

Moltmann (1992:66) says 'there is only a church if and as long as Jesus of Nazareth is believed and acknowledged as the Christ of God'. He continues to explain that the sentence above raises the question of the reciprocal relationship between knowledge of Christ and acknowledgement of the church. It means one cannot think about the church in the absence of Jesus Christ. Without Christ there is no church. The Apostles said there is no other name given under the sun, but only Jesus' name. Jesus said no one can have means towards Father but through him. The way the first Christians uphold the name of Jesus, it was so high that people began calling them Christian. They sang songs to Jesus, they prayed to Jesus and worshipped God the Father and God the Son.

4.4.5   Jesus and the Church

Jesus is everlasting yet He became a human being and became part of human history. In the church God and human beings became one and Jesus became the meeting place. The Old

Testament regards God as a dwelling place while the New Testament says Christians are the temple where God dwells. Jesus became the neutral zone, a meeting place where both God and humanity can have fellowship and communion. Both God and humanity share a meeting place which is Jesus. Jesus is the best of both worlds, fully God and fully human. The role of the Holy Spirit is to help human beings to know God better. It is debatable what happens when a Christian is filled with the Holy Spirit. Does the Christian become a better human being or do they become divine?

Jesus prayed on the eve of his arrest, that the Father might keep believers safe in the world and not take them away. Christians are called to live in a relationship with God as human beings on earth. Salvation is to be reconciled to God and to stand right with God and continue to worship him. To be a member of the Christian community one has to enter through the door, Jesus. It means one does not join the Christian community to be a Christian but one has to have an encounter with Jesus. It means it is Jesus who can usher a person into the Christian community as a witness to Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is Jesus who invites a person into the community by transforming the individual. Jesus is not only the door; He possesses all that God is in Him.

Being introduced into the community of faith by Jesus, and having access to the presence of God the Father by the power of the Holy Spirit; the person does not become divine but does participate in the divine nature. Christians are to approach the world in the name of Jesus Christ which is divine. Yet Christian should still recognise that they are human beings speaking to other human beings. Christians have been transformed from sinners into saints but on earth they are still human beings. Jesus who is God and the best revelation of God came to human beings as a human being and utilised human resources to inform the world about the hidden things of God. A person becomes Christian by encountering Jesus Christ who is divine, yet the person remains who they are whether male or female. People don't lose their gender when they become born again but they live for God as human beings among other human beings as witnesses.

Moses was told by God to strike the water and God opened the way across the Red Sea. God spoke to Joshua telling him that the Israelites should go around the walls of Jericho. God works in the world through human agents like Paul, Moses and David. God is the one that is

constructing the community of faith. God has infiltrated time and space through the community of faith which was bought by the blood of Jesus. This community is not divided according to race, space or time. The church on earth is coming together by the called one who shares a common relationship with the same God. Padilla (1982:29) says 'evangelism would therefore involve a call to be incorporated into a new humanity that included all kinds of people who would find their identity in Christ rather than in their race, social status or sex'. Evangelism can be regarded as God using the community of faith as an instrument to call all humanity back to God. The Holy Spirit activates God's gifts in the church for the building up of the church.

It has been stated that in Africa one becomes a person in the presence of other persons. The others are members of an extended family, the clan and members of the same ethnicity. The members become united through their fellowship with the same ancestors within the same family. Therefore one becomes fully human but based on the desire of that community. It is without doubt culture, values and belief systems within that community which are part of the building block of an individual. But for the church in the New Testament it clearly shows that the Apostles, according to Padilla (1982:29) regarded that 'each church was meant to portray the oneness of its members regardless of their racial, cultural, or social differences'. Each local congregation was therefore to manifest both the unity and the diversity of the body of Christ.

The African community and the church as the community of faith have an element in common that is bringing in the invisible world into space and time. Jesus promised that when two or three are gathered in the name of Jesus His presence shall be in that meeting. Jesus was born into time and space, lived among human beings then died. After his resurrection (only Jesus made history by his resurrection) He spoke to his followers. The Christian church continues to believe that Jesus still speaks in His church today. The challenge that may face the church in Africa is how to recognise the presence of Jesus Christ within the community as their Father instead of ancestor. If the church was established to fulfil the needs of African culture or to satisfy the quest for African identity how can Jesus be accommodated.

According to Moltmann (2006:68) 'if the church does not see itself as the church of society, or as German, or white, or male church, but calls itself instead the church of Christ then it will also have to make Christ its starting point in its own self-understanding'. The church in Africa needs to learn how to renounce the ancestors to pursue their faith in Jesus Christ. The same communion and fellowship Africans have with their ancestors is able to meet in Jesus. Jesus as the creator of all humanity is in a better position to help Africans to become fully human. Africans are used to obeying the voice from the dead but in Jesus Africans have one whose blood speaks better things than the blood of Abel. Jesus connects an individual with the Father and with the entire community of faith and they can share one 'ancestor' who is able to unite both the living and the dead. According to the book of Hebrews there is such a cloud of witnesses watching over the community of faith because they won't receive the fulfilment of the promise until all Christians are welcomed home.

4.4.6   Ubuntu and Perichoresis juxtaposed

Looking back on what Gathogo (2008:47) said that the meaning of our people is based on the 'members of the blood relatives, tribe mates, clan mate, political camp mates, social camp mates and so forth. That may impose a difficult for the church's endeavour for oneness. The oneness of the church does not mean to overlook the many of the church. As Paul said in 1 Corinthians 10:17 (KJV) 'we being many are one bread, and one body'. How can the church benefit from Ubuntu and from perichoresis? The challenge is that perichoresis is a notion that originates from the activities of the divine while Ubuntu from a human activities. They both have a strong factor about the life of a community and recognising the plurality and unity at the same time. Perichoresis may be regarded from above while Ubuntu as from below. According to Moltmann (2000:309) 'the triune God is a God in community rich in inner and outward relationship. In looking deep into the triune God Moltmann (2000:310) finds that 'if the father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are joined together through eternal love, then their oneness is in the concord with each other. They form their unique, divine community through their self-giving to one another'.

Ubuntu may be motivated by the fear of being isolated and alone. Zizioulas (2006:1) claims that 'each individual is born with this fear of others which is the result of the fall of human. Well the fear of other is pointed that is the western phenomenon but the African speak of

community. If one may ask about the triune God, Moltmann (2000:310) says 'by virtue of their overflowing love, they go beyond themselves and open themselves in creation, reconciliation and redemption for the other being of finite, contradiction and moral creatures, in order to cede them space in their own eternal life and to let them participate in their own joy'. It is important to emphasise that love not fear is the factor that is being shared and that unites. The same love is spoken 'as a philosophy, Ubuntu inculcates a sense of belonging to one another in such a way that love, care and respect for one another become indispensable ingredient' (Pato 1997:59).

A foundation can be laid between the community in the divine and community in the African society. The fellowship can be observed between the divine and the human. The question is the commonness of the foundation. Another factor is the content of the members of that community. Since the Ubuntu is based on the context of the African people, the danger it is when faced with the realities of change in the African life. Pato (1997:54) argue that 'the African way of life is not something static. The change according to Pato (1997:54) is mainly due to interaction with the outside world, but also due to changing conditions of life, new needs, development of ideas, and modification of techniques and values'. That implies that an African person is no longer alone and had to realise that. So an African is compelled to rethink some of the position held traditionally. That is why Pato (1997:54) says that 'because of these influences and changes, certain former traditional ways of life have been modified or abandoned'.

When Jesus prayed in John 17:22-23 saying '. . that they may be one, even as we are one: i in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one', may feel similar as *I am because we are, and since we are therefore I am. I belong, therefore i am.* Moltmann (2000:312) express similar notion saying 'the person who confesses the triune God begins to live in Him. We experience ourselves in God and God in us, that is the new true life'. The expression is based on 1John 4;16b that says 'God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him'. The Christian faith accepts Moltmann (2000: 318) sayings that 'it is the power of perfect love which lets each person go out of history to the extent that he is wholly present in the other. That means, conversely, that every Trinitarian person is not merely person but also living space for the two others'.

The African church need to have a new context which may be common to the entire universal church which is Jesus Christ, as foundation. The concept of Ubuntu should be Christianised by taking Jesus as the authority base on the scriptures. The world is full of community and the church in Africa should be in a position to be a community of faith build by Jesus and to be His disciples. The life of a disciple is a life of offering and sacrifices. When an African turns his/her life to Jesus there will be some sacrifices like turning away from the ancestor in order to have fully communion with the triune God. Ubuntu and perichoresis find commonality and cooperation through Jesus Christ, because Moltmann (2000:319) points out that in the Son and in the Spirit the Father comes to Himself and becomes conscious of Himself a Father. In the Father and in the Spirit the Son comes to Himself and becomes conscious of Himself as Son, in the Father and in the Son the Holy Spirit comes to Himself and becomes conscious of Himself as the Spirit'.

4.5   The Ecumenical Agenda

Makhulu (2001:378) points out that 'the search for healing and wholeness is a primary concern of religions insofar as they are concerned with salvation. Pobee (1997:417) asks, 'is Africa today stretching its hands to God in worship, praise and thanksgiving'? In the parliament of nations and humanity, has Africa found its rightful, dignified place? The ecumenical movement is more concerned about uniting the church for common purpose of the mission of God towards the world. Part of the agenda for mission is salvation and evangelism. The church is concerned with salvation and participates in institutions that seek to mediate wholeness and healing. Makhulu (2001:378) indicates that 'indeed the New Testament and traditional African religion share parallel ideas: that the individual's health derives from a condition of cosmic wholeness and that illness is symptomatic of disrupted, broken relationships in all of creation'. In the person of Jesus Christ the entire creation is able to unite for a common purpose, the search for healing and wholeness.

When Jesus is the centre of the community in Africa the community should be able to lift up and stretch its hands to God. Pobee (1997:417) feels that 'Africa is missing out by not participating and sharing on a global level through world institutions'. For example he relates the WCC (World Council of Churches 1948 Amsterdam) had a total attendance of 1271, of whom some 36 came from Africa. The 36 came from 12 countries and not all of these

participants from Africa were Africans. Pobee (1997:418) also noticed that 'with the exception of the Coptic Orthodox Church of Egypt and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, all the delegates (from Africa) were from Western and mission churches and were white'.

At 1998 Harare Assembly there were 117 delegates from 48 African member churches not all the churches were registered members. The delegates were from 22 countries. The WCC received from Africa the self-initiated churches; the African Israel Church of Nineveh (Kenya), African church of the Holy Spirit (Kenya), Church of Jesus Christ on Earth founded by the special messenger Simon Kimbangu (Democratic Republic of Congo) and the church of the Lord Aladora (Nigeria). Pobee (1997:418) explains that '(the) above churches represent a home grown African Christianity, often devoted to the Holy Spirit as the focus of belief, even if not to the exclusion of Christianity and the trinity'. Pobee points out that the significance of these churches, with their differences and different styles of worship and theology for the ecumenical movement and vision is yet to be worked out.

The challenge may be the question of how to contribute on the world stage for the church in Africa. Can the church at large on the global front benefit from an African emphasis on communion with the ancestors? If Africa approaches the world on a global setting without Jesus as the centre there is potential for division. Another fact is that of missions and evangelism which seems to be lacking within the African Initiated Churches. The problem is that an ancestor belongs to a certain community or a clan and cannot be shared by outsiders who are not members. In addition Dickson (1984:34) thinks that 'when the religions of the world are looked at from the point of view of their founders and reformers African religion is placed at a disadvantage because it has no founders'. Without a founder or a reformer the African theologies had taken the approach of setting the record straight, more or less like an apologetic. There is also a challenge of terminology and precise categories for conceptualising African religion on the world stage. Mbiti (1969:179) announce that 'the sources from which we derived our written information use the term worship inconsistently. He further explains that 'one reason for this derives from the fact that the word itself as such, does not exist in many African languages'.

According to Gillies (1964:7) 'the modern ecumenical movement is an attempt to bring about Christian unity in the world today, and to recover, on a world-wide scale, the original

outward unity of the church'. He further states that it aims at the destruction of all divisions within the church, which is to become one world-wide Christian fellowship. As stated before, for the church on the global stage, to find unity, Jesus must be the centre of the community of faith. Gillies (1964:11) holds the position that 'Christian unity is to be found in certain forms of interdenominational work and witness, with the co-operation of different churches in conferences, conventions and campaigns under the banner, all done in Christ Jesus'.

Jesus' aim for the church may be able to display God's love in unity to the world. Gillies (1964:17) says that 'it is agreed that it is the aim of the church to prepare man for the next world, but equally it is believed that it is the responsibility of the church to prepare the world for men'. He reveals that the blessings of the gospel of Christ include the alleviation of poverty, disease and hunger, and the creation of a true fellowship that relieves the loneliness of modern society. The wholeness of the gospel demands a holistic expression, since it concerns every aspect of people's lives. The African voice regarding making the world a better place for human beings can be heard from Makhulu (2001:371) when he points out that 'the ecumenical perspective, the unity of all in addressing illness thinking together, envisioning together, acting together should become an imperative'

It seems that of late the WCC has embraced the uniqueness of African churches and is trying to accommodate them. Pobee (1997:424) observes that 'from Ghana is a programme coordinator for ecumenical theological education at the WCC in Geneva'. Pobee (1997:424) suggests that for the member churches in Africa the question that needs to be asked is 'how far they are being renewed by the promptings of the secretariat as well as how far themselves as communities of faith are agents of renewal in the world'. Some may regard him as speaking for the WCC rather than for Africans. Here Pobee argues based on the word *Koinonia* saying the WCC claims to be a fellowship of churches. According to Pobee's (1997:424) opinion in this regard 'the root idea of Koinonia is participation' which was pointed out at the beginning of this chapter. The participation is experienced in the triune God by grace, particularly through baptism.

Pobee (1997) regards worship and spirituality as different realities even though worship is a part of spirituality. He points out that some have reduced spirituality to worship. According to Pobee (1997:424) 'spirituality is obedience to the will of God as evidence that we partake

in God's Holy Spirit'. Pobee (1997) may be creating a problem by trying to classify spirituality and worship. Spirituality does not mean one is participating in the Holy Spirit. One can be religious without participating in the Holy Spirit, because some religious institutions do not believe in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit can never be regarded on the same level as the spirits of the dead. Pobee continues to suggest that the ecumenical dimension comes in when we allow the spirituality of various people to engage each other around the throne of grace, people of different cultures and backgrounds, but the Holy Spirit does not share space and glory with others. As God the Almighty said, before Him there is no other, therefore the Holy Spirit does not share space with other spirits. In worship Christians are clear about the object of their faith.

Pobee (1997) thinks that maybe the lack of spirituality failed to bring all of life under the purview of God's rule. There is so much spirituality and religious activity in Africa but there is a need for the clarity of the object of worship. Africa needs to embrace the triune God and begin to obey him. A human being can be respected and honoured yet Christians fear God and give Him the glory. Pobee (1997:425) asks, 'what is the ecumenical spirituality in our countries when we encounter government brutality and oppression, international orders which pauperise entire people, massacres of one tribe by another, oppression of women, and exclusion of youth? ' He says Africa today is in the ecumenical movement.

Since the WCC was instrumental in helping the church in Africa fight against colonialism and apartheid. Pobee (1997) calls for the church in Africa to request the help of the WCC again to fight the suffering of African people. Pobee (1997:425) says 'at the heart of the Christian message stands the cross, a symbol of torture and inhumanity'. He continues to argue that suffering has been the reality of humanity, Africans and Christians included. But here the cross may be taken far from its original meaning. Pobee (1997) brings the cross to the suffering of the African people in Africa by Africans. He says the cross symbolises the reality of Africans. Such suffering he argues unites all humanity in Africa across religious, cultural, ethnic and tribal lines. The cross united Christians because of the person they experienced through the message from the cross.

4.6 Closing Reflections

Human beings were created in the manner God wanted them to be. They are made with the ability to communicate, to listen to others and be listened to. One of the fast growing businesses in the world is the business of communication. The world is so advanced that technology has taken communication to another level. Through the World Wide Web people can communicate with those who are far away. Human beings are able to fellowship and participate through Facebook, Twitter, Mxit, WhatsApp and many other mediums. Through these facilities and devices strangers become intimate with one another. Technology has made it possible for cultural boundaries and religious limitations to be crossed. One can no longer emphasis being an African in a global setting. Isolation is no longer possible and it seems that people have reached the ends of the world.

Communication and the community is proof that human beings cannot survive in isolation. A politician needs a constituency, a doctor needs patients, a teacher needs students, a pastor needs a congregation and a leader should have followers. It is only God who is who He is. He does not need others to be who He is, He is complete in Himself. God was forever there before the beginning. Therefore any community which is made up of human beings in the absence of God may have the potential to corrupt a person. Paul wrote to the church in Corinth saying that the gifts given by Jesus which are 'Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers'. 'The gifts are for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man' (Ephesians 4:11-13). There is a development to attain unity of faith, towards the knowledge of the Son of God and thirdly unto a full grown man. All this development does not take place in isolation but in the presence of others. Moltmann (2006:69) says 'the whole human race only seems to be material for the election and gathering of the community of the saved, as if mankind were there for the church and not the church for mankind'.

CHAPTER FIVE: JOHN ZIZIOULAS ON BEING AS COMMUNION

5.1   Individualism *vis-à-vis* communion

Zizioulas (2006), in his work titled *Communion and Otherness* seems to deal with the evils of individualism. This individualism is perceived as an outcome of the Western Culture. This culture is an opposite of the African notion of Ubuntu. According to Zizioulas (2006) 'Western thought have never ceased to build itself and its culture on this basis' much of the endeavour and energy is spent in protecting the individual and to promote the culture of Individualism. He says in Western culture protection from the other is a fundamental necessity. Others are viewed negatively or with a suspicious attitude. In this culture one is an enemy before they can be a friend. Zizioulas (2006:1) points out that 'communion with the other is not spontaneous: It is built upon fences which protect from the dangers implicit in the other's presence'. The joy or the happiness of the individual counts often more than that of others. The sense of community is a challenge because others are viewed as suspect.

Zizioulas (2006:1) claims that 'each individual is born with this fear of others which is the result of the fall of human. He further says the essence of sin is fear of the other, which is part of this rejection. By this rejection Zizioulas means the human's rejection of being associated with God his creator. The fall of Human was due to the search of the realisation of the self by becoming from otherness of God. Adam after realisation of the self-run away and hid Himself from the otherness. Zizioulas (2006:2) claims that 'reconciliation with God is a necessary pre-condition for reconciliation with any other'.

Zizioulas' (2006) interpretation of the fall of Adam is that when God and Adam separated the human experienced fear. This fear was not manifest while Adam was still linked and connected to God. At that time Adam was within the presence of his God the creator. In the presence of God Adam learnt how to accommodate the other. In the absence of God's presence fear took control so the human had difficulty accepting others. According to the understanding of Zizioulas (200:2) 'to show how deep and how widespread the fear of the other is: we are not afraid simply of a certain other or others, but even if we accept certain

others, we accept them on condition that they somehow are like ourselves'. The otherness may be understood as being different, therefore in the otherness of the next person there is difference. People may accept others because they see themselves in others. Zizioulas (2006:2) points out that 'the fear of the other is in fact nothing but the fear of the different, we all want somehow to project into the other, the model of our own self which shows how deeply rooted in our existence the of the other is'.

Fear makes a person to lose the sense of reality. When Jesus was walking on the water the disciples perceived Him as a Ghost because of fear. Zizioulas (2006:2) says 'when the fear of the other is shown to be the fear of otherness we come to the point of identifying difference with division'. When otherness is perceived as difference there are some implications to that perception. According to Zizioulas (2006:2) when difference becomes division, communion is nothing but an arrangement for peaceful co-existence. There is no room for unity in diversity.

The problem is how to deal with this attitude and culture of individualism within the context of the church. Zizioulas (2006:3) asks two questions, firstly 'how is the relation between communion and otherwise realised? ' and secondly, 'what the place of the other is in ecclesial communion? ' Zizioulas (2006:3) presents 'the church as a community that lives within history and therefore within the fallen state of existence'. The church is a gathering of people or individuals who have been called out of the world to be a community of faith. These are individuals having a historical background which differ from one person to another. Zizioulas (2006:3) points out that 'sin as fear and rejection of the other is a reality experienced also within church'. He explains further that 'the church is made up of sinners, and she shares fully the ontological and cosmic dimension of sin which is death, the break of communion and final diastasis (separation and decomposition) of beings. In South Africa, due to political reasons the church committed the sin of rejecting otherness based on race. There was a church for whites and for black and there was a church that was on the side of the ruling party and the church that was in opposition. There was a challenge of communion because of the reality of otherness. This means people were sinners within the faith. The expectation as mentioned by Zizioulas (2006:4) is that 'we insist that in her essence the church is Holy and sinless'. That was the challenge also in South Africa. It seemed South

Africans were "denominationalised" before they could be Christianised. The people experienced the church, God, and they worshipped within the limitations of their denominations. The separation was experienced through the colours in the uniforms, while the West experience as they differ from one confession to the other, each from the same Protestant family.

Zizioulas challenges the church to repent (*metanoia*). Zizioulas (2006:4) says 'the church can only come to repentance which is true and genuine if she and her members are aware of the true nature of the church'. Even if he speaks from the Orthodox standpoint, the church at large should consider that challenge in reference to the Scriptures.

The church can achieve only when its focus is fixed on the Godhead. Zizioulas (2006:4) gives the following information that 'there is no model for the proper relation between communion and otherness either for the church or for the human being other than the Trinitarian God'. Zizioulas in a way understands that there is the communion and otherness in the Godhead which should be developed as a model for the church. He also points out that the same communion and otherness is found in the human being as the image of God.

5.2 Towards an Ontology of Otherness

Zizioulas (2006:13) begins the discussion of the ontology of otherness by saying, 'the theme of otherness is a fundamental aspect of theology. The other in an individual is what makes that individual to be unique'. God created each human being to be so unique that no one is a copy of another. That is what Zizioulas (2006) calls freedom. According to Zizioulas (2006:13) 'being other and being free in an ontological sense, that is, in the sense of being free to be yourself, and not someone or something else, are two aspects of one and the same reality. '

5.2.1 Bridging the Gap of Otherness

Zizioulas (2006:19) argues that 'otherness is necessary for freedom to exist: if there is no absolute, ontological otherness between God and the world, there is no ontological freedom allowing each of these two beings to be themselves and thus to be at all. 'The question is raised concerning how God then relates to the world. As for Zizioulas (2006:20) 'whenever mysticism was used as a form of communion between God and the world, this was either

rejected outright or accepted at the expense of otherness'. He proposes that when the history of Patristic thought is carefully studied it would reveal that the problem of ontological relationship between God and the world occupied a central place in the creative theology of that time.

Jesus as the Logos is brought into the context between God and the world. According to John 1:1-3, creation was brought about through the Word of God, and He became flesh. The Word who is the Son of God, the second person in the Trinity was with God in the creation. The creation continues re-creating itself but not outside God. The entire existence is in the hands of God through the word of God. Zizioulas (2006:24) speaks of 'the changes and adjustments into how the world and God relates to one another'. He says 'the love of God bridges the gulf of otherness by affecting the changeable and adjustable aspect of being, and this applies equally to God and to the world: God bridges the Gulf by adjusting His own tropos, that is, the how He is, while created existence also undergoes but of its tropos'. Zizioulas (2006) here seems to be applying his knowledge of Greek Philosophy to explain how God and the world relate. When he points out Jesus as the word of God it is clearly understood, especially in relation to how creation came into being. The meaning of God is not clearly explained. It is not clear whether the God mentioned is the Father for the entire Godhead. Yet in the Christian faith it is an acceptable fact that the entire Godhead was involved in the entire project of creation.

Zizioulas (2006:28) in bringing some Greek Church Fathers' thinking says to connect this bringing of the Gulf with a person of the Trinity, that is with the Incarnation: without the Incarnation of the Logos, the Ontological distance between God and the world cannot be overcome, since it is only through the adjustment of a divine mode of being, that is, a person, that Communion and Otherness can coincide. In I Timothy 2:5 Paul says 'there is one mediator between God and humans, the man Christ Jesus'. This text speaks volumes especially about the doctrine of Incarnation. God provided the divinity and gave humans their humanity both of which found their place in the Human/God, Jesus Christ. The Incarnation is not just an ideology of the church but it is a historical event. Paul in Roman 8:17 says 'now if we are children, then we are heirs - heirs of God did co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in His sufferings in order that we may also share in His glory'. In other

words God shares some things that belonged to humans in Christ and in return humans by being the children of God through Christ promise to share the glory of Christ. But Paul also said in the same Romans 8:19-23, 'for the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed for the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice. That the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God'. Paul went further to explain that we know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pain of Child birth right up to the present time. With that in mind Zizioulas (2006:29) says 'God and the world are united without losing their Otherness only in the person of the divine logos, that is, only in Christ'. He explains further that it is a person that makes this possible, because it is only a person that can express communion and otherness simultaneously, thanks to its being a mode of being, that is, an identity which, unlike substance or energy, is capable of modifying its being without losing its ontological uniqueness and otherness.

5.2.2   Personhood and Being

Zizioulas points out that person and personal identity are widely discussed nowadays as a supreme ideal; nobody seems to recognise that historically as well as existentially the concept of the person is indissolubly bound with theology. In his work of *Being as Communion,* Zizioulas attempts to show how deep and indestructible the bond is that unites the concept of the person with patristic theology and ecclesiology. Zizioulas (1985:28) compares the philosophical views of Plato and Aristotle. He says Platonic thought of a person as a concept which is ontologically impossible because the soul, which ensures man's continuity, is not united permanently with the concrete, individual man: it lives eternally but it can be united with another concrete body and can constitute another individual e. g. by reincarnation. Then he says in Aristotle the person proves to be a logically impossible concept, precisely, because the soul is indissolubly united with the concrete and individual, a man is a concrete individual, he endures, only for as long as his psychosomatic union endures – death dissolves the concrete individuality completely and definitely. Zizioulas (1985:29) argues that,

> *ancient Greek thought remained tied to the basic principle which it had*
> *set itself, the principle that being constitutes in the final analysis a unity in*

spite of the multiplicity of existent things because concrete existent things finally trace relationship and kinship with the 'one' being, and because consequently every differentiation or accidence must somehow be regarded as a tendency towards non-being, a deterioration of a fall from being.

He points out that not even God can escape from this ontological unity and stand freely before the world, face to face in dialogue with it.

The view is the way in which things came into being each relates to another. The idea of thinking may sound as if the existence as it stands came from one source. And that all things related to each other based on that source. Zizioulas speaks of unity. There is some similarity with the African concept of harmony. It is a well-known fact that the Greeks were associated with the gods. Just as in Africa where unity and harmony has to do with how human beings interact with the gods. In Africa the gods are the ancestors, but the Greek gods were not based on genealogy, unlike in Africa where there were no statues nor temples for the gods or ancestors, Greeks were known for their temples and statues of their gods. Life was lived with the interacting with the gods as Africans do. According to Zizioulas (1985:30) 'in this way Greek thought creates a wonderful concept of cosmos that is of unity and harmony, a world full of interior dynamism and aesthetic platitude, a world it is truly beautiful and divine'.

In the world of harmony and unity what is the position of human beings? In ATR human beings live their lives in between the ancestors and God the creator. Zizioulas (1985:31) says 'the place of man in this unified world of harmony and reason is the theme of Ancient Greek tragedy. He says it is precisely here that the term 'person' appears in ancient Greek usage'. How was the term, mask developed towards being identified as a person, since mask was the term for theatre? Zizioulas (1985:31) says 'the theatre, and tragedy in particular, is the setting in which the conflicts between human freedom and the rational necessity of a unified and harmonious world as they were understood by the Ancient 'Greeks', are worked out in dramatic form'. The setting differs from that of Africa where the personhood of an individual is so united with his or her community and is in union with the living and the dead. According to Zizioulas (1985:32) 'it is precisely in the theatre that man strives to become a

person, to rise up against this harmonious unity which oppresses him as rational and moral necessity'. For an African the theatre may be seen as the community where he or she would have communion with the living and the dead. But for the Greeks theatre is where an individual fights with the gods and with his fate, it is there that he sins and transgresses, but it is there too that he constantly learns –according to the stereotyped principle of ancient tragedy –that he can neither escape fate ultimately, nor continue to show Hubris to the gods without punishment, nor sin without suffering the consequences.

When an individual puts on the mask in the theatre, the individual can choose what he or she wants to be. The individual takes the form of another, hiding the true nature of the one behind the mask. Zizioulas (1985:33) points out that 'the mask is not unrelated to the person, but their relationship is tragic. He further adds that in the ancient Greek world for someone to be a person means that he has something added to his being'. The person is not his true hypostasis.

Two questions by Zizioulas (1985:35) 'how could we have arrived at an identification of the person with the being of man'? The second question is how freedom could have become identical with the world, the identity of the concrete man a product of freedom, and man in his very being identical with the person? He points out that for these things to have come about, two basic presuppositions were necessary:(A) A radical change in cosmology which would free the world and man from ontological necessity, and (B) an ontological view of man which would unite the person with the being of a man, which his permanent and enduring existence, with his genuine and absolute identity. Zizioulas viewed the role that was played by the Greek Church Fathers in resolving the questions of person and freedom. According to Zizioulas (1985:36) 'the concept of the person with its absolute and ontological context was born historically from the endeavour of the church to give ontological expression to its faith for the triune God'. He claims that this faith was primitive – it goes back to the very first years of the church and was handed down from generation to generation with the practice of baptism. For the Greek Fathers, they had to find a way and place for harmony between Christianity and Greek philosophy. A place where they could speak, about God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, yet still be able to claim the oneness of God.

Most of these points were made when reflecting on the understanding of how the Cappadocian Fathers dealt with the Trinity and relationships therein and with humanity. Therefore the study moves towards, Zizioulas' (1985) view of communion.

5.2.3 Truth and Communion

What was the problem of truth at the time of the Church Fathers? Pilate once asked Jesus, 'What is the truth? 'The same question is still asked today based on the understanding about the absoluteness of truth. It is said that there can never be an absolute truth since truth is relative. That concept has challenged the position of Christianity being the only religion that has the means to salvation. Zizioulas (1985:67) views 'Christology as the sole starting point for a Christian understanding of truth'. Jesus pointed out in John 14:6 that he was the truth. That may mean truth for Christianity. Truth is not just a concept or opinion, it is a historical event. The challenge was how to harmonise the truth as understood by the Greeks, the Jewish perspective of the person of Jesus Christ. The tension could be when Paul presents the cross of Christ as the content of his preaching. Zizioulas (1985:68) claims that Paul stood against the Greek and Jewish mentalities simultaneously. He further says that this confrontation between the Christological content of the gospel message on one hand, and on the other the Jewish as well as the Greek mentality, is directly connected with the problem of truth. In the Old Testament truth was based on the oath of God and what he said and promised in his name. All this took place within the field of a history which was created by God's promises to his people. God's people had to respond to the promises of God and obey his laws. The Israelites became obedient to the laws of God and also held on to every word of God, because that was their truth and reality.

But for the Greek mind according to Zizioulas (1985:68) 'they sought the truth in a way which transcends history'. He explains further that starting from the observation of the world, Greek thought raised the question of being organically and inseparably connected with the observing and perceiving mind. Three facts that are associated with Greek thought are: firstly, the unity that exists between the intelligible world, secondly, the thinking mind and thirdly, being. For the Greeks unity was where truth would be found. Truth was identical with virtue and beauty. The cosmos was the unity of all and truth and cosmos were held to be identical.

How can a Christian accept the idea that truth operates in history and creation when the ultimate character of truth and its uniqueness seems irreconcilable with the change and decay to which history and creation are subject? Zizioulas (1985) raised that question due to the understanding that truth is coherent and that there must be consistency which may not be found in history and in creation. Zizioulas (1985:70) adds that 'the New Testament way of understanding truth, with its Christological character, seems to contradict both the Jewish and Greek ideas of truth that has been presented here'. In the New Testament Jesus is presented as the Alpha and the Omega of history meaning that he began history and creation and he will end both of them. More than that Jesus is present between the beginning and the end. He continues making history and he is part of that history. According to Zizioulas (1985:71) understanding is that 'the New Testament hurls a challenge to Greek thought because Greek thought is in the flow of history and through it'. It is in the changes and its ambiguities that man is called to discover the meaning of existence. Zizioulas (1985:71) says if we want to be faithful to the Christological character of truth, we must affirm the historical character of truth and not despise it for the sake of its meaning. In the Old Testament the focus was upon the future, about someone who was to come. As history was made and also unfolded the goal was somewhere ahead in the future. Zizioulas calls it the future which constitutes a reality still to come. The New Testament points out the beginning of the future that was anticipated in the past. He asks how truth can be considered simultaneously from the point of view of the nature of being (Greek preoccupation) from the view of the goal or end of history (preoccupation of the Jews), and from the viewpoint of Christ, who is both a historical person and the permanent ground (the logos) of being (the Christian claim) and all the while preserving God's otherness in relation to creation. To answer the question Zizioulas approaches it from Greek patristic thought. He believes that their answers to the questions of their time can be meaningful today. The idea of communion became a tool in the hands of the Greek Fathers to let them answer questions.

5.3   Jesus as Logos

The church Fathers especially the Greek Fathers had to find a way to reconcile the Greek idea of truth with the Christian claim that Christ is the truth. According to Zizioulas (1985:72)

'the attempt was made in the first three centuries being assisted by the idea of Logos'. The Greek apologists like Justin, and the Alexandrian theologians like Clement and Origin seem to have been the first onset attempt. Philo was a Jewish scholar who lived in Alexandria approximately between 30BC and AD 50. Ferguson (2003:479) says 'Philo received a Greek education which was integrated with his Jewish religion and life'. The integration was evident when the Greek concept of Logos was used in the Old Testament, when referring to the world being created by the Logos of God (Genesis 1:1). In the New Testament Jesus Christ is the word and the word is God and nothing was made that was made without Him. As it was said before the Greek truth was associated with creation and history and Jesus as Logos is being regarded as the Creator who is also involved in history. Yet Zizioulas (1985:73) sounds a warning that this offered the church a possibility of converting Greek thought to Christianity and made all Christians debtors to the apologists. It was nevertheless full of danger for the Christian gospel.

Referring to the apologists Zizioulas (1985:73) focuses on the work of Justin who developed an idea of truth that was similar, if not identical, to that of Platonism. The position was that God was regarded as the ultimate truth, understood to be He who is, always the same in Himself and in relation to all things, and who could be known only through the mind. This understanding of truth as something that is fixed established its links to the world in and through the mind.

For Africa it is the king, or chief together with the ancestors who hold the authority. The concept of creation does not occupy African thought that much. The African does embrace God the Supreme Being as the creator but there is no focus on when creation happened or how it was done. Some African myths about creation say human beings came from the soil or from a rock below. The mountains are regarded as belonging to the spirits of the ancestors. Truth and reality may be regarded as what builds and develops the community and the relationship within that community. An African spends most of life in an attempt to build relationships and community.

History in Africa is associated with time, because events signify time. Most of reality is about what has happened. Therefore culture in Africa has to do with the past. Any development that challenges African culture is regarded with suspicion. Culture unites the African

community and it is like a point of reference in any activity. The saying 'according to my culture' is a line that is used every day in Africa. For Jesus and Christianity there must be harmony with African culture. One may ask how that can be accomplished. Jesus had to be numbered among the ancestors. Christian teaching must accommodate African culture without being judgmental. Any scripture that says anything against African culture especially regarding the ancestors is not acceptable. Truth has to do with what is acceptable within the entire community. Truth has to be that which is able to bring the community together without challenging culture and that which is able to build relationships. To an African truth must be seen within the boundaries of culture being in accord with the worship of the ancestors. Any developments should be that which promotes the community and not an individual because it is the community that gives the individual his or her identity and humanness. A person may have intelligence but it is the unity within that community that drives the thinking that drives the intelligence.

The missionaries were viewed negatively because they were perceived as tampering with the harmony that unites the community and that may have disrupted the flow of life and the development of relationships. The majority of Africans did not view Jesus as the only way back to God. He can only be accepted within the community of the ancestors. The African may not understand the worship of one God away from the community of ancestors and other Africans of his or her community. Therefore God can only be closer to Africans if he is part of African ancestors. The Greeks isolated their gods away from the triune God yet employed the resources found within Greek philosophy in their attempt to worship God. Zizioulas (185:74) points out that in a Christological sense the bond between God and the world is also a bond between truth and the mind, and the truth of philosophy is nothing less than part of this Logos.

Zizioulas (1985:74) says the two Alexandrian theologians Clement and Origen were among those who introduced philosophy into the church. Their starting point was philosophy to theology. Zizioulas (1985) says it was the introduction of the concept of Logos that led to the crisis of Arianism. Referring to Justin, Clement continued with the idea of truth as the nature of being. The concept was developed further with nature being upheld as equivalent to the truth of things. According to Zizioulas (1985:75) this concept of truth as nature led Clement

to understand the nature of God as spirit, based on the scriptures like John 4:24 pointing out that 'God is a Spirit'. He then unites the spirit and truth saying that those who worship God must worship him in spirit and in truth. Zizioulas explains that here the spirit is defined as nature which leads to the idea that spirit is God's corporal substance, which was developed by Origen. Origen was seen dealing with the meaning of the vents, as recorded in the Bible. Zizioulas' (1985:76) interpretation of Origen was that he postulated tha 'the truth resides in the meaning of things, and once this meaning has been grasped, the things bearing it lose their importance'. For that reason it led Origen to place the accent on Eschatology.

These views had implications for Christ as the truth. In John 1:17 it says 'grace and truth came by Jesus Christ'. Zizioulas (1985:76) says 'Origen attempted to reconcile John 1:17 and In John 14:6 Jesus said 'I am the truth'. In John 1:17 truth is spoken of in the context of a historical event - Christ came and brought something along i. e. grace and truth. Zizioulas (1985:77) says Origen understood 'came' in John 1:17 not as a historical event, but in cosmological terms. He says that the truth has been directly imprinted by God – evidently in the eternal creation of the world. For Origen truth exists as the very nature of being. Wisdom is not an event in history as the incarnation is but Christ participates in wisdom. When it is said that nothing was made that was made without Him, Jesus is seen participating in the truth as the Logos of creation.

Zizioulas (1985:77) realises that Origen's view fails to answer how the historical Christ can be the truth? Origen was viewed as undermining the historical Christ because his main focus was on revelation, and there is a contradiction between revelation and history. According to Zizioulas (1985:78) revelation tends to lead to 'a unification of existence so that its meaning can be apprehended, while history presents existence in the form of fragmentations and antinomies'. He further explains that if there is an interest in truth as history, it inevitably results in the human mind becoming the ground of truth, the crucial bond between truth and creation. Referring back to the idea of truth as being and truth as history Zizioulas (1985:78) feels that the apologetics' manner of approach and Origen failed to create a synthesis.

5.3.1   The Eucharist

Having concluded that the approach to the idea of truth as being and truth as history failed, Zizioulas (1985:78) moves on to the Eucharistic, approach. The question here is 'What is life?' The Greeks' concept from the understanding of Aristotle is that life is a quality added to being but it is not being itself. Zizioulas (1985:79) further elaborates that the truth of being is not found in life, but precedes it; a lifeless stone can claim for itself the verb 'to be' just as much as an animal can. To the Greek mind 'being' was used as the verb 'to be' and the verb for life was to have, life is something to be possessed that cannot proceed being. Therefore it means truth can only relate to being not to life. The Christian understanding of both being and life is totally in contradiction with that of the Greek mind. Christians may say being and life while the Greek mind does not have that style of thinking. According to Zizioulas (1985:79), 'this identification of being with life affected the ideas of truth in a decisive way'.

From the book of John one can learn that in Jesus there is life and there is truth. In one person there is the way, the truth and life. If life is possessed by being, then how does truth relate to Jesus as a being or as life in Him? The challenge here is because Jesus does not just possess life but He is life. Since He was forever there from eternity how does one refer to him as a being? According to Zizioulas (1985:79) understanding 'the Greek mind, life is possessed and cannot proceed being'. In Jesus it seems life precedes the being and he does not just possess life, he is life.

To understand some of the Early Church Fathers' thoughts is to appreciate and understand their opponents like the Gnostics. In the book of John, Jesus gave eternal life and was also regarded as the true life. Christ was seen as the truth not of the mind of the incorruptibility of being. Zizioulas (1985:80) says 'this was an extremely profound assimilation of the Greek concept of truth as the nature of things with the Johannine and Ignatian concepts of truth as life'. The Greek Church Fathers saw Christ being the truth because he is life and the universe of beings finds its meaning in its incorruptible existence in Christ, who takes up into himself the whole creation and history. One cannot speak of being outside life therefore the ontological nature of truth resides in the idea of life.

A foundation was built by these discussions in order to perceive the life of the church as a community. Theological reflection was also based on the relationship between the Eucharist

and life. Christ is alive and continues to live in the Eucharist. Zizioulas (1985:81) calls it 'a life of communion with God, such as exists within the trinity and is actualised within the members of the Eucharistic community'. In that place knowledge and communion are identical.

5.3.2   The Trinitarian presupposition

The fourth century gave the church an opportunity to redefine the doctrine that was taught. At the same time the church was able to observe the solidness of her teachings, in relation to heresy. Zizioulas (1985) regards the contribution of earlier theologians like Clement, Origen Ignatius and Irenaeus as a base and foundation for response to the questions asked by Arius and his followers. According to Zizioulas (1985:83) Athanasius' stand point was a direct consequence of the ontology of communion formed within the current Eucharistic theology that connected Ignatius, through Irenaeus to Athanasius.

Zizioulas (1985:83) observes that Athanasius made a clear distinction between substance and will. According to Zizioulas (1985:83) 'the distinction was needed in order to make it plain that the being of the Son in His relation to God was not of the same kind as being of the world'. He elaborated by saying the Son's being belongs to the substance of God, while that of the world belongs to the will of God. From the Greek setting away from the Jewish setting theologians like Athanasius employed Greek resources in order to protect the Biblical roots of the gospel from the dangers of Greek ontology.

Athanasius avoided the cosmological thinking of Justin and Origen then adopted the Eucharistic thinking Ignatius and Irenaeus. Zizioulas (1985:84) explains that to say that the Son belongs to God's substance implies that substance possesses almost by definition a relational character. If the substance of the Father is the same as that of the Son which is something to do with relationship then it means substance was forever there, there was never a time when the Father was without the Son. Zizioulas (1985:86) observes that 'Athanasius develops the idea that communion belongs not to the level of will and action but to that of substance'.

Having referred to Ignatius and Irenaeus, Athanasius laid the foundation for the Cappadocian Fathers. Zizioulas (1985:87) points out that one of the difficulties in developing an *ontology*

of communion which possessed clarity was the fact that, as an ontological category substance did not differ essentially from *hypostasis*. For Athanasius, *Ousia* and *hypostasis* was one and the same thing. When the Cappadocian Fathers entered the scene the term *hypostasis* was dissociated from that of *Ousia* and according to Zizioulas (1985:87) it was identified with that of *Prosopon*. Thus *hypostasis* became a term for relational, and was employed in Trinitarian theology. When *hypostasis* became a relational term it entered into ontology, becoming the relational categories of existence. To be and to be in relation became identical. As explained by Zizioulas (1985:88) for someone or something to be, two things are simultaneously needed, being itself and being in relation.

The category of *hypostasis* defined as relational is closer to that of an African becoming a person in the presence of other human beings. One belongs to the community where relationships are built. Zizioulas (1985:88) says 'it is only in relationship that identity appears to have an ontological significance, and if any relationship did not imply such an ontology meaningful identity, then it would be no relationship'.

The Cappadocian Fathers contributed by making use of the Greek understanding of the being of God which came to be placed on a new and more Biblical foundation. The transformation of these terms *hypostasis* and *ousia* provided the Church Fathers especially the Cappadocians enough resources to teach about the Father as the ground of being and the Son in subordination without making Him a creature. Zizioulas (1985:89) states that 'the identification of God with the Father risks losing its Biblical content unless our doctrine of God includes not just the three persons, but also the unique *ousia'.*

5.3.3   The Christian connectedness

Having discussed Origen and the other Greek fathers, theologians and apologists, Zizioulas (1985:94) concludes, that the truth of creation is a dependent truth, while the truth of God's being is communion in its self. It means the idea of truth leads to life and communion of beings. Based on the view of history from the Old Testament's perspective, history is viewed ontologically. According to the Old Testament time and perfection is what is going to happen in the future. Zizioulas (1985:96) explains that 'the truth of history lies in the future, and this is to be understood in an ontological sense'. History is true, despite change and decay, not

just because it is a movement towards an end but mainly because it is a movement from the end, since it is the end that gives it meaning.

Zizioulas (1985:96) points out that 'Greek thinkers like Maximus developed a Christological synthesis within which history and creation become organically interrelated'. Yet Zizioulas (1985:97) notices that 'there was a departure from the Greek idea of truth and that this departure was performed Christological which led to a synthesis of truth as being and history simultaneously'. He points to God who knows the created beings as the realisation of His will, it is this love of God that unifies beings and points to the meaning of being. Zizioulas says the incarnate Christ is so identical to the ultimate will of God's love, that the meaning of created being and purpose of history is simply the incarnate Christ. He says all creation; the universe as it stands was created or came into being with Christ in mind and in heart. One may speak of history or creation they are all interrelated in Christ the Logos. The conclusion is that Jesus who is the Alpha and Omega he is also the truth. Zizioulas (1985:98) says 'the truth is located simultaneously at the heart of history, at the ground of creation, and at end of history, all this in one synthesis which allows us to say Christ is the truth for Jews and Greeks at the same time'. He indicates that it may be the first time where philosophical language succeeded in uniting the beginning and the end of existence.

5.4   Truth and Salvation

The fall of man is a historical event which has done a lot of harm to the being of creation. The fall of human beings resulted in sin and created a separation between the creator and his creation. In the absence of human beings living in communion with their Creator people start to search for communion with creation as a point of reference. Sin was not the only result of the fall; death became part of the reality of the human race. Zizioulas (1985:105) notes that death is connected with truth in existence through the truth's identification with nature itself, accompanied by individualisation and fragmentation of nature. If death comes as a result of the fall which also isolated human beings from communion with God which resulted in humans as a point of reference then salvation has to reverse what the fall has done. Zizioulas (1985:105) shows that to be saved from the fall, means essentially that truth should be fully applied to existence, thereby making life something true, that is undying,

which is what the gospel of John calls eternal life. This eternal life is life with truth and knowledge where the individualisation of nature becomes transformed into communion.

5.4.1 Christ and Truth

The fourth gospel makes claims about Jesus being the truth and life. He is from eternity and came into time and space to become a human being. Jesus Christ was born to be the Saviour of the world. Zizioulas (1985:107) remarks that 'if the truth saves the world it is because it is life. Truth can only be contained by a container that is truthful'. Therefore when Jesus became human because He is truth it was God giving the world the most human being ever. Zizioulas (1985:107) professed that the triune God offers in Himself the only possibility for such an identification of being with communion; he is the revelation of true personhood.

Yet even though Jesus became a human and lived with other human beings, He was not alone. Salvation has been a task that was accomplished within the communion of the Godhead. According to Zizioulas (1985:107) 'Christology was founded precisely upon the assertion that only the trinity can offer a created being, the genuine base to personhood and hence salvation'. As a saviour of human life Jesus was in a position higher than human beings. The Early Church recognised that Jesus had to be God. And Zizioulas (1985:108) brings to light that 'Christ was not an individual but a true person'. The African concept of *Ubuntu* that says, *I am because I belong*, that an African becomes fully a person in the mist of others, seems to come home here. Zizioulas (1985:108) demonstrates that our experience of personhood through communion and love gives an idea of this kind of experience.

In the African understanding death becomes a promotion to ancestry. It seems that being an ancestor is a move closer to being divine. Christ at death remained who He was and at resurrection He brought human beings closer to God through a relationship with their Creator on the level of personhood.

5.4.2 The Spirit and the Body of Christ

There are two approaches that are mentioned for the Christological starting point to the understanding of truth. Zizioulas (1985:110) points out the first kind of Christology where Christ is identified as an individual in history. In this case truth comes through the means of

the spoken words of Christ based on what scripture informs us, and the necessity to interpret.

Zizioulas (1985:110) tells of 'the second type of Christology where Christ cannot be conceived in Himself as an individual'. His whole personal existence had a certain relationship with His body, the church. In this relationship there is no gap to be bridged between Christ and the church. The Holy Spirit is a person who has a personal relationship with the church. Zizioulas (1985:111) makes the following illustration that 'the Holy Spirit, in making real Christ even in history, makes real at the same time Christ's personal existence as a body of community'. He further says Christ does not exist first as truth and then as communion: He is both at once. In the spirit there is no separation between Christology and Ecclesiology.

In the Bible (Matthew 1:18) and (Luke 1:35) the coming of Jesus Christ into time and space was a historical event which was made possible by the Holy Spirit. Zizioulas (1985:111) says 'Christology's very foundations are laid pneumatologically'. He further says 'the Holy Spirit is the one who gives birth to Christ and to the whole activity of salvation, by anointing Him and making Him Christ'. Furthermore the church which is the body of Christ is made up by the gifts of the Holy Spirit. There is a connection in the historical event of Jesus Christ and the birth of Jesus Christ movement by the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus' coming was made possible by the Holy Spirit and He continued to anoint Him (Jesus) for the task of salvation. The birth of the church became a historical event through the power of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost and the church which is the body of Christ continues to be built and identified by the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Zizioulas (1985:111) points out that 'without risk of exaggeration Christ exists only pneumatologically'. The mystery of Christology is that the Christ-event is an integral part of the economy of the Holy Trinity. One cannot speak of the Father outside the Son and the Holy Spirit and the same can be said by both the Son and Holy Spirit. The Trinity worked together in the event of incarnation and salvation, in fact they have never been isolated one from another.

The church which is the body of Christ is an organism because of the Holy Spirit who is the power of her existence. Only in the communion of the Trinity does the church become alive and edified. The presence of the triune God in each member of the body of Christ unifies the

body as a unit. There are many members of one body but the head is one. The church is one but there are many at the same time. Being united under the leadership of Christ through the Spirit the diversity of the members is embraced. By unity does not imply uniformity but that all become one in communion with the triune God. Zizioulas (1985:112) confirms this by saying that 'the individualisation of human existence which results in division and separation is transformed into existence in communion where the otherness of person is identical with communion within a body'.

Since Jesus is the truth who was incarnate through the power of the Holy Spirit and both Christ and the Holy Spirit are members of the trinity that means the Holy Spirit is also the truth. Zizioulas (1985:113) explains that only 'the mode of the operation of truth differs, a Christ-mode and a Spirit-mode, such that there one divine love may accommodate itself to our needs and limitations'. It seems that for the member of the body of Christ it is not what they are saying but it is what they had become, since they had been transformed into existence in communion. Truth is a position where one is, through communion.

The person becomes part of the many in Christ through baptism. According to Zizioulas (1985:113) 'baptism signifies the decisive passing of our existence from the truth of an individual being into the truth of a personal being'. Christian doctrine about baptism teaches that it symbolises the death and resurrection of Christ and therefore a person dies with Christ and is resurrected with Him into a new life. The resurrection aspect of baptism is therefore nothing other than incorporation into the community. Zizioulas (1985:113) further shows that 'eternal life needs the new birth of baptism as a birth in the Spirit , just as Christ's own birth was in the Spirit, so that each baptised person can themselves become Christ, His existence being one of communion and hence of true life'.

Christian life is lived within the community of faith not out of it. Zizioulas (1985:114) argues that 'Christ's existence is a realisation of the community of the church'. He further maintains that this community is born as the body of Christ and lives out of the same communion which we find in Christ's historical existence. The life that a Christian lives on earth should be a foretaste of the life outside time and space, a taste of eternal life.

5.5   The Eucharist and Christ

Is there any relationship between Christ and Eucharist? And what is the church's understanding of how Christ relates to the Eucharist? Firstly, according to Zizioulas (1985:114) 'the Eucharist reveals the Christ's truth as a visitation and as the Tabernacle of God in history and creation so that God can be beheld in the glory of His truth and partakers of which His communion of life'. The church assembles for the Eucharist in the name of Christ who is within the community of faith. In the New Testament the assembly did not occur outside the Tabernacle as it did in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament only the high priest was able to enter into the presence of God in the most Holy place. In the New Testament the entire community is in communion with the Eucharist assembly and God's word. Zizioulas (1985:115) maintains that 'it is important to note that 'this way of understanding Christ as truth, Christ Himself becomes revealed as truth not in a community but as a community'. In the community Jesus is the word of God heard and revealed within the community.

Secondly the historical Christ-event in the Eucharist becomes a history experienced and realised. Zizioulas (1985:116) explains that 'within history pictured truth does not come to us solely by way of delegation but it comes as a Pentecostal event which takes linear history into a charismatic present-moment'?

Thirdly, the formulation of truth in the church is based on the meaning of the Creeds by the Church Fathers. The aim was to lead to communion with the life of God. Zizioulas (1985:117) points out that 'a council's aim was Eucharistic communion, and in producing or adopting Creeds the intention was not to provide material for theological reflection, but to orientate correctly the Eucharistic communities'. There seems to be a bond between dogma and community which has a link between truth and communion. According to Zizioulas (1985:118) 'dogmas, like ministries cannot survive as truth outside the communion-event created by the Spirit'. It is because a concept or formula cannot incorporate the truth within itself, unless the spirit gives life to it in communion. Zizioulas further says it is the communion of the church which makes theology into truth.

Fourthly, human beings have communion with the entire creation of God. Zizioulas (1985:119) says 'the Eucharist shows that truth is not just something concerning humanity alone, but it has a profound cosmic dimension'. Most human beings are reasoning individuals who can use their minds to learn and interpret nature. Zizioulas (1985:119) explains that 'the responsibility for a human being is to make a Eucharistic reality out of nature. People may be able to make nature capable of communion'. The result is that Christ becomes a cosmic Christ and the world as a whole dwells in truth, which is communion with its creator.

Finally, Zizioulas (1985:120) says that 'a Eucharist concept of truth shows how truth becomes freedom, based on the words of Jesus 'you shall know the truth and the truth say set you free' (John 8:32). As mentioned before the results of the fall of human beings was the separation from God and from other human beings. Christ came to give a human being the right to choose to continue being separated from God or to come home to God. Zizioulas (1985:121) says that 'the overcoming of these divisions is the price of what we call catholicity of existence within Christ and His body, the Catholic Church'. Zizioulas (1985:121) points out that 'the freedom given by the Christ-truth to creation is precisely this freedom from division and individualisation, creating the possibility of otherness with communion'.

The church is a gathering of individuals who have come into the knowledge of truth. The community of faith is about those who had separated themselves from God and God through Christ united them with others. According to Zizioulas (1985:122) 'man is free only within communion'. He continues by saying if the church wishes to be a place of freedom, she must continually place all the objects she possesses, whatever they may be within the communion-event to make them true and to make her members free in regard to them as objects as well as in them as channels of communion. Truth liberates by placing beings in communion.

Zizioulas' (1985) attempt as outlined in the first section was to point out how the Greek Church Fathers used methods and thoughts from Greek philosophy to defend and to explain Christian truth. He began by demonstrating how the ancient Greek mind understood human beings and their place within creation. He moved from creation to personhood. Zizioulas (1985) was able to make plain how the Greek fathers incorporated a Greek perspective. He

demonstrated how the Greek fathers took the gospel which was presented at first by Jewish Christians with a background of Judaism. The Jewish Christians were related to Abraham and to Moses and they were able to connect Jesus with their Scriptures. Prior (2005) points out that in the church in Jerusalem and all Judea the gospel was within the Jewish setting. As the gospel moved out of Jerusalem and from all Judea towards the ends of the world, it was confronted by questions that were not Jewish. The Jewish church worshipped God the Father and God the Son both as divine but remaining within monotheism. The Jewish church never queried the nature and position of Christ with the Father. When the gospel touched the ground of 'the ends of the world' which was Hellenised new questions were asked. They began to ask the nature of Jesus Christ and His position with God the Father, from the influence of Plato and Aristotle's philosophy. The Greek Church began to respond philosophically to these questions.

5.6 Christ, the Spirit and the Church

This section is about how Christology and Pneumatology relate as components of ecclesiology. The question is: Is the work of Christology separated from Pneumatology or is there is a link? It was stated that the Holy Spirit was like a supervisor of the incarnation and when Jesus was about to start His ministry the Holy Spirit anointed Him. The father who sent Him was with Him and so was the Holy Spirit. The church was born through the power of Pentecost and the believers were baptised by the Holy Spirit. The believers preached Christ and Him crucified. Zizioulas (1985:130) argues that both the Father and the Spirit are involved in history but only the Son becomes history. Both the Father and the Holy Spirit were involved in incarnation and resurrection. Incarnation was the process that brought Jesus into history, when He became human. In resurrection Jesus was liberated from the bondage of history, that it was the spirit that raised Him from the dead, and by so doing Christ became an Eschatological being, the last Adam.

Another important contribution of the Holy Spirit according to Zizioulas (1985:130) to the Christ-event is that, 'because of the involvement of the Holy Spirit in the economy, Christ is not just an individual not one but many'. The incarnation made Jesus to be at a particular place at a certain time. He was confined to time and space through the limitation of the body. After the resurrection Jesus was no longer subject to the principles of time and space.

Zizioulas (1985:131) says 'the Holy Spirit has been associated with the notion of communion'. He explains further that Pneumatology contributes to the Christological dimension of communion. For members of the body of Christ to be like the head and to continue being united with the head, they need the work of the Holy Spirit. Christians, being united to the head needs inspiration and sanctification. Zizioulas (1985:132) indicates that the Spirit makes the church, it is the very essence of the church, and the church is constituted in and through eschatology and communion.

5.6.1   Implications

Zizioulas (1985:132) points to 'the importance of the local church in ecclesiology'. When it is stated that the church is the body of Christ it means the church exists through Jesus Christ. Each event that took place during Christ's life on earth has certain meaning for the church. Zizioulas (1985:132) explains that 'the church is the body of Christ, which means that she is instituted through the one Christological event: she is one because Christ is one and she owes her being to this one Christ'. The Holy Spirit enables the church to be the church at a local level yet still connected to the universal church.

The second implication given by Zizioulas (1985:133) is 'the significance of conciliarity. Since there is no Pope or council for Orthodox theology unlike in the Roman Catholic Church what is the nature of conciliarity'? According to Zizioulas (1985:133) 'the true nature of conciliarity in Orthodox theology can be understood only in the light of what is called the constitutive role of Pneumatology in ecclesiology, and of the fact that Pneumatology implies the notion of communion'. The pattern of the Trinity set a stage for Ecclesiology. God is a communion of persons meaning that the nature of God is communion. The emphasis is on the one substance of God which coincides with the communion of three persons; 'the one and the many'.

Based on the understanding of the Triune God stated above, Zizioulas (1985:134) points out that 'in Ecclesiology all this can be applied to the relationship between local and the universal church'. The Christian faith teaches that there is one church, as there is one God. Yet Zizioulas (1985:135) points further that 'the one church is the communion of many local churches; communion and oneness coincide in Ecclesiology'. The commune of the local

church is a foundation of the universal church. By the universal church do we mean the council in a global setting like WCC?

According to the views of Orthodox theology as presented by Zizioulas (1985:136) 'it is not just the church as a confederation of local churches but it requires an institution which expresses the oneness of the church and not its multiplicity'. Even though there is recognition of the oneness and multiplicity the two need to coincide in an institution which possesses a twofold ministry: the ministry of the Apostle (the oneness) and the ministry of the many (the heads of the local churches).

Another implication is observed by the Bishop and the community. Here the focus is on the local church and the Bishop still maintains the one and many approach. Zizioulas (1985:136) indicates that 'in the local church the one is represented through the ministry of the Bishop while the many are represented through the other ministries and the laity'. The local church still maintains the metaphor, the body of Christ. The body of Christ is one yet there are many members of the body of Christ. The suggestion is that Christ as the head is represented by the Bishop, and the members (the many) find their unity through the ministry of the Bishop. Yet the Bishop cannot stand on his own without the community of faith. According to Zizioulas (1985:137) 'there is no church without the community, as there is no Christ without the body, or the one without the many'.

5.7   On the Eucharist and Catholicity

There were certain realities of life which came from the Early Church, which caught the attention of the leadership of that time. The Jews in Jerusalem had a certain attitude towards Hellenised Jews which was not based on Christian principles. Zizioulas (1985:151) states that 'certainly there was a basic difference in faith that distinguished Christians from their environment; the distinctiveness affected their manner of gathering'. He points out that the unity of their gathering was based on their race as Jews. When the church moved from Jerusalem to 'the ends of the world' race was no longer a base for their gathering. It was noticed that the Christians declared that in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, male or female, adult or child, rich or poor, master or slave. The church was neither Jewish nor Pagan but a new race in Christ which was non-racial.

Zizioulas (1985:151) reveals that this attitude (the non-racial) 'which transcended not only social but also natural divisions was portrayed in the Eucharistic community par excellence'. The Early Church was the Eucharistic community in its composition. It was a Catholic community because it transcended not only social but also natural divisions. This picture of the Eucharistic community is viewed by Zizioulas (1985:152) as a picture of the Kingdom of God of which this community was a revelation and a real sign.

The Orthodox understanding of the Catholicity of the Eucharistic community is also reflected in its structure. It seems that there is a similarity of understanding concerning an individual on the Throne on behalf of Christ on earth, known also as the living image of Christ. It is not fully explained why the Bishop in Rome became more powerful than other Bishops. During the time of persecutions of the church by Rome it seemed all Bishops were of equal position. The possibility is that the change of status of the Bishop in Rome might have been influenced by politics. The manner of approach about the status of the Roman Bishop took the direction of the Old Testament high priest. The high priest was the only one who had the right to enter into the most Holy place. With the Roman Bishop they tried to link Peter with Jesus Christ. There is no proof that Peter had a superior status to the other apostles in the New Testament.

The Bishop who took the Throne within the structure of the church, according to Zizioulas (1985:153), a fundamental function of this one Bishop was to express in himself the multitude of the faithful in that place. Zizioulas continues to explain that this Bishop was the one who would offer the Eucharist to God in the name of the church, thus bringing to the Throne of God the whole body of Christ. With this approach the Bishop became the one in whom the many united would became one brought back to Him who had made them.

The Bishops were considered to be equal; none was to be superior to any other or chosen to represent the church before the Throne of God. In the presence of God each Christian has a right to enter by the name of Jesus Christ the Son of the living God. The role of Jesus in the Trinity is to be the way into the Godhead. As the New Testament revealed no one can approach God without Christ. The understanding of this superior Bishop is a challenge to the understanding of the fivefold ministry within the church. The New Testament talks about the Apostles, Prophets, Evangelist, Teachers and Pastors which seemed to function collectively

until the church reached its maturity in the unity of Christ. The five were not the only ones mentioned. There seems to be a contradiction between the gifts of the Spirit and the positional structure in the church, especially the one presented here as the Eucharistic community. The church should recognise the Lordship of Jesus Christ who is present in the body of Christ by the Spirit.

Zizioulas notes that the Holy Spirit was present during the process of incarnation and the birth of the church. The Holy Spirit is also at work during the salvation of human beings. The question is how much the human agent can be trusted to occupy the universal position of Jesus Christ. According to the understanding of Perichoresis and communion the Holy Spirit is here now and not without the other members of the Godhead. The work of the Holy Spirit is to enable the church to know Christ better, and to bring God's presence into the Christian meeting. Zizioulas (1985:153) says the Bishop would become the one through whose hands over the whole community would have to pass when it's being offered up to God in Christ. He further said that the decisive pre-eminence of the Bishop in the idea of a Catholic Church was thus developing from within the heart of the Eucharistic community.

The ministry of the Holy Spirit is compared to the position of the superior Bishop who is on the Thrown. This was mentioned because many members within the institutional church united under the orders of the Bishop. Zizioulas (1985:153) points out that the 'Plurality of orders ought to cease to be a division and be transcended into a diversity like the one given by the Holy Spirit who distributes the gifts without destroying the unity'.

5.8   Reflections on Catholicity

Catholicity here refers to the universal church of God not a certain denomination. The church is said to be Catholic because, according to Zizioulas (1985:158), it is the body of Christ. He further indicates that the church Catholicity depends on Christ Jesus since He is a universal figure. The church is also Catholic as long as it is where Christ is. Zizioulas (1985:159) point out that 'the Christological character of Catholicity lies in the fact that the church is Catholic not as a community which aims at a certain ethical achievement but as a community which experiences and reveals the unity of all creation insofar as this unity constitutes a reality in the person of Christ'.

The shortcoming with African ancestral worship here is the lack of a universal figure. The church maybe based on certain family ties within the community and race and ethnicity may play a role to create divisions. The category of unity and being universal may be hard neither to find nor to achieve within African Traditional Religion. Yet Christ has the universality goal in approach because God so loved the world. Zizioulas (1985:159) points out that Christ's unity and His Catholicity is what the church reveals in her Catholicity. It means the church's Catholicity is a presence which unites into a single existential reality both what is given and what is demanded, the presence of Him who sums up in Himself the community and the entire creation by His being existentially involved in both of them. The implication is that once the church loses the unity and relationship with Jesus she becomes like a salt that has lost its saltiness.

This may suggest that the oneness that is shared within the Trinity should be shared between the Godhead and the church. If the unity of the church is based on the relationship with the Godhead through Jesus Christ then it may mean that the church should maintain and pursue the relationship. Jesus prayed about it. In His prayer He mentions how He relates to the Father and asks the Father to help the church to maintain that oneness. For the church to remain in unity she must pursue to keep the oneness with the Trinity. Zizioulas (1985:160) claims that 'to reveal Christ's whole body in history means to meet the demonic powers of division which operate in history. Jesus prayed for the unity when He asked the Father to make them one'. The unity is a picture of the unity within the Godhead. If God is a unity and pursue the same for His church then it means the division in the church is something that happens outside the oneness of God. To show that the division is not from God it is called the '*demonic powers of division which operates in history'*. Zizioulas (1985) talks about a Christological Catholicity which is recognised with its Pneumatological dimensions.

According to Zizioulas (1985:160) in the celebration of the Eucharist the church very early realised that in order for the Eucharistic community to become or reveal in it itself the wholeness of the body of Christ the descent of the Holy Spirit upon this creation would be necessary. When the church and creation in its wholeness is under the cloud of the Holy Spirit, then the entire church as the body of Christ is able to maintain unity. Zizioulas

(1985:162) points out that the way the Catholicity of the church is revealed in the Eucharistic lies in the transcendence of all ultimate essence of Catholicity which lies in the transcendences of all divisions in Christ. He mentions further that it covers all areas and all dimensions of existence whether human or cosmic, historical or Eschatological spiritual or material, social or individual. Zizioulas (1985:162) seems to have a negative approach towards the thoughts of dichotomy and dualism. For him man and the world form a unity in harmony and so do the various dimensions in man's own existence. According to Zizioulas (1985:162) an Ecclesiological Catholicity in the light of the Eucharistic community suggests and presupposes a Catholic Anthropology and a Catholic view of existence in general.

The idea here is about the continuation of the relationship between the church and the created world of God. God has continued to be in a relationship with His creation. He has never stopped to be the Creator. There is a consultant interrelation between the church and the world. The church is the community which through the descent of the Holy Spirit transcends herself and the world and offers it to God in the Eucharist where the church is in communion with the divine.

The church in the world and in history faces the reality of division and classification within her. Zizioulas (1985:163) asks how this view of Catholicity can be reconciled with the fact that the Eucharistic community itself is divided into different categories and classes of people. The church cannot just speak about unity that has been suggested yet fail to face the reality of a division that is so deep.

Zizioulas (1985:163) suggests that 'the church as the body of Christ exists as a manifestation of Christ's own ministry and as a reflection of this very ministry in the world'. He claims that ministry transcends all categories and divisions. Zizioulas (1985) believes that ministry is not understood outside the context of the community, it means there is no ministry that can stand outside or above the community.

God is able to touch the entire church through one person within the community. But no one can stand and minister without the others. When one stands to minister the entire church is edified, and when the church is edified the one that is ministering is also edified. Human beings cannot become without others. It means human beings become in the

presence of others. It is only God, Who is who He is without anything making Him. A singer needs those who can listen to his or her music just as a king needs a country, because no one can be a leader without followers. Zizioulas (1985:165) says the Eucharistic community and the church in general, as a communion (*koinonia*) can only be understood in the varied categories of personal existence.

It is Zizioulas' (1985:165) understanding that 'ordination to the ministry in the context of the Eucharistic communion implies that the seal of the Holy Spirit which is given cannot exist outside the receiver's existential relationship with the community'. Christianity was founded and built on the foundation of love. The motivation for ministry is not selfishness but love. Without love as a motivating factor, Christianity is regarded as nothing. Zizioulas (1985:165) points out that outside this existential bond with the community it is destined to die. The Spirit who gives this charisma once, and constantly sustains it, does not live outside this community because He is the bond of love. That bond of the Spirit is the love that must continue to hold Christians together as a bond.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

This research is an attempt to discover the benefits based on the understanding of the notion of Perichoresis by the Cappadocian Fathers and the notion of Ubuntu (Communion) in ATR. The approach of juxtaposing may result in some challenges especially when there is apparently no coherence and consistency between the two Traditions (African and Cappadocians). Some may even ask which one should benefit from another or how both can benefit the African Church.

The benefits should be achieved when the African Church discovers and analyses what role authority played in the worship and veneration of the ancestors in the foundation and reflection about God in ATR and to identify the sources of authority employed by the Cappadocian Fathers to justify their veneration and worship of the Lord Jesus alongside God the Father. Africans proposed the approach of contextualisation which was part of Africanising Christianity. The research discovered that African culture became the authority and the foundation for doing theology. It is not that clear why culture became the foundation rather than the tool. But the setting was the encounter between Western and African culture instead of the contents of the gospel message. The African response was to reject the attitude and the behaviour of the missionaries. But that implied that most of the work done by the missionaries was perceived as negative and associated with colonialism. In some instances Christianity was viewed as a means to soften Africans against white oppression. Evangelisation was equated with western civilisation.

Most of the categories of thinking and initiatives that sounded western and American were viewed negatively. Throughout this research it seemed that western thought was more about concepts than African thought. Africans are more concerned about the practical and cultural roles played. For instance life is lived in the observation of certain rites and rituals justified by African culture. But one cannot really tell what those rituals do to an individual. The rituals may not be questioned because one may be judged as looking down on someone's culture. The community and African ancestors seemed to be the custodians of the culture and values.

It was indicated that ATR justifies the continuation of the worship and veneration of the ancestors based on culture as well. The problem is the belief in luck or fate rather than the grace of God. Because the ancestors should be remembered from time to time that they may continue protecting family members by performing a *service*. The service is conducted by slaughtering an animal and drinking African beer. To forget to have a service from time to time may bring anger from the ancestors and bad luck to the members of the family. To continue with the veneration of the ancestors is viewed as being African while to discontinue is viewed as anti-African.

It has been stated and revealed that due to the ancestors being part of the community and the clan there is much about the family orientation in approach. One is born into ATR therefore there is a lack of evangelising or missions. It is a family enterprise. There is a lack of going out to make more members with other families. The question of adopting a child is difficult for traditional Africans and there is also the promotion of tribalism and ethnicity.

The category of ancestral worship or veneration helps to understand the belief of life after death but lacks insight into that world of the dead. According to the discussions about cult, the emphasis on the justification concerning the continuation and making the record straight it can't go any further. There are no discussions of concepts and opinions. One cannot develop concepts about righteousness, justification, or sanctification. What had been discussed is about rituals for purification and about respecting the elderly. It is true that ATR deals with the activities of rituals and less about concepts.

Because of the shortcomings in dealing with concepts the implication is that not much is taught on the revelation of God. Africa and Africans do not ask about the existence of God because it is given that He is there. The debate is that long before the arrival of Christianity there was a form of worship. The argument is based on the African names given for God. Who this God is, Africa is lacking. Mbiti has attempted to write about the African concepts about God but those concepts lacked the issue of revelation. Because God was never discovered but that He revealed Himself, and without that revelation it is difficult if not impossible to speak about God especially outside the historical event of Jesus Christ.

During the process of this research there was an argument concerning the term Supreme Being. Some theologians like Ogbonnaya (1994) felt uncomfortable with the term Supreme Being. While Moila (1987) felt that other terms like *Mohlodi, and mmopiwabatho* (Creator of the universe and human beings) were an influence from Christianity. It was Moila's contribution that Africa believes that human beings are from the ground not created as it is stated in Christianity. The term Supreme Being may imply a being that is there but not known who that being is. It is not clear where the term came from but the blame in most cases is directed to the West.

Another debate was on the distance that exists between God and Africans. There is a claim that there was never an image and a temple in Africa that represents a God. Based on the lack of a temple or a statue others argued about the distance between God and Africans. It is not clear why a statue or a temple for a god in Africa was never discovered, and to try and state this as proof of the distance may be too extreme. If that is so then communion between Africans and the Triune God may be hard to occur. That may also mean that the communion within ATR arises from somewhere outside the presence of God.

On the other hand the Cappadocian Fathers were engaged with concepts and questions about the nature and position of Jesus Christ in relation with the Father. The Cappadocian Fathers like all the other Church Fathers referred to the Old Testament and to the writings of the apostles as their authority for theological discussion. They were far removed from the historical background of the Old Testament. There was an advantage that already the Scriptures were translated into Greek. The question was how to respond to the questions of their time using documents that were written for a Jewish audience. The Jewish Scriptures (the Torah) were regarded by the Jews as the Law of God which called for their obedience. The Cappadocian Fathers managed to use the Jewish Scriptures in their Greek setting employing Greek recourses and categories of thinking.

Philosophy was not their authority nor their historical background but their tool, a means to an end. The link with the Jewish Scriptures was Jesus Christ. The focus was not just on Jesus Christ but also what He had done. Putting it another way it was based on what God had done through Him. Through Jesus Christ God moved out of the isolated room of the Jewish temple to be a universal God. He was no longer the God of Israel but the God who so loved

the world that He gave His only begotten Son. The emphasis was on whosoever believes in Him whether Jew or Gentile.

The Cappadocian Fathers and the church at large embraced monotheism. The monotheistic worship was maintained as obedience to the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4). What the Cappadocian Fathers inherited from the Jewish church was the worship of one God yet bringing Jesus Christ into that oneness. As pointed out in this research paper, the Jewish church never saw the tension that was apparent as something to be resolved. They accepted the tension without trying to solve it. The Early Church from Jerusalem to all Judea, sang songs, and ate food in honour of Jesus Christ within the oneness of God. It was stated that Israel did not ask about the being of God but they asked what it says in God's Law that human beings may obey Him.

In obedience to the authority of the Scriptures the Early Church maintained monotheism. The Jewish church in Jerusalem never saw themselves as a new movement but a continuation of what was promised in the Law. Peter stood up and said this is the fulfilment of the Scriptures. The church in Jerusalem and all Judea which was more Jewish regarded the Torah as their Scriptures. Jesus came according to the scripture and to fulfil them. The apostle and the Church Fathers had to find coherence and consistency between the historical event of Jesus Christ and the Scriptures.

Since in Jesus there is a universal figure and that Jesus came to fulfil the Scriptures, therefore they had to take a universal position just like Him. The Scriptures came from God who is the word, and the word testifies to Him. It is in the Scriptures that the church hears God speak. From the beginning of the birth of the church throughout her history the Scriptures took a position of authority to judge the doctrines of the church and how Christians ought to live their lives. So the continuation of the worship of one God was based on the authority of the Scriptures. The church had to be seen obeying the word of God.

When questions were asked about the worship and veneration of Jesus Christ within monotheism, the Church Fathers had to justify the practise based on the Scriptures and the event of Jesus Christ. In the Hellenised world Christianity encountered some questions that were never asked before. Who was Jesus in relation to God the Father and to the creation at

large? First they had to employ the interpretation of the Scriptures and the historical event of Jesus Christ in order to respond to the oneness of God. They had to handle the Scriptures as the source of the revelation of God not just a human concept or insight. The God of the Scriptures is real and He is not just some human made myth. This is the God who revealed Himself. When the Scriptures say in the beginning it is assumed that it was God making history about Him.

In their attempt to resolve the question of the oneness of God the Church Fathers consulted the Scriptures. The first appearance of the word *one* was in Genesis chapter *one*, and it was 'evening came and morning came; day *one'*. In chapter 2 of the book of Genesis Adam was taken from being *one* (single) and Eve was taken out of him. It was like God divided him into *two*; then the bible said the two shall be *one.* The first appearance of the word *one* chapter one of Genesis is a unity of evening and morning. Adam was taken from singularity to plurality then to unity. The point is that from the Scriptures the Church Fathers wrestled with the meaning of *one*.

The point here is about the position of the Scriptures within the Church Fathers' theological reflections and debate. And what Jesus had done to justify His veneration and worship within that *oneness* without violating monotheism. It is clear that the Christian church was not just dealing with concepts and ideologies but they had an encounter with God. What the church experienced through the Holy Spirit and what they read in the scripture was coherency and consistency. They linked what Jesus had done historically and what they experienced personally based on the words from the Scriptures. McGrath (1990:13) argues that God is not an idea we can kick about in seminar rooms, He is a living reality who enters into our experience and transforms it.

When in ATR, Africans employed the authority of culture and African heritage to justify the continuation of the cult of ancestral worship, the Cappadocian Fathers employed culture as a tool not authority. With the understanding of monotheism within Christianity the Cappadocian Fathers never brought the Greek gods into the oneness of God. They seemed to have understood that Jesus is the only way back to God, Jesus is the Way, Truth and the Life.

But one may ask if the role of the Creeds was a form of authority. The Creeds were human products and were used as tools of passage for entry into Christianity. The Creeds became the foundation of Christian Doctrine throughout the history of the church. The Creeds consolidated the thoughts of the Church Fathers and was a base for the Doctrine of the Trinity. The Church Fathers in the Creeds made these confession; *we believe in God. . . we believe in the Son. . . . and we believe in the Holy Spirit*. That may imply that faith plays a very essential role in the building up of Christian Doctrine. It suggests that there had to be a consistency between the teaching and the experience. Both experience and teaching had to recognise the scripture as authority

The church in Africa can benefit from recognising the authority of faith and for doing theology. The choice for the African church is between the cultures or to employ culture as a tool to communicate the truth of the gospel. To employ culture as the authority Christians in Africa shall continue observing the practise of venerating the ancestors. The veneration and the worship of the ancestors is the same as the worship of other gods and to continue with the practise within the Christian faith violates the oneness and the unity of God.

The church in Africa can connect with and appreciate the work done by African theologians of the Early Church. From African theologians of the Early Church Fathers, Africans can discover pure work by Africans before it was transport in Western culture to the south. It is the claim of this research that the nature of the sources employed as references and authority for theological reflection, has the potential to influence the outcome of theological judgements and conclusions, especially outside the authority of the Scriptures. For instance the church in South Africa became part of political development, which means the church was in politics and politics was in the church. As laws and policies were made life was moulded. Politics gave the church an environment where there was a church for the oppressor and one for the oppressed in one denomination. Hofmeyr and Pillay (1994:169) say that 'the church was an important agent in the politicisation of Africans'; it provided the ideal environment for shaping a new African religious culture. Africans pursued a church that could accommodate their culture and also attend to their political needs.

When countries like Ghana were embracing their freedom and independence in South Africa black leaders were banned, imprisoned or in exile. The church had to fill the gap. And the

approach became what was known as Anthropological where the focus was on the suffering of the people. Already there is a tension; which church? There was a church that served the purpose of the ruling party and the church of the victims. There was a reality of the problems of racism, induced landlessness, depravation, poverty in the land of plenty and general suffering. When faced with these kinds of realities it was correct to embark on a theology that will be relevant to the situation.

Nevertheless the church in Africa needs to take notice that when Christ died on the cross it was for all humanity irrespective of their background. The relationship between the church and politics in South Africa is the most painful one. In many cases the church had to form a partnership but not by choice. In the partnership between politics and the church, it was not a sharing of equal setting. The church was not the master but a servant. Even though many of the leaders in the struggle were products of missionary education, it was politics that influenced the theological debate.

When theology is based on an outside agenda in order to fulfil political needs resources become scarce and then people tend to lose focus on God. When Jesus took the cross more than 2000 years ago He took it for the entire human race; the oppressed and the oppressors. The church should set the standards with an agenda in obedience to God. The foundation that was set by politics both in Africa and South Africa proved that it was not reliable because of the uncertainty in politics.

God in Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit was the solid foundation laid for the church. When reading the Bible it is true that one encounter of the history of Israel and certain historical figures like Abraham, Moses, David and many others historical figures who made history with God. Yet God had become the main character in the history of any individual or nation. It was not a collection of sayings or opinions but it was God revealing Himself. As important as the history of the struggle was but the story about Jesus Christ is the greatest story this world has ever heard and seen.

Somewhere down the line politics shamed the church. The heroes of the struggle in most African countries became the new oppressors of the African people. It is not a good picture

that after more than 50 years of independence Africans are now moving by millions to Europe and America.

What can happen if there can be an African evangelical approach to Christianity and the theology of the church? The African who has an insight to both Evangelicals and ATR may be in a good position to articulate an appropriate theological reflection which can be relevant without violating the oneness of God. Jesus came into the world to create a new kind of people through whom He can alter history. Historically there is something wrong that happened and it involves the first Adam. The relationship between God and the first Adam was affected and in a way that infected the entire universe.

Making theology relevant to the context of the African people is essential but there is more than that. There should be an immensity on the approach to finding God as Africans rather than how to be more Africans at the expense of how to relate with Him. The first point is that the church in Africa needs to start at the beginning where the fall was. The separation between the first Adam affected the entire of God's creation. If then the separation between God and Adam affected and infected the entire creation that can only mean human beings were created in a position of power. The power from God can only function in a peaceful manner when God and human beings are in a good relationship. The possibility is that humans being may never come to understand fully to what extent the fall and separation from God affected them. But it can only be measured by the way God responded.

There are too few discussions about Jesus Christ within ATR. The discussion discovered by embarking on this research is that there had to be a choice between Jesus being part of Black Theology or African Theology. To make Jesus relevant and to contextualise the discussion He had to be part of the ancestral worship and veneration or a freedom fighter. Jesus can be all things to all people but the purpose of the incarnation was to search for the lost that He may save them.

The Jews were facing problems politically when Jesus came. They anticipated a political figure. Even His disciples became aware of the task at hand when they were anointed with the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus avoided being a political figure when the people who ate bread from Him wanted to do so. He created the world and the world was created through

Him. He was aware of the suffering of that time and the suffering that was to come. He never promised His followers honey and milk but to suffer persecutions of all kinds. The second Adam came to create a new kind of community; He can rewrite history and fellowship with them.

Theological discussion can include a socio-political agenda because that is part of the reality facing people. Christians cannot avoid the realities of life in the here and now in favour for only concentrating with going to heaven. When the majority of the members in the church are living in informal settlements and there are those who are HIV positive, the church must respond. The church should not be perceived as only heavenly focused but earthly useless. As the light of the world the church must infiltrate at all levels of life in any department. The church will lose her saltiness if she fails to respond to the challenges of life in the here and now moment. Jesus said the poor will be always with us and it is the responsibility of the church to look after them.

The church must also have a political voice. Prayer for political agenda must continue in the church. Where the church feels that politicians are not serving God's purpose for His people, there must be a prophetic message for the leaders of the day. When there are no jobs the church must have programs for job creation.

Before Jesus could call Lazarus back to life He gave the instruction that they should remove the stone by the entrance. He then spoke to the Father before calling Lazarus from the dead. He gave a second instruction after calling Lazarus back to life, to remove the cloth, 'untie him and let him go'. The point here is that there is a part of the lives of people where God has to intervene based on the needs of the time. He made the world and gave it to human beings therefore He has His part to play but He may not violate His word. Jesus was aware about the realities and the suffering facing human beings. But He gave a solution according to the way He diagnosed the problem.

The problem of sin which has resulted in the separation from God was the main focus. There were relationships that were broken, and human beings without mending these relationships will be lost forever. Human beings shall forever search for answers from the wrong sources. Jesus came to find the lost and save them, and more than that to reconcile

all people to God. All human kind had fallen into sin because of Adam. When the first Adam got lost from God, he went down with the entire human race. The second Adam came to redirect and to alter the process. This is the reality and the position of God in relation to humanity.

When human beings had turned their back from God they are like when the earth turns away from the sun. They formulated a word for that, 'sunset'. But in reality the sun is still standing where it was the part that is experiencing darkness has turned away from the sun. The darkness is called night which represents a lot of negativity. When it is night people cannot see well and much money is wasted in the effort to replace the light that is gone. The temperature also changes at night and there is a need for warmer clothes.

One of the reasons God used suffering as a means to salvation was because sin had to be punished. God demonstrated His love by taking the punishment upon Him. Jesus who never knew sin was made to be sinful for humanity and died like a criminal with criminals. God was satisfied sin was forgiven and the price was paid. The message of the cross calls all humanity to humble themselves before God and to surrender their lives. Human beings are called to acknowledge their part as sinners who were not able to save themselves because of sin. The New Testament says Jesus did not die in vain. His death was not an ordinary death like any human being. Many people had been crucified by the Romans before, but it is the death of Jesus that made history. He was crucified with two criminals only one did God raised from the death.

It is the claim of this research that the Christian life begins when a person receives Christ as Lord. Unlike in ATR or Judaism where a person is born into that religion in Christianity there had to be a historical event where a person makes a change. A church can be joined but to become a Christian one must become a Christian by accepting Jesus. Christianity is a relationship with God. It is a life that is influenced by the relationship one has with God. To address the results of sin there must be a process of reconciliation for an individual to enter into a relationship with God.

One of the most essential contributions by Africans to Christianity is the concept of relationship. Each level of an African life is an introduction into relationships. An African is

born into the relationship of the extended family and the community. A child is born to take someone's name in the family. These relationships start at birth and know no end. The African life is in a position to benefit the church with their understanding of the relationship Jesus had with both the visible and the invisible worlds.

It was noted that Jesus was the best from both worlds the invisible and the visible. He was seen by some disciples up the mountain talking to Elijah and Moses who both were no longer alive. Death is a reality yet it is not the end of life but a translation into the land of 'air'. Jesus said God was not of the dead but of the living, because of the phrase 'I am the God of your fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob'. African life is lived in a continuation of relationships beyond the grave. The African ancestors went away beyond death while Jesus went also but return on the third day He resurrected and said 'peace be with you'. If a person had not received Jesus as a saviour, can that person join Jesus where He is after death? There is a possibility that the ancestors may be far from where Jesus is if they had not accepted Him, the one who is the door, and a way back to God.

African theology, to be beneficial to the African mind should take the approach of building relationships. First one has to realise that any approach that seems to undermine African culture is unacceptable in whatever way. When African culture is mentioned one needs to be cautious, any approach must recognise the role of culture in African life and find a way to respect that. The content of African culture that can be effective is the question of relationships.

God had a relationship with Adam and sin broke that relationship. God continues playing the role of the Creator to His creation. It is true that in the process of that broken relationship human beings may have pursued other means of worship. Jesus can be presented as fully God and fully human in order that human beings can continue to fellowship, in the visible and invisible world. There is a relationship between the visible and invisible, the way Africans live their lives in the visible affects the invisible.

The approach needs to make God real for the relationship to be real. There is a weakness of concepts within ATR but a persuasive approach that is practical. In the African mind the ancestors are not just an imagination but a reality. McGrath (1990:13) does make a

compelling argument that can easily fit the African worldview. He says there is a tendency on the part of many, 'especially that of a more philosophical inclination, to talk about God as if He was some sort of concept'. McGrath (1990) claims that it is much more accurate to think of God as someone we experience and encounter.

The African way cannot just accept concepts which are not relevant to the realities of their lives. The African should come to a point where he or she can say as McGrath (1990:13), 'our experience of God is something which we talk about with others, and our encounter with Him is something which we can try to put into words'. It is the experience that informs human knowledge about God. It is experiences that build relationships, which can be a foundation to build upon the teaching of the relationship within the trinity. Words without the reality and the experience of God cannot mean anything in African traditional life. McGrath (1990:13) claims that in Christianity it is not about the words we use to say something about God but what those words are saying about God.

There is a possibility that Africans may have a feeling that words sometimes miss the reality of what people experience. McGrath (1990:14) proposes theology should be about their experiences when people encounter God. As the Christians begin to share their experiences of encountering God words will begin to capture those experiences. In their sharing of experiences Christians realise that they have encountered the same person.

McGrath (1990:14) argues that it is very difficult to describe their experiences about God to a person who has never had that experience. The statement can support the thinking that maybe when Western missionaries and Africans encountered each other there was less of God but too much of culture (west and African). Maybe they lacked a point of contact because there is a difference between the church and Christianity. Most discussions in Africa are more about the church than Christianity. Africa may have been "denominationalised" rather than Christianised. The discussions about Jesus Christ are not sufficient enough to prove that there is something lacking.

When Africans have an encounter with God through Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit the conversation will deal with the experiences they share amongst themselves. McGrath (1990:15) says when Christians talk about God they are not discussing an idea or a

concept but an encounter and experience that they share. Brunner (1966:18) explains how those who never saw Jesus in His human form how they experience the same Jesus like those who saw Him in His human form. He says 'to us, who have not seen Him in the flesh and as the risen Lord, He comes to us as the same, and He is truly present to us'. How does that happen, Brunner (1966:18) claims that Jesus reveals Himself to us through the revelation of the apostles' testimony in their narrative and their teaching concerning Him, the Christ'. Since the African experiences the presence of an ancestor in their services as a reality, there is nothing to share with the world because it's a family matter. And therefore God may not be experienced in His absence; He has to be a guest of honour in any meeting that belongs to Him. When two or three gather in His name He totally owns the gathering.

McGrath (1990:17) believes that 'as Christians read the Bible they encounter someone they know, someone who stands out from its pages as a living reality in their experience'. In the African teachings the reality and the context of the African are the experiences discussed and the bible should be confined to that. They (in the ATR) encounter one another especially concerning cultural issues. The reading of the scripture enlarges their (especially for Evangelicals) knowledge about the person whom they continue to encounter.

A person can listen to a presenter on the radio for many years until a certain picture of that person is built. The person knows the presenter from the level of listening, but the presenter is more than what he or she is on the radio. In most cases what people see after building a picture of a radio presenter or DJ differs from the reality. The same can be said about God. Throughout there have been talks, discussions and debates about God. To listen to someone on the radio is so different from meeting that person in reality. McGrath (1990:17) says knowing means encountering and experiencing someone. A child may be told about the pain of the fire or something that is hot, until the day he or she touches fire or something that is hot, may never fully understand what fire and hot is. He continues to explain that knowledge about God and knowledge of God are combined, as factual knowledge and encounter; together they make up our knowledge of and relationship with the person of God.

The problem is when human beings have an encounter with God and fails to know it or not realised what has happened. Many Africans may have met God and never realised that is what has happened because of the manner they view Jesus Christ. For Brunner (1966:19)

says 'the reality of the revelation culminates in the subject who receives it'. According to Brunner 'if there is no faith, then the revelation has not been consummated; it has not been actually happened'. McGrath (1990:19) points out that one of the reasons why Christians believe in God is their conviction that He has revealed Himself, supremely in Jesus Christ.

The employment of the insights of Moltmann is given here for a discussion concerning spiritual matters. The research is persuaded to attempt at building an approach that is compelling to the African understanding by means of relationships. For the relationship to be convincing the reality of the presence of God has to be real. Moltmann (1992:2) says, 'the Spirit brings men and women to the beginning of a new life, and makes them the determining subjects of that new life in the fellowship of Christ'.

The language that is usually used for African ancestors is the language of the spiritual world. The connection of the two worlds, the invisible and the visible has been stated previously in this paper. In theological discussions about the formation of relationships with God, experiencing the Spirit of God as a reality is not a concept that needs to be emphasised. As Moltmann (1992:2) explains, 'people do not only experience the Holy Spirit outwardly in the community of their church'. He further says 'they experience it to a much greater degree inwardly, in self-encounter- as the experience that God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit'.

In the church there must be a realisation of the essential the role of the Holy Spirit. The service is participation together with the Spirit of God. No activity in worship that does not include the movement of the Holy Spirit. Moltmann (1992:3) includes the Holy Spirit involvement saying that 'there are no words of God without experiences of God's Spirit'.

The Spirit is the subject determining the word, not just the operation of the word. The African mind does not have a problem of accepting that the indwelling of the Spirit in our hearts goes deeper than the conscious level in us. It is mentioned already that to an African the spiritual world is a reality. If Africans in their worship are able to penetrate the land of the dead through ancestors, it will be so helpful if they can come and penetrate the presence of the one who is from above and is above all. Not all spirits are obedient to God and to the Word of God. In other words not all spirits that operate in the lives of human

beings are of God. That is why it is essential that Christians should first accept Jesus who will then ask the Father to send the Holy Spirit. It is Jesus who connects an individual with the Father, who also sent forth the Holy Spirit.

Moltmann (1992:6) seems to concur with McGrath (1990) by asking 'how is a man or a woman supposed to be able to talk about God if God does not reveal himself'. And how are they supposed to be able to talk about a God of whom there is no human experience? In dealing with these questions Moltmann (1992:6) proposes that 'theology ought not simply to take over modern epistemological and scientific conceptualisation of experience, and then look around for alternatives'. It ought to determine these conceptions themselves. When theologians stylise revelation and experiences alternatives Moltmann (1992:7), warned that 'it will end up with revelation that cannot be experienced and experience without revelation'.

It is true that many Africans feel that by becoming a Christian one may have the perception that the ancestors are being neglected. Some may fear that some bad luck might happen and the ancestors will be angry for being neglected. In former discussion there is the recognition that the ancestors are closer to God. In that understanding the ancestors may play the role of mediator between man and God? There is less information concerning how the closeness between God and ancestors is determined. If the ancestors are closer to God, then Africans find a means to God through Jesus Christ then the ancestors need to appreciate the initiative of that family member because it is from God. The closeness can also mean harmony and peace with God. The ancestors due to their closeness with God may have a better understanding why God through Jesus Christ gave human beings a way back to Him. It not clearly defines why the ancestors still demand some sacrificial offering, when God in Jesus Christ had provided the best of them all. After Jesus Christianity hold that God is satisfied and therefore there is no need of another sacrificial offering.

In closing this last chapter some comments need to be emphasised. Djereke (1996:148) writing under the title *trinity and the practice of Christianity in Africa today* says, 'the trinitarian mystery is about one God in three distinct persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit'. He emphasizes that 'the trinity has two elements of unity and difference or diversity which need not be estranged and should be held together because what makes the

Trinitarian God is not only the unity of nature but also the differentiated character of that nature'.

Djereke (1996) further points out the issue of unity in diversity within the Godhead. The unity in the Godhead should be reflected in the life of the church. However Djereke (1996) is of the view that Africans should worship God in a way that is acceptable to Africans. If the church should be united under the unity of the Godhead, then the question is why does being African or American be an issue. In the Godhead, the diversity is recognized without being over emphasized, while the emphasis is on the unity. The notion of perichoresis is based on that unity; that Jesus and the Holy Spirit are in the Father, and that the Father and the Son are in the Holy Spirit, they are so united that each contains the other.

As stated by other Africans Djereke (1996:151) says the cry for an African Christianity is to incorporate African values in Christianity. He continues to say that 'the Trinitarian mystery of unity compels us (Africans) to integrate African values into Christianity so that African men and women may feel at home in it today'. Even though the trinity becomes a model, however the emphasis is on the Africanness as seen throughout the theological discussion within the African believers. In order for the African church to be able to preach a life changing prophetic message, the emphasis should be on how to relate with the triune God. Africa does not need a church that can accommodate and integrate African values into Christianity which have failed to transform lives in this continent. Djereke (I1996:152) is correct by saying

> it is important to deepen the Christian faith in the lives of the African
> people so as to avoid painful and sad events like the Rwandan tragedy
> (April 1994) which can be interpreted as an expression of a superficial
> Christianity resulting from mere teaching of doctrines, administration of
> sacraments and making Christians rather than helping people know who
> Jesus is and what He said and did.

Djereke (1996:155) says that 'the quest for an African Christianity in the divine trinity is understood by the church as a communion of differences'. He also states 'on the basis of this communion of differences or unity in the diversity, Africans have both the right and duty to

have a Christianity that is different from that of Europeans, Americans and Asians'. Christianity that is based on Jesus as the head of the church should not be different from any other, for Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever. The church in Africa should recognize that the Jesus of faith is the same Jesus of history. It is what Jesus has done historically and what He continues to do in His church making history today. That can be achieved by recognizing the contribution by the apostles.

The matter of recognizing the contribution of the first church is also emphasizes by Zizioulas (1975). He speaks of the church's continuity with her apostolic origins. Zizioulas (1995:81) explain that 'continuity means succession or survival in the time, i. e. from the past to the present into the future'. What God had done through Jesus and also the coming of the Holy Spirit points to the unity of the Godhead's unity in the project of the human salvation.

The Trinity continues influencing the body of Christ today. Moreover what keeps the church's focus is what the future holds for the church. Zizioulas (1995:84) declares that 'all that has been said so far leads to the necessity of a theological synthesis between the historical and the eschatological approaches to the church's continuity with the apostles'.

The warning for the church today is that the emphasis should not be on the church being African or English but to be Christ like. God knows that people are Africans or Americans and He came to make them to have a right standing with Him. The goal should not be trying to prove to the world how much Africa is African but it should rather be on forming a healthy relationship with God. God through His Son is in the process of calling people to Him and that they may learn to obey Him. When that becomes priority Africans will be able to continue the worship of God which will be acceptable as a living sacrifice. Therefore the notion of Perichoresis has a strong influence and an impact for the church because it brings some insights about who God is and how He relates within the trinity. But the notion of communion in the ATR is based on how Africans relates especially based on the notion of Ubuntu, yet because its approach had to start with human beings then move towards God, there are challenges. Since the approach and point of reference is human beings there is no sense of transformation of human life based on the demands on the work of the cross of Jesus Christ. Even though there is a strong sense of community it is based more on the family ties rather than on faith in Jesus Christ. Since humans are limited and commit sins and

mistakes that presuppose that the notion of communion has limits and some forms of evils as witness during the Rwanda genocide. However it is also a religion that is not documented therefore there are no boundaries. The classification of the ATR as Christian Faith is problematic due to the fact that the followers of the ATR are at liberty to call upon other gods which is contrary to what the Word of God stipulates. No-one can go to the Father except through the name of Jesus. The ATR on the other hand contradicts the Word by acknowledging other gods and thereby promulgating the serving of two masters which is also against the Word of God. It also recognizes a person having both and serving two masters.

But with Christianity this is not acceptable.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Afeke B & Venter P. , 2004. Christianisation of Ancestor Veneration within traditional Religion: an evaluation. *In die Skriflig, 38(1).* 47-61.

Aiken, C. F. , 1911. *Monotheism. In The Catholic Encyclopaedia.* New York: Robert Appleton Company. Retrieved June 25, 2012 from New Advent: http://www. newadvent. org/cathen/10499a. htm.

Amanze J. , 2001. The African Foundations of Christianity: Myth or Reality*? Scriptura, 77.* 273-286.

Armstrong K. 1999. A History of God. London: Vintage Books.

Athanasius, 1892. *De Synodis /Councils of Ariminum and Seleucia*. Translated by John Henry Newman and Archibald Robertson. From Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 4. Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co. , 1892.) Revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight. http://www. newadvent. org/fathers/2817. htm (visited during May 2011).

Athanasius, 1892. *On the incarnation of the word*. From Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 4. Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co. , 1892.) Revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight. http://www. newadvent. org/fathers/2802. htm (visited during May 2011).

Athanasius, 1892. *History of Arius opinion*. Part two Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 4. Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co. , 1892.) Revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight. http://www. newadvent. org/fathers/2817. htm (visited during May 2011).

Athanasius, 1892. *Statement of Faith*, NPNF (2), IV, 83–85. Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 4. Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co. , 1892.) Revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight. http://www. newadvent. org/fathers/2821. htm (visited during May 2011).

Balcomb A. 1996. Modernity and the African Experience. *Bulletin for Contextual Theology*. Vol 3. Number 2. Pp12-20.

Balcomb A. , 1998. Narrative: Exploring an Alternative Way of doing Theology in the New South Africa. *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, 101 (July 1998). 11-21.

Balcomb A. , 2001. Is God in South Africa or are We Still Clearing our Throats*? Journal of Theology for Southern Africa, 11/2001*: 57-65.

Basil. 1895. *,De Spiritu Sancto*. Translated by Blomfield Jackson. From Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 8. Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. (Buffalo, NY:

Christian Literature Publishing Co. , 1895.) Revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight. http://www. newadvent. org/fathers/3203. htm (visited during May 2011).

Basil, 1895. *Letters and Select Works.* (48). The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers Second Series Vol. VIII. Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems.

Bate S. , 2001. Culture in Christian Praxis. *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, 109 (March 2001). 67-82.

Becking B. , 2001. Only One God: on Possible Implications for Biblical Theology. In Becking B, Dijkstra M & Korpel M (eds) *Only One God?* London: Sheffield Academic Press. 189-201.

Bediako K. , 1996. Understanding African Theology in the 20th Century. *Bulletin for Contextual Theology, 3 (2),* June 1996:1-11.

Beeley C. 2010. The Holy Spirit in the Cappadocians: Past and Present. *Modern Theology*. Volume 26 number 1 pp 90-119

Berger P. 1990. *The Sacred Canopy*. New York: Achor Books

Beyers J and Mphahlele D. 2009. Jesus Christ as Ancestor: an African Christian Understanding. *HTS* Vol 66 NU 1 pp 38-42.

Block D. I. , 2004. How Many is God? An Investigation into the Meaning of Deuteronomy 6: 4-5. *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society, 42(2),* June 2004:193-212.

Brand G. 1999. Salvation in African Christian Theology: a Typology of Existing Approaches. *Exchange* vol. 28:3 July 1999.

Brand G. 2002. *Speaking of a Fabulous Ghost*. New York: Peter Lang.

Bridge J. , 1910 . *Homoousion. The Catholic Encyclopedia. Vol. 7*. New York: Robert.

Appleton Company, 1910. http://www. newadvent. org/cathen/07449a. htm(visited during 25 Jun. 2012).

Brown H. , 1988. *Heresies.* Grand Rapids Michigan: Baker Books House.

Brown T. 2006. Personhood as a Tool to Reflect upon Koinonia. Anglican Theological Review, 88 Nu 2 pp 163-179.

Brunner E. , 1966. *The Christian Doctrine of God* vol 1. London: Lutttworth Press.

Brunner E. , 1966. *The Christian Doctrine of Creation and Redemption* vol 2. London: Lutttworth Press.

Chadwick H. , 1985. *The Early Church*. New York: Penguin Books.

Chadwick H. , 2001. *The Church in Ancient Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Chidester D. , 1992. *Religions of South Africa*. London: Routledge.

Chikane F. , 1985. The Incarnation in the Life of the People in Southern Africa. *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* pp 37-50.

Chilton B & Neusner J. , 1996. *Judaism.* London: Routledge.

Chimeri D. , 2003. Interpreting Jesus from an African Context: a Critical Review of the Evidence from Zimbabwe. *Journal of African Thought, 6 (2),* December 2003). 28-34.

Christie-Murray D. , 1976. *A History of Heresy.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Choon Sup Bae and Van der Merwe P. 2008. Ancestor Worship-is it Biblical? HTS 64/3 pp 1299-1325.

Costa R. 1988. Introducing: Inculturation, Indigenisation, and Contextualisation. In Costa, R. O. (ed), *One Faith, Many Cultures: Inculturation, Indigenisation and Contextualisation*). New York: Orbis Books.

Cox J. , 1998. Rituals, Rites of Passage and the Interaction between Christian and Traditional Religion. In Cox, J. L. (Ed),*Rites of Passage in Contemporary Africa.* Cardiff: Cardiff Academic Press.

Crisp O. 2005. Problems with Perichoresis. *Tyndale Bulletin vol* 56. Number 1 pp 119-140

Cunningham S. , 1990. The Healing of the Deaf and Dumb Man (Mark 7:31-37), with Application to the African Context*. African Journal of Evangelical Theology, 9 (2). 1*3-22.

Darby I 1999. Broad Differences in Worship Between Denomination. (ed) Christo Lombaard, Ecumenism: Essays and Exercises in. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publication

Daley B. , 2007. The Person in God and the Person of Christ in Patristic Theology: an Argument for Parallel Development. In Twomey D & Ayres L (eds.). *The Mystery of the Holy Trinity in the Fathers of the Church*. Dublin: Four Courts Press. 9-36.

Daley B. , 2006. *Gregory of Nazianzus: the Early Church Fathers*. London: Routledge.

Daneel M. , 1987. ,*Quest for Belonging*. Pretoria: UNISA.

Dickson K. 1984. *Theology in Africa*. New York: Orbis Books.

Dijkstra M. , 2001. The God of Israel: Israel, the People of YHWH. In Becking B, Dijkstra M & Korpel M (eds) *Only One God?* London: Sheffield Academic Press. 81-126.

Djereke J. , 1996. Trinity and the Practice of Christianity in Africa Today. *AFER African Ecclesial Review 38 number 3* pp 148-157.

Donders J. 1986. *Non-Bourgeois Theology.* New York: Orbis Books.

Dockery D. , 2000. *Biblical Interpretation Then and Now.* Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books.

Dulles A. , 1994. *The Assurance of Things Hoped For*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dunn J. , 1991*. The Partings of Ways*. London: SCM Press.

Ejizu C. , 2008. *African Traditional Religions and the Promotion of Community Living in Africa*. http://www. afrikaworld. net/afrel/community. htm. (visited during August 2010).

Ekem J. , 2003. Biblical Exegesis in an African Pluralistic Context: Some Reflections. *Journal of African Christian Thought, 6 (1)*, June 2003: 31-34.

Ela J. 1988*. My Faith as an African*. New York: Orbis Books.

Ensenbach S. , 2008. *A Gender Analysis of the Kenyan Crisis*. www. accord. org. za.

Erickson M. , 2006. *Christian Theology 2nd Edition*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic.

Etuk U. 1985. The Theology of contextualisation in Africa: a Cover for Traditional Cultural Revival. *Concord Journal* vol 11 number 6 pp214-222

Eusebius, 1890. *On evening hymn of the Greeks*. From Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 1. Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co. , 1890.) Revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight. http://www. newadvent. org/fathers/250109. htm (visited during May 2011).

Ferguson E. , 2003. *Background of Early Christianity 3rd edition.* Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans.

First Council of Constantinople. 1908. In The Catholic Encyclopedia Shahan, T. (1908). . New York: Robert Appleton Company. Retrieved January 24, 2012 from New Advent: http://www. newadvent. org/cathen/04308a. htm.

Freligh H. , 1994. *Newborn*, Texas: ICI University Press.

Gathogo J. 2008. African Philosophy as expressed in the concepts of Hospitality and Ubuntu. *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*. Volume 130 pp 39-53

Gaylard R. 2004. Welcome to the World of our Humanity. (African) Humanism, Ubuntu. JLS/TLW volume 20 number ¾ pp 265-282

Gerson L. , 1994. *God and Greek Philosophy.* London: Routledge.

Gillies D> 1964. *Unity in the Dark*. London: Banner of Truth

Goba B,. 1998. The Hermeneutics of African Theologies. *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* (November 1998). 19-35.

Grabbe L. , 2010. *An Introduction to Second Temple Judaism*. New York: T & T Clark International.

Greene S,. 1996. Religion, History and the Supreme Gods of Africa: a Contribution to the Debate. *Journal of Religion in Africa*, XXVI (2). 123-137.

Gregory of Nazianzus, 1894. *Second Theological Oration* (Oration 28). Translated by Charles Gordon Browne and James Edward Swallow. From Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 7. Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co. , 1894.) Revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight. http://www. newadvent. org/fathers/310228. htm (visited during May 2011).

Gregory of Nazianzus, 1894. (Oration 31) *The Fifth Theological Oration. On the Holy Spirit.* Translated by Charles Gordon Browne and James Edward Swallow. From Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 7. Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co. , 1894.) Revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight. http://www. newadvent. org/fathers/310231. htm (visited during May 2011).

Gregory of Nazianzus, 1894. *To Nectarius, Bishop of Constantinople. (Ep. CCII.) Letters on the Apollinarian Controversy*. Translated by Charles Gordon Browne and James Edward Swallow. From Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 7. Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co. , 1894.) Revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight. http://www. newadvent. org/fathers/3103a. htm (visited during May 2011).

Gregory of Nazianzus, 1894. *To Cledonius the Priest Against Apollinarius.* (Ep. CI.). Translated by Charles Gordon Browne and James Edward Swallow. From Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 7. Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co. , 1894.) Revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight. http://www. newadvent. org/fathers/3103a. htm (visited during May 2011).

Gregory of Nazianzus, 1894. *Oration 38 On the Theophany, or Birthday of Christ*. Translated by Charles Gordon Browne and James Edward Swallow. From Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 7. Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co. , 1894.) Revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight. http://www. newadvent. org/fathers/310238. htm (visited during May 2011).

Gregory of Nazianzus 1894. *Oration 45 The Second Oration on Easter. Translated by Charles Gordon Browne and James Edward Swallow*. From Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 7. Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co. , 1894.). Revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight. http://www. newadvent. org/fathers/310245. htm (visited during May 2011).

Gregory of Nyssa,1893. Against Eunomius (Book II) Translated by H. C. Ogle and H. A. Wilson. From Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 5. Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co. , 1893.). Revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight. http://www. newadvent. org/fathers/290102. htm.

Gregory of Nyssa,1893. *On the Holy Spirit, Against the Macedonians*. Translated by William Moore and Henry Austin Wilson. From Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 5. Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co. , 1893.). Revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight. http://www. newadvent. org/fathers/2903. htm (visited during May 2011).

Gregory of Nyssa, 1893. *On the Holy Trinity To Eustathius. Translated* by H. A. Wilson. From Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 5. Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co. , 1893.) Revised and edited for New

Advent by Kevin Knight. http://www. newadvent. org/fathers/2904. htm (visited during May 2011).

Gregory of Nyssa, 1893. *On "Not Three Gods To Ablabius.* From Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. 5. Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. (Translated by H. A. Wilson Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co. , 1893.) Revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight. http://www. newadvent. org/fathers/2905. htm (visited during May 2011).

Gregory of Nyssa, 1999. *The Christian Mode of Life. (Slener J and O'Boyle P the Fathers of the Church st Gregory Ascetical Work volume 58* pp 125-158) the Catholic University of America Press.

Grieb K. , 2005. People of God, Body of Christ, Koinonia of Spirit: the role of Ethics Ecclesiology in Paul's Trinitarian Language. *Anglican Theological Review*, 87 Nu 2 pp225-252.

Grenz S. , 1994. *Theology for the Community of God*. Carlisle: The Paternoster Press.

Grudem W. , 1983. Scripture's Self-Attestation and the Problem of Formulating a Doctrine of Scripture. In Carson D & Woodbridge J (eds). *Scriptures and Truth.* Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press. 19-59.

Grunlan S. and Mayers M. , 1988. *Cultural Anthropology: a Christian perspective*. Grand Rapids Michigan: Zondervan publishing House.

Gundani P. 2007. Theology from Below: an Examination of Popular Mourning Songs by Shona Christian Women. *Journal of Music Research in Africa.* Volume 4 number 1 pp 42-51

Gunton C. , 1990. The Promise of Trinitarian Theology. London: T&T Clark.

Hanson R. 2005. *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God*. London : T & T Clark.

Harrison V. , 1991. Perichoresis in the Greek Fathers. *St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly, 35/1*(1991) 99. 53-65.

Hildebrandt J. , 1990. *History of the Church in Africa*. Achimota: Africa Christian Press.

Hofmeyr J. And Pillay G. 1994*. A History of Christianity in South Africa*. Cape Town: HAUM Tertiary.

Horne C. 1991. *The Doctrine of Salvation*. Chicago: Moody Bible Institution.

Horsley R. , 2006. Early Christian Movements: Jesus Movements and the Renewal of Israel. *HTS , 62 (4)*. 1291-1225.

Hurtado L. 1988*. One God, One Lord: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism.* Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

Isichei E. , 2004. *The Religious Traditions of Africa: A History.* London: Praeger.

Jean-Claude SJ. , 1996. Trinity and the Practice of Christianity in African Today. *African Ecclesial Review*. Vol 38, number 3 pp 148-157.

Kaiser C. , 1998. The Incarnation and the Trinity: Two Doctrines Rooted in the Offices of Christ. *The Greek Orthodox Theological review.* Vol 43, number 1-4 pp 221-255.

Kelly J. , 2006. *Early Christian Creeds*. London: Continuum.

Khathide A. 2003. Spirits in the First-Century Jewish world, Luke-Acts and in the African Context: an Analysis. University of Pretoria.

Kiernan J. , 1995. African Traditional Religions in South Africa. In Prozesky M. & De Gruchy J. (eds). *Living Faiths in South Africa*. Johannesburg: David Philip. 15-27.

Kinimi L. and Malek G. , 1999. Towards Defining Ecumenism. (ed Christo Lombaard *Essays and Exercises in Ecumenism*. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications.

King N. 1986. *African Cosmos an introduction to Religion in Africa. California: Wadsworth publishing company.*

Kombo J. 2009. The Trinity in Africa. *Journal of Reformed Theology Vol 3 2009 pp 125-143.*

Kudadjie J. , 1995. African Spirituality. In Du Toit C (ed.) *Spirituality in Religions*. Pretoria: UNISA.

Kwenda C. , 1999. Affliction and Healing. *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, (103), March 1999:1-12.

Lammert R. , 2009. The Word of YHWH as Theophany. *Concordia Theological Quarterly number* 73 pp 195-210.

Leclercq, H. (1910). *St. Gregory of Nyssa. In The Catholic Encyclopedia*. New York: Robert Appleton Company. Retrieved April 18, 2012 from New Advent: http://www. newadvent. org/cathen/07016a. htm.

Lewis B. 2010. Forging an Understanding of Black Humanity through Relationship: an Ubuntu Perspective. *An International Journal. Volume 8 number 1. Pp 69-85*

Lombaard C. , 1999. The Bible and Ecumenism. In Lombaard C. (Ed.) *Essays and Exercises in Ecumenism.* Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publication.

Maimela S. , 1990. Salvation as a Socio-Historical Reality. *Journal of Black Theology in South Africa*, 4(1), May 1990: 43-55.

Maimela S. , 1991. Religion and Culture: Blessings or Curses? *Journal of Black Theology in South Africa*. Volume 5. No 1 May 1991pp 1-15.

Makhulu W. , 2001. Health and Wholeness: Ecumenical Perspectives from Africa. *Ecumenical Review 53* Nu 3 pp 374-379.

Maluleke T. S. , 1994. Christ in Africa: The Influence of Multi-Culturity on the Experience of Christ. *Journal of Black Theology in South Africa*, 8 (1), May 1994: 49-64.

Maluleke T. S. , 1997. Will Jesus Ever be the Same Again: What are the Africans doing to Him? *Journal of Black Theology in South Africa*, 11(1), May 1997:13-27.

Maregere T. , 2010. *Sustainable Peace Processes: Addressing the Status of refugees and Internally Displaced Persons*. www. accord. org. za (visited during October 2011).

Martey E. , 1994. *African Theology*. New York: Orbis Books.

Mazamisa W. , 1995. Re-reading the Bible in the Black Church. *Journal of Black Theology in South Africa,* 9(2), November 1995: pp 1-23.

Mbanda L. , 1997. *Committed to Conflict*. London: SPCK.

Mbiti JS 1969. ,*African Religions and Philosophy*. London: Heinemann.

Mbiti JS 1970. ,*Concepts of God in Africa*. London: SPCK.

Mbiti J. 1971. ,*New Testament Eschatology in an African Background*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Mbiti J. 1975. ,*The Prayers of African Religion*. New York: Orbis Books.

McGrath A 1990. ,*Understanding the Trinity.* Eastbourne: Kingsway.

McGrath A . 1997. ,*The Genesis of Doctrine*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: W. B. Eerdmans.

McGrath A. 1997. ,*A Passion for Truth.* Leicester: InterVarsity Press.

McGrath A, 2001. ,*Christian Theology: an Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

McKim D 1988. ,*Theological Turning Points*. Atlanta: John Knox Press.

McSorley, J. 1907. ,*St. Basil the Great*. The Catholic Encyclopedia. Vol. 2. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1907. , 18 Apr. 2012 http://www. newadvent. org/cathen/02330b. htm

McVeigh M. 1974. *God in Africa; Conceptions of God in African Traditional Religion and Christianity*. Massachusetts: Claude Stark.

Meiring A. 2007. , As Below, so Above: A Perspective on African Theology. *HTS,* 63 (2). 733-749.

Meredith M. 2006. *The State of Africa. A History of fifty Years of Independence*. Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers

Eedith A. , 2002. *Gregory of Nyssa: the Early Church Father*. New York: Routledge.

Mndende N. , 2006. Spiritual Reality in South Africa. In Du Toit C & Mayson C. (eds). *Secular Spirituality as a Contextual Critique of Religion*. Pretoria: UNISA. 153-173.

Mogashoa H. 1999. Some Ecumenical Organisation in South Africa in Lombaard C (ed): *Essays and Exercises.* Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications.

Mogoba S. ,& Mekoa I. , 2007. Saints, Martyrs and Ancestors: An African Reflection on the Communion of the Living and the Dead. Paper presented at the Theological Society of Southern Africa Conference on Saints, Martyrs and Ancestors. 21-23 June Pretoria, South Africa.

Moila M. , 1987. *Toward an Anthropologically informed Theology: the Kingdom of God Theology, Christianity Presence, and Conflict in Pedi Society*. Michigan: UMI.

Moila M. , 1991. The African Version of Christianity. *Journal of Black Theology in South Africa*, 5(1), May 1991: 33-39.

Moltmann J. , 1992*. The Spirit of Life. A universal Affirmation*. London: SCM Press.

Moltmann J. , 1993. *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*. London: SCM Press.

Moltmann J. , 1999. *The Way of Jesus Christ*. London: SCM Press.

Moltmann J. 2000. *Experiences in Theology*. London: SCM Press.

Moltmann J. , 2006. *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*. London: SCM Press.

Motlhabi M. 1994. African Theology or Black Theology? Toward an Integral African Theology. Journal of Black Theology in South Africa. Volume 8 number 2 pp 113-141.

M'Passou D. , 1998. The Continuing Tension between Christianity and Rites of Passage in Swaziland (ed James L. Cox , *Rites of Passage in Contemporary Africa*). Cardiff: Cardiff Academic Press.

Mtetwa S. 1996> African Spirituality in the Context of Modernity. *Bulletin for Contextual Theology in Southern African and Africa, vol 3, 2 June 1996 pp 21-25.*

Mtetwa S. , 1998. ATR and Culture in a Post-Apartheid South Africa: a Critical Appraisal. *Journal of Black Theology in South Africa*, 12 (1), May 1998: 59-75.

Mugambi J. , 1994. *African Christian Theology an Introduction*. Nairobi: East African Education Publishers.

Munyika V. 2004. *A Holistic Soteriology in an African Context*. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications.

Murithi T. , 2007. A local Response to the Global Human Rights Standard: the Ubuntu perspective on dignity. *Globalization, Society and Education*, vol 5, no 3 November 277-286.

Muzorewa G. , 1985. *The Origins and Development of Africa Theology*. London : Orbis Books

Muzorewa G. , 1990. The Future of African Theology. *Journal of Black Theology in South Africa,* 4(2), November 1990: 36-51.

Nadar S. , 2002. The Bible in Africa: Transactions, Trajectories, and Trends. *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, 112 (March 2002). 99-104.

Naudé P. , 2004. Confessing the One Faith: Theological Resonance between the Creed of Nicea (325 AD) and the Confession of Belhar (1982 AD). *Scriptura*, 85: 33-53.

Ngoetjana L. , 2002. *A Critical Comparison of the Concepts of Modimo (God) in Sotho Traditional Religion and the Concepts of the Christian God as a Missiological Problem.* Unpublished PhD thesis. Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal.

Nichols O. , 2005, African Christian Theology and the Ancestors: Christology, Ecclesiology, Ethics and their Implications beyond Africa. *Journal of African Christian Thought*, 8(1), June 2005). 27-33.

Nengwekhulu R. , 1990. The Dialectical Relationship Between Culture and Religion in the Struggle for Liberation. *Journal of Black Theology in South Africa*, 4 (2), November 1990). 1-13.

Nkomazana F 2001. The Contextualisation of Christianity: the case of the Bangwato of Botswana. *Religion and Theology*. Vol 8 issue ½ pp 96-118.

Nűrnberger K. , 2007. Ancestor Veneration in the Church of Christ. *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, 129, November 2007:. 54-69.

Nyamiti C. 1996. The Trinity from an African Ancestral Perspective. *Journal of the Catholic University Eastern Africa in African Christian Studies vol 12 NU 4 pp 38-74.*

Nyirongo L. , 1997. *The Gods of Africa or the God of the Bible*. Potchefstroom: PU vir CHO.

O'Collins G. , 1999. *The Tripersonal God*. London: Geoffrey Chapman.

O'Donovan W. , 2000. *Biblical Christianity in Modern Africa*. London: Paternoster Press.

Ogbannaya A. , 1994. *On Communitarian Divinity: An African Interpretation of the Trinity.* New York: Paragon House.

Origen, 1885. *De Principiis*. From Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 4. Edited by Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co. , 1885.) Revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight. http://www. newadvent. org/fathers/04121. htm (visited during May 2011).

Quee A. , 2008. *Regional Child Warriors in West Africa*. www. accord. org. za (visited during October 2011).

Padilla C. , 1982. The Unity of the Church and the Homogeneous Unit Principle*. International Bulletin of Missionary Research*. 6 No 1 pp 23-30.

Pannenberg W. , 1968. *Jesus-God and Man*. London: SCM Press LTD.

Pannenberg W. , 1970. *What is Man*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

Pannenberg W. , 1991. *An Introduction to Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Edinburgh Publishing House.

Pato L. 1997. Being Fully Human: from the Perspective of African Culture and Spirituality. *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa, nu 97 March 1997 pp53-61.*

Phelps J. , 2000. Communion Ecclesiology and Black Liberation Theology. *Theological Studies,* vol 61 Issue 4 December 2000 pp672-699.

Pobee J. , 1992. *Christian Faith in an African Context*. Gweru: Mambo Press.

Pobee J. , 1997. Let Ethiopia Hasten to Stretch out its Hands to God. *Ecumenical Review* 49 Nu4 October pp416-426.

Pobee J. & Ositelu G. , 1998. *African Initiatives in Christianity*. Geneva: WCC Publications.

Prestige G. , 1964. *God in Patristic Thought*. London: SPCK.

Pryor D. , 2005a. *One God and One Lord*. [Online mp3] Centre for Judaic-Christian Studies at www.jcstudies. com (visited during May 2011).

Pryor D. , 2005b. *Biblical Principles of Worship*. [Online mp3] Centre for Judaic-Christian Studies at www.jcstudies. com. (visited during May 2011).

Richardson A. , 1981. *Creeds in the Making*. London: SCM.

Rusch W. , 1983. *The Trinitarian Controversy*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.

Saayman W. , 1990. *Christian Missions in South Africa: Christianity in South Africa* (ed Martin Prozesky) pp 28-35. Bergvlei: Southern Books.

Sankey P. , 1994. The Church as Clan: Critical Reflections on African Ecclesiology. *International Review of Mission.* 83 Nu 330. Pp 437-449.

Seoka J. , 1997. *African Culture and Christian Spirituality*. In Guma M & Milton L. (eds). An African Challenge to the Church in the 21th Century. Johannesburg: SACC.

Shabangu A. , 2004. *The Gospel Embodied in ATR and Culture with Specific References to the Cult of Ancestor Veneration and Concept of Salvation*. Unpublished PhD thesis. Pretoria: University of Pretoria.

Shekhawat S. , 2008. *A Genda Analysis of the Kenyan Crisis*. www. accord. org. za.

Shutte A. , 2001. *Ubuntu an Ethic for a new South Africa*. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications.

Schultz S. , 1990. *The Old Testament Speaks*. New York: Harper San Francisco.

Smith N. , 1994. Christian Witness and the Plurality of Cultures: the story of Koinonia Southern Africa. *International Review of Mission.* Vol LXXXIII Nu 328.

Stan C. , 2007. Contemporary African Cultural Values: a Challenge to Traditional Christianity. *African Ecclesial Review*, 49 (3&4), December 2007:184-217.

Suggs M. , 1984. Koinonia in the New Testament. *Mid-Stream* 23 Nu 4 pp 351-362.

Sweeney L. , 1992. *Divine Infinity in Greek and Medieval Thought*. Paris: Peter Lange.

Tenney M. 1996. New Testament Survey. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

The Nicene Creed In The Catholic Encyclopaedia. Wilhelm, J. (1911). New York: Robert Appleton Company. Retrieved January 24, 2012 from New Advent: http://www. newadvent. org/cathen/11049a. htm(visited during May 2011).

Theodoret, 1892. ,*Ecclesiastical History Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, Vol. 3. Edited by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co. , 1892.) Revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight. http://www. newadvent.org/fathers/27021. htm (visited during May 2011).

Tiênou T. , 1987. The Theological Task of the Church in Africa: Where are We now and Where Should We be Going? *East Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology*, 6(1). 3-11.

Tienou T. , 1990. The Right to Difference: the Common Roots of African Philosophy. African *Journal of Evangelical Theology*, 1:24-41.

Tiênou T. , 1991. Which Way Africa Christianity: Westernisation or Indigenous Authenticity? *Africa Journal of Evangelical Theology*, 10 (2). 5-11.

Tlhagale B. , 1998. Bringing the African Church into the Church. *Journal of Black Theology in South Africa*, 12(2). 1-17.

Turaki Y. , 1999. *Christianity and African Gods*. Potchefstroom: Potchefstroomse Universiteit vir Christelike Hoër Onderwys.

Twesigye E. , 1987. *Common Ground*. Paris: Peter Lang.

Ukpong J. , 1996. Rereading the Bible with African Eyes. *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*,no 91 (1995) pp 3-15.

Ukpong J. , 2000. Developments in Biblical Interpretation in Africa*. Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, 108, November 2000: 3-18.

Von Allmen D. 1975. The Birth of Theology: Contextualisation as the Dynamic Element in the Formation of New Testament. International Review of Mission, Volume 64 number 253 pp 37-55

Von Campenhausen H. , 2000. *The Fathers of the Church*. London: Hendrickson publishers.

Von Harnack A. , 1957. *History of Dogma.* New York: Harper and Brothers.

Von Harnack A. , 1904. *The Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*. New York: G. P. Putnams' Sons.

Van Heerden W. , 2002. 'The Proverbs is the Drum of God: on the Use of African Proverbs in the Interaction between African Culture and the Christian faith. Scriptura, 81: 462-475.

Wendland E. , 1991. "Who do People say I am": Contextualizing Christology in Africa. African Journal of Evangelical Theology, 10 (2). 11-31.

Werner J. , 1961. *Early Christianity and Greek Paideia*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Wesche K. , 1984. The Union of God and Man in Jesus Christ in the Thought of Gregory of Nazianzus. *St Vladimirs' Theological Quarterly* 28 no 2 1984 pp 83-98.

West G. , 1994. The Bible and Theology. (eds) John W. de Gruchy and C. Villa-Vicencio Doing Theology in Context. *South African Perspectives*. Cape Town: David Philip.

West G. , 2005, Articulating, Owning and Mainstreaming Local Theologies: The Contribution of Contextual Bible Study. *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, 122, July 2005:23-35.

Workman H. , 1980. *Persecution in the Early Church.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Young F. , 1975. *Sacrifice and the Death of Christ*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press.

Young J. , 1986. *Black and African Theologies*. New York: Orbis Books.

Zizioulas J. , 1975. Apostolic continuity and Orthodox Theology: Towards a synthesis of two Perspectives. *Vladmirs' Theological Quarterly*; number 2 pp 75-108.

Zizioulas J. , 1985. *Being as Communion. Studies in Personhood and the Church.* London: Darton, Longman and Todd.

Zizioulas J. 1995. The Doctrine of the Holy Trinity: the Significance of the Cappadocian Contribution. (ed Christoph Schwöbel Trinitarian Theology Today: Essays on Divine Being and Act. Edinburg: T & T Clark

Zizioulas J. , 2006. *Communion and Otherness.* London: T&T Clark.

Zimbabwe Catholic Bishop's Conference AFER, 29 Nu 50 1987 pp 309-314.

Zulu E. , 2002. Reverence for Ancestors in Africa: Interpretation of the 5th Commandment from an African Perspective. *Scriptura*, 81: 476-482.

INDEX

African culture *3, 12, 13, 14, 18, 21, 22, 29, 30, 31, 33, 68, 81, 84, 87, 93, 151, 152, 154, 157, 161, 166, 175, 178, 184, 186, 189, 202, 206, 209, 219, 247, 264, 285, 295*

African Initiated Churches *3, 13, 21, 22, 32, 75, 245, 251*

African Traditional Religion *3, 6, 12, 13, 18, 21, 24, 30, 53, 69, 75, 76, 78, 84, 90, 161, 205, 236, 281, 311*

Athanasius *7, 20, 50, 67, 95, 105, 106, 107, 108, 116, 117, 118, 119, 121, 140, 143, 146, 160, 161, 177, 187, 268, 304*

Basil of Caesarea *7, 107, 108, 118, 121, 128, 139, 141*

Black Theology *6, 8, 78, 79, 80, 81, 84, 93, 152, 196, 202, 203, 236, 292, 310, 311, 312, 313, 315*

Body of Christ *8, 17, 89, 205, 209, 210, 213, 214, 215, 216, 218, 236, 238, 244, 247, 254, 272, 273, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 301*

Cappadocian Church Fathers *3, 7, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 24, 107*

Communion *3, 9, 13, 16, 18, 20, 23, 24, 76, 113, 136, 140, 144, 149, 205, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 219, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 237, 238, 239, 246, 248, 250, 251, 255, 256, 257, 259, 261, 262, 263, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 277, 280, 282, 283, 287, 300, 301*

Constantinopolitan Creed *21, 23, 96, 97, 98, 133, 143, 147*

Gregory of Nazianzus *7, 107, 108, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 179, 180, 181, 306, 307, 308, 315*

Gregory of Nyssa *7, 107, 108, 119, 121, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 139, 140, 142, 143, 180, 185, 308, 309, 310, 311*

Holy Spirit *3, 4, 16, 20, 22, 23, 25, 38, 44, 45, 46, 47, 49, 53, 68, 86, 88, 96, 97, 98, 99, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 116, 117, 120, 121, 122, 123, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 145, 148, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 179, 181, 182, 185, 189, 191, 205, 209, 212, 213,*

215, 216, 222, 236, 237, 246, 247, 248, 250, 251, 253, 261, 272, 273, 276, 277, 280, 281, 282, 283, 289, 290, 291, 292, 296, 298, 299, 300, 301, 305, 308

Judaism *5, 6, 14, 20, 22, 34, 35, 36, 37, 39, 44, 45, 53, 57, 60, 61, 64, 68, 96, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 147, 152, 165, 183, 192, 193, 205, 214, 236, 276, 294, 306, 307*

Koinonia *8, 205, 210, 211, 212, 213, 215, 216, 217, 238, 252, 305, 309, 314*

Monotheism *3, 14, 15, 16, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 44, 46, 53, 57, 61, 64, 65, 66, 68, 92, 100, 101, 102, 104, 113, 147, 163, 164, 166, 168, 177, 182, 188, 276, 288, 289*

Nicene Creed *3, 6, 21, 23, 40, 44, 50, 96, 97, 99, 105, 106, 107, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 133, 139, 146, 177, 187, 190, 205, 314*

Otherness *149, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 263, 273, 275*

Perichoresis *2, 3, 7, 9, 11, 16, 23, 24, 76, 145, 149, 205, 248, 280, 285, 301, 306, 309*

Revelation *11, 18, 26, 47, 48, 52, 54, 56, 57, 58, 64, 85, 88, 89, 96, 102, 146, 150, 155, 157, 163, 165, 174, 180, 183, 184, 205, 208, 210, 219, 224, 246, 266, 271, 279, 286, 289, 297, 298, 299*

Scriptures *11, 17, 20, 22, 32, 34, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 45, 51, 59, 64, 65, 69, 86, 102, 106, 107, 109, 130, 132, 150, 151, 169, 183, 193, 257, 276, 287, 288, 289, 290, 309*

Trinity *3, 7, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 23, 24, 26, 41, 47, 71, 98, 119, 120, 123, 126, 127, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 135, 139, 143, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 160, 162, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 177, 181, 182, 187, 191, 201, 258, 262, 272, 277, 279, 281, 290, 301, 306, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 316*

Ubuntu *1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 13, 16, 17, 18, 24, 76, 149, 188, 190, 204, 225, 226, 227, 229, 231, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 248, 249, 250, 255, 271, 285, 301, 307, 310, 312, 314*

Veneration *4, 12, 13, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 58, 70, 90, 91, 92, 100, 161, 187, 223, 224, 239, 285, 286, 288, 289, 290, 292*