

CHAPTER 4

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE AFRICAN CONTRIBUTION

4.1. Africa - the world's powerhouse

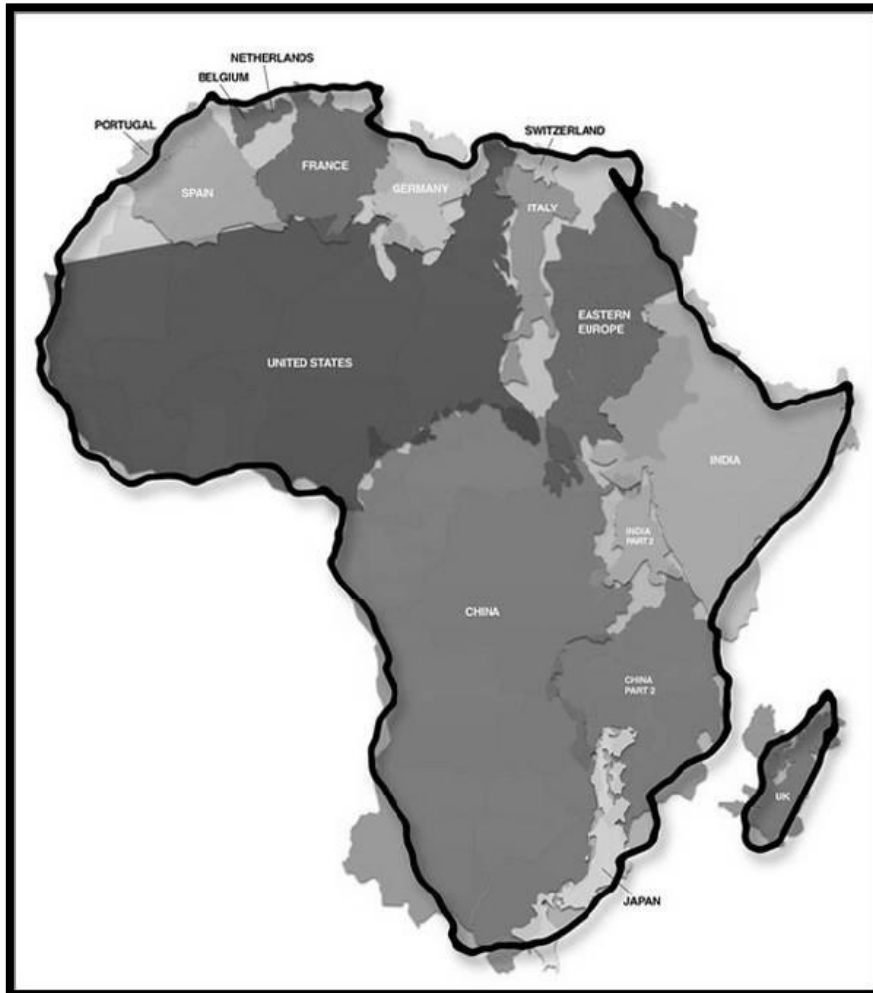


Figure 3 Relooking Africa's importance (Taken from <http://qiganticplanet.wordpress.com/>)

Africa is a great continent; it is the second largest continent on earth with a total landmass covering 30,212,000 square kilometres, roughly 22.3% of the world's total land area (Johnstone & Mandryk 2001). As the image above (cf. figure 5) illustrates; Africa is blessed with its sheer size; it is larger than the combined total masses of the United States of America, China, India, Western Europe, Argentina, and New Zealand

Africa is a continent of great beauty and indescribable splendour. From the barrenness of the Kalahari, to the complexity of the Cape Fynbos¹. From the Valley of a Thousand Hills in Natal, to the majesty of Mount Kilimanjaro. From Cape to Cairo, Madagascar to Morocco, Africa is blessed with indescribable beauty, magnificent scenery, bountiful flora and fauna and the warm hearts and welcoming hands of her diverse people. Africa's people numbered around a billion in 2010 which is approximately 15% of the world's total population spread relatively sparsely throughout the continent (see Jenkins 2007). We should not take this for granted as the combined population of the countries mentioned above (in terms of fitting into the land mass of Africa, the United States of America, China, India, Western Europe, Argentina, and New Zealand) make up about 58% of the world's total population.

Both beauty and bounty extend beneath the soil as some of the world's largest concentrations of minerals, precious metals, gases and oil lie yet to be explored beneath the African soil. In the light of its significant natural resources, Africa is the world's richest continent by far! In support of this, Adeyemo (2009:4) in his book *'African Enigma and Leadership Solutions'*, recalls former USA President Bill Clinton's profound statement: "The rest of the world cannot do without you- the world needs Africa" (Adeyemo 2009:4). Furthermore, Africa has the agricultural resources (untold potential yet to be fully realised) to feed its entire population with

¹Fynbos is the major vegetation type of the small botanical region known as the Cape Floral Kingdom. Only five other floral kingdoms are recognised, and these cover huge areas such as the whole of Australia and most of the northern hemisphere. The Cape Floral Kingdom is both the smallest and the richest floral kingdom, with the highest known concentration of plant species: 1 300 per 10 000 km²! The nearest rival, the South American rain forest has a concentration of only 400 per 10 000 km². Conservation of the Cape Floral Kingdom, with its distinctive fynbos vegetation, is a national conservation priority demanding urgent action. (See: <http://www.bcb.uwc.ac.za/envfacts/fynbos/>)

great surpluses to feed the rest of the world (Adeyemo 2009:5), Zambia, Zimbabwe and the Democratic Republic of Congo alone have the potential of feeding the entire continent if they slightly increase agricultural productivity. Some assert that South Africa alone, given its diverse climate, could produce enough food for the whole of Africa, although this claim is yet to be proven. However, any drive through countries like South Africa, Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe (and others) reveals a rich heritage of farming, herding, cattle ranching, commercial farming that pre-date the Colonial era and have been commonplace in the African heritage for generations. Africa is a resourceful continent with wealth extending from water and minerals to energy. Africa is said to have the largest reserves of gold, copper, diamonds, bauxite, manganese, nickel, cobalt, platinum, radium and phosphates in the world (will expand on these later). According to the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) 2009 Fact Book²: South Africa is a middle-income, emerging market with an abundant supply of natural resources; well-developed financial, legal, communications, energy, and transport sectors; a stock exchange that is 18th largest in the world; and modern infrastructure supporting an efficient distribution of goods to major urban centres throughout the region.

South Africa is the world's largest producer of platinum, gold and chromium. Botswana is the world's largest exporter of diamonds (by value) to world markets, Nigeria and Angola have substantial oil and natural gas deposits which are fairly representative of the fact that fossil fuels, including large deposits of coal, petroleum and natural gas are in abundance in Africa. The Democratic Republic of Congo is wonderfully endowed with some of Africa's largest mineral deposits

² Downloadable at: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>

including gold diamonds, copper, cobalt, coltan and zinc. Africa is a great continent with lots to offer the world; most African countries have vast quantities of underdeveloped and unexploited minerals that will secure the future of their peoples for generations to come. The enormity of Africa's resources in relation to global resources is perhaps best portrayed by Ayittey (2002) as he cites David Lamb in his compelling read *'Africa in Chaos'*, in which he reveals that much of our wealth in Africa is taken for granted and, although common-sense to some, is unrealised for many of the general populace. For instance, Africa has 40% of the world's potential hydro-electric power supply; at least 46% of the world's diamonds (Botswana being the world's largest exporter of diamonds as per value); vast quantities of chromium and 50% of the world's gold (with South Africa being the largest exporter in the world). According to Barry Sergeant (2010:88-90) there are no less than one hundred listed companies around the world involved in exploration, developing or mining the metal in Africa. These are due to increasing uncertainty over the current state of the world economy, and the current political turmoil unfolding in countries like Egypt, Libya and Bahrain. However, much remains to be seen whether the price of gold will indeed boom or bust in the foreseeable future (Sergeant 2010:88-90). Furthermore; Africa boasts 90% of the world's cobalt; 50% of its phosphates; 40% of its platinum; 7.5% of its coal (China having the largest market share); 8% of its known petroleum reserves; 12% of its natural gas; 3% of its iron ore; and millions upon millions of acres of untilled farmland (Lamb 1983:20). It also has 64% of the world's manganese, 13% of its copper and vast bauxite, nickel and lead resources.

This has great ramifications for Africa's economic development and potential. An example of this is copper mining in Zambia, which alone employs some 40,000 people and accounts for 10% of GDP and 70% of foreign exchange earnings. In an article in *African Business* (Versi 2010:50) it states that in 2010 the copper price rose by more than 15% and was expected to rise by up to 50% in the next 6-13 months.

Africa's natural resources account for 70% of cocoa, 60% of coffee, 50% of palm oil, and 20% of the total petroleum traded in the world market, excluding the United States and Russia. Ghana is one of the larger exporters of cocoa (second only to Côte d'Ivoire), palm oil and rubber in Africa. Smith (2010:100) reports that Ghana's agricultural sector accounts for 60% of the labour force but only contributes a paltry 40% of GDP. Stephen Gyasi Jnr (2010) asserts that the recent discovery of offshore oil in Ghana could bring in welcomed revenue to invest in infrastructural projects. Patrick Smith, in a special report on investment in Ghana, states that initial projections of oil revenue would increase GDP by around 14%, however, recent projections have levelled out to around 9.9% real GDP growth within the first year of production (Smith 2010:3) overtaking gold exports currently earning a yield of around \$2.8bn in 2009. This is significant nonetheless given Ghana's government indebtedness of 67% of GDP in 2009 and an estimated 70% of GDP in 2010 (Smith 2010:100). Ghana is possibly Africa's third biggest player in the oil industry alongside Nigeria and Angola with prospects of net exports of their easier to refine oil to ready US and Asia markets for years to come. South Africa, on the other hand, is leading the way in the production of the world's first synthetic jet fuel, approved by international aviation bodies. This was put to the test in

September 2010 when a Boeing 737 powered entirely by Sasol's synthetic fuel took off from Gauteng to Cape Town covering a distance of 865 miles, and becoming the first passenger aircraft to make such a flight on synthetic fuel (Noury 2010:54). Sasol, a company formed by the Apartheid government to counter fuel supply threats due to economic sanctions, is today the world's largest producer of synthetic fuels from coal and natural gas, with operations in around 30 countries worldwide, including projects in the Middle East, Nigeria and its largest venture to date in China. Noury (2010:55) states: "Sasol's daily production satisfies approximately 30% of South Africa's transport fuel needs".

The vast resources in Africa make it one of the wealthiest regions in the world. In most parts of the continent, it is possible to engage in farming all year round. Africa could easily be a paradise on earth. This is affirmed in an insightful article by Tom Nevin (2010:60, 61) in *African Business* entitled "Africa's new breadbasket?" where he pertinently states that some 420,000km² of Zambia's total land area of 752,000km², is classed by the FAO³ as having medium to high agricultural potential. Current reports from the World Bank indicate that a mere 15% of arable land in Zambia is cultivated. Estimates indicate that in the years to come Zambia (already exporting maize surpluses to other sub-Saharan countries) agricultural produce could rise from its current 1% of GDP to around 10% of GDP in a relatively short period of time. Sugar production in the SADC (Southern African Development Corporation) is the fifth largest producer in the world and a report by Morgan in *African Business* (see Morgan 2010:49-50) shows the potential for

³ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Africa to increase its global market share by exporting sugar and by utilizing sugar for domestic power supply.

4.1.1. From Colonial domination to Independent rule

Despite the preponderance of wealth and beauty Africa remains a developing work in progress. There are many views relating to why Africa is today's 'underdog' in global issues, however, Africa has been historically marginalized through the Slave Trade in the 18th Century and then through Colonisation in the 19th Century onwards. These and other internal experiences have led to the perception of Africa as the 'dark continent'. In reality, Africa's progress and her becoming a global player was interrupted. In his book, *'The Africans'*, African scholar and historian Professor Ali Mazrui (holding to an Externalist Colonial view regarding the current state of Africa's affairs) claimed that almost everything that has gone wrong in Africa is the fault of Western Colonialism and Imperialism, which: "harmed indigenous technological development" (Mazrui 1986:164), and caused the infrastructure (roads, railways, and utilities) to collapse (Mazrui 1986:202). Furthermore, "the political decay is partly a consequence of colonial institutions without cultural roots in Africa" (Mazrui 1986:199). This view was popular following independence in the sixties where African leaders, with few exceptions, attributed almost every African malaise to the operation or conspiracy of external agents. In the DRC (formerly Zaire), President Mobutu blamed corruption on European colonialism. When asked who introduced corruption into Zaire, he retorted: "European businessmen were the ones who said, 'I sell you this thing for \$1,000,

but \$200 will be for your (Swiss bank) account'. "Other examples of similar references to outside interference, are former Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi who blamed the IMF (International Monetary Fund) and various international development agencies for "denying Kenya development funds, thus triggering mass poverty". The list of those who refuse to accept blame continues: Robert Mugabe (President of Zimbabwe); Issifu Ali (Chairman of Ghana's ruling political party known as NDC) and Jerry Rawlings (President of Ghana) (Ayttey 2002). African leaders need to take responsibility for their own actions.

On the other side of the spectrum we have the Internalists, who, by the early 1980's were fed up with the Colonialism/Imperialism claptrap, and the refusal of the leadership to take responsibility for their own failures. A new and angry generation of Africans emerged, who stressed the role of internal factors, including: misguided leadership, mis-governance, systemic corruption, capital flight, economic mismanagement, declining investment, collapsed infrastructure, decayed institutions, senseless civil wars, political tyranny, flagrant violations of human rights, and military vandalism, among others. Internalists maintain that, while external factors have played a role, the internal factors have been more important in determining the current state of Africa (Ayttey 2002).

Whatever the influences and culprit; Africa can no longer be ignored and should in no way be seen as the 'dark continent', nor allow the perceptions of outsiders to define African identity and shape the future of the African continent and people. At the same time we cannot make excuses, shift the blame, or hide behind our past

injustice - it's time for Africans to show the world what we have to offer and to rise up to the challenge of leadership.

Although contextualized to a Nigerian setting, Nigerian novelist, Chinua Achebe (1985:3) is correct in his views regarding leadership:

The trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. There is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian character. There is nothing wrong with the Nigerian land or climate or water or air or anything else. The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge of personal example which are the hallmarks of true leadership. We have lost the twentieth century; are we bent on seeing that our children also lose the twenty- first? God forbid (Achebe 1985:3).

Adeyemo (2009) reminds us that Africa is the richest of all seven continents of the world, yet black Africans are among the poorest on the planet - a great enigma. Africa is most likely the first home of humanity, yet it is the least developed globally. Africans are hospitable to foreigners, yet hostile and violent to fellow African brothers and sisters. African professionals and executives are making nations around the world greater and more prosperous, yet their own towns and villages of origin remain underdeveloped and in ruins. Adeyemo (2009) rightly calls this situation *enigmatic*, it is absurd, inexplicable and beyond human comprehension. Former United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan at the OAU⁴ Summit in Lome in 2000 pertinently stated: "Instead of being exploited for the benefit of the people, Africa's mineral resources have been so mismanaged and plundered that they are now the source of our misery" (2000:1).

Ayittey (2009:37) rightly states:

⁴ Organization for African Unity

Africa is not poor because of the residue of colonialism or the machinations of large global corporations. Africa is not poor because of poor resource endowments or climate. Africa is poor because its dysfunctional, kleptocratic politics have disorganized its societies, and Western countries and their aid vehicles have been unwittingly complicit in this. Africa is rich; only its politics are poor (Ayittey 2009:37).

4.1.2. African resurgence or redundancy; which shall it be?

The potential of Africa is indeed great, and although Africa is often perceived by the West as a “calamitous continent, evidenced by bad leadership, corruption, murder, poverty, poor governance, fragile states and vast, ungoverned spaces that have to be ‘controlled’” (Cilliers 2010:15), the momentum of African development is accelerating and the continent’s economic potential is immense, even though it is starting from a very low baseline. I agree with Cilliers (2010:15) that this may not, as former South African President Thabo Mbeki would have us believe, be the African century - it is likely to be the Asian century, even though the East’s spectacular growth slows down in the years to come. Africa currently remains little more than a spectator to many of these shifts. To put it starkly, by way of reminder, the collective value of all of Africa’s economies is merely US\$ 2.2 trillion, representing little more than 3% of a total global GDP (PPP) of US \$69.8 trillion (Cilliers 2010:15). This does not negate our important role and should in no way detract from our significant progress. Africa is yet to bloom, and as the new emerging powers such as China, India, Brazil and Russia outpace the growth of developed countries, their expansion is dragging Africa along. Hence, South Africa’s recent inclusion into the BRICS grouping of countries. The Mail and Guardian online reporter (cf. “Punching above our weight”, 30 March 2012)⁵

⁵ Downloadable at: <http://mg.co.za/article/2012-03-30-punching-above-our-weight>

speaks openly about the work ahead for South Africa to keep pace with Brazil, Russia, China and India. This is seen as President Zuma's greatest foreign policy move - one that will define our future either way!

The Republic of Botswana, located within Southern Africa, serves as one of Africa's great examples in the way it utilized its natural resources to uplift the quality of life for all within its borders. Present-day Botswana, formerly Bechuanaland, gained independence alongside Lesotho in 1966 in what marked the end of an important era for Africa, as an era that had its beginning in Ghana in 1957 (see Hastings 1979). The era of independence was an important turning point in African history. However, even independence would not guarantee impunity, democracy, greater freedom and prosperity.

The struggle for African independence throughout the continent seemed quickly twisted into a sordid power game, dutifully cheered by a somewhat disillusioned and powerless populace. Independence from Colonial rule did not mean immunity from further influence, power and interference. The faces of the rulers were black where formerly they had been white, but the deeper social, political and economic structures created by Colonialism had clearly outlived the passing empire-structures which differentiated profoundly between dominating elites and dominated masses. Indeed the changes which had taken place, so loudly trumpeted, seemed now in many countries to have accomplished little but to accentuate the inherent immorality of the underlying system by increasing the scale of personal corruption and diminishing the mechanisms of accountability

among the now ruling elite. It is true that more and more African countries have completed or are undergoing the transition to democracy, while many others “languish in the shackles of oppression, dictatorship and poverty. Far from the romantic image of uniformity and common ancestry, language and orientation, held both on the continent and elsewhere” (Cilliers 2010:14). This is true in many African countries and is vividly illustrated in their Governance ratings worldwide where many African countries are said to be amongst the worst. Independent African countries often have a newer form of Colonialism, or, worse yet, dictatorship with overt violent tendencies to maintain control.

There’s not only bad news; Mauritius and South Africa made it in the top 50 best rated countries in an IFC/ World Bank report for ease of business. Furthermore, five African countries ranked above Turkey (at number 65) in the World Bank’s 2011 ‘Doing Business’ report with eight above China (Smith 2010:100). In fact the same report details the fact that, despite the stark problems, 30% of global reforms in the past year took place in sub-Saharan Africa. However, starting a business still costs 18 times as much in sub-Saharan Africa as in many OECD (Organization for Economic cooperation and Development) economies. What is most disturbing is the fact that a reported “two-thirds of countries saw a decline in democratic participation and human rights, with big drops in Madagascar, Niger and Mauritania. The right to freedom of association and assembly deteriorated most in Angola, Mali and Tanzania” (Smith 2010:100).

Looking back, the campaign for political independence had been sold to the common African man as the road to something little short of an economic and social millennium. That glittering prize was now found to be reserved to the small minority and became with every year that passed more alienated from the common man, whose smile turned slowly sour in the bewilderment consequent upon so great, if inevitable, a deception (Hastings 1979). This is confirmed by Chang (2012) in his research relating to South Africa's urban tribes. This has been perpetuated throughout the years since independence. Africa's deteriorating economic and moral situation is indeed a paradox given its boundless resources. According to an article published in 1999 in the *'African Observer'*, four out of 10 Africans live in absolute poverty and recent evidence suggests that poverty is on the increase. If Africa wants to reduce poverty by half over the next 15 years, it needs to attain and sustain an average annual growth rate of 7% - an enormous task. Not much has changed since then:

When the World Bank in 2008 adjusted its yardstick for extreme poverty from \$1.00 to \$1.25 a day, it found, in the words of one New York Times report on the change; that while most of the developing world has managed to reduce poverty, the rate in sub-Saharan Africa, the world's poorest region, has not changed in nearly 25 years. . . . Half of the people in sub-Saharan Africa were living below the poverty line in 2005, the same as in 1981. That means about 389 million lived under the poverty line in 2005, compared with 200 million in 1981" (Ayittey 2009:37).

Despite the vast inconsistencies and deficiencies in Africa, there are some African success stories worth noting: "Benin, Botswana, Ghana, Mali, Malawi, Mauritius, Rwanda and Uganda, for example. But these successes are overshadowed by the large meltdowns and crises in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, Somalia, Sudan and Zimbabwe. The large countries that should be the continent's engines of growth are instead dragging it down" (Ayittey 2009:37). On the whole,

however, Cilliers states that Africa's reaction to the global economic recession has provided many analysts with 'food for thought' as, despite the views of outsiders and pessimistic insiders, Africa seems to have weathered the impact of the recent financial crisis remarkably well. South Africa's strength in this area is applauded by Anver Versi, in a positive editorial released by *African Business* (cf. Cilliers 2010:13-15), where the DTI (Department of Trade and Industry) stated: "During the global financial and economic crisis, the Rand represented stability and there was a flight away from dollars to the South African currency. In addition, returns on South African portfolio investments at around 8.5% far outperformed returns in the EU (European Union) at around 1–2%. Another upside to Africa's current resurgence is the sharp decline in conflict on the continent since the collapse of the Berlin wall, and by 2006 war deaths in Africa are reported to have dropped by two thirds" (Cilliers 2010:14). Unfortunately the levelling out from the sharp declines of conflict rates in Africa has been largely due to election violence in Kenya and Nigeria and coups in Guinea (Schulz-Herzenberg 2010:13). "Despite the myriad challenges, the growth story is also changing the mind-set of Africans, who are more confident about the continent's global positioning and see a chance for a new realism about what needs to be done to move forward" (Games 2010:41). Instead of looking backwards to find scapegoats for problems, as has been the trend, there is a renewed realism about what actually needs to be done to move forward.

Botswana is a good example of an African success story. At the time of independence, Botswana was one of the poorest countries in the world with a per capita income estimated at less than US\$100 per annum. It was largely rural and

dependent on agriculture for livelihood. The country's real GDP, valued at 1993/94 prices amounted to P908.6 million. Of this total, agriculture accounted for P387.6 million or about 43%, while bank, insurance and other business services, the second largest sector, contributed P183 million or about 20%. None of the other major sectors of the economy accounted for as much as 10% of real GDP in 1966. In terms of employment, most people were engaged in subsistence agricultural farming and a significant part of the labour force was working as migrant labourers in the South African mines. There was, therefore, very little in terms of industry, except the abattoir in Lobatse and a few economic activities that had emerged in Francistown. This data is taken from the Botswana Central Statistics Office Report (2006:12- 13).

Although Botswana was never Colonized (in the traditional sense of the term) the British refrained from developing vast infrastructural networks within the country as the perception was that there was nothing to warrant such development within the then Bechuanaland Protectorate. Unlike its neighbour South Africa; the climate is harsh and over 80% of the country is considered desert, the landscape is arid, and there were no evident signs of wealth under the earth. The case of Botswana defies the enigma that seems to characterize Africa so well. Botswana is known as Africa's greatest success story and its values are emulated elsewhere in Africa. With the discovery of minerals, especially diamonds, soon after independence, Botswana quickly became the fastest growing economy in the world. According to the Central Statistics Office and its 2006 Report on demographic changes; Botswana's growth rates averaged 13% through the 1970's and 1980's. Within a relatively short period of time, diamonds began to dominate in terms of

contribution to GDP, government revenue and export revenue. What an achievement; from being almost non-existent in 1966, mining contributed as much as 47% to GDP in 1986 before declining slightly to a 35% share in 2003. However, during this same period, agriculture declined to less than 5% of GDP by 1986 from its contribution of 40% of GDP in 1966. This is indicative of the change in rural/urban migration and domination, the latter taking precedence since independence (a trend discernible throughout Africa to varying degrees).

The 2006 Report from the Botswana Central Statistics Office relates that the good performance in terms of growth, driven by diamond mining has enabled the country to make significant human and infrastructural investments. As a result, most communities throughout Botswana, now have access to schools (basic education), health and water within reasonable distance. The investment in infrastructure, health and education has seen some major results in terms of human development. Social indicators show that life expectancy had gone up before a big reversal from HIV and AIDS, literacy rates are relatively high, and more schools, roads and hospitals have been provided.

It is at this point where the country of Botswana serves as a success story both on economic and political fronts. Botswana has prospered greatly, and due to competent and courageous leadership, has been transparent and had a healthy level of accountability. The finance generated through diamond sales has been used for the development of the country as a whole. Oppenheimer (2005:n.p.)

states that Botswana owes its current rate of development not to aid, but to business - this, in his view, is unique in Africa.

In Botswana... the management of its natural resources has provided an outstanding model for others to follow. It is indeed a cause for regret, and in some cases tragedy, that other countries, similarly blessed, have failed to follow its example and adopt a mining regime that is both predictable and transparent. This, together with the prudent and responsible use of its diamond taxes and revenues to provide roads, schools and hospitals for its people, has enabled it truthfully to claim that its diamonds are for development. Fiscal prudence, certainty, open democracy and respect for the rule of law have made Botswana into an African success story. A recent World Bank report ranked Botswana as 19 out of 145 of the world's most open economies, and one of the best in which do business. The report took into consideration productivity levels, investment potential, lack of corruption, labour flexibility, access to credit, and the legal protection of contracts, property registration and the protection of investment. Botswana is not unique; neither should it be. It is simply the best example I know of the benefits which good governance can bring to Africa's people - benefits which no amount of aid can ever produce ... (Oppenheimer 2005:n.p.)

Despite this pervasive enigma that seems to pervade African society in general, there is hope - not all is lost. It is the Church, with its network of members and general positive influence within society that will have a large role to play in the shaping of things to come. Bowers and August (2005:20-34) in their missiological article on social transformation, cite the ANC's (South Africa's current ruling political party, the African National Congress) statement on moral renewal of South Africa in which the former South African President, Thabo Mbeki says that "in striving for political and economic development, the ANC recognises that social transformation cannot be separated from spiritual transformation".

However, in order for this to occur, we will need to be more aware of the role and importance of a 'local flavour' to the way we do things as African Christians specifically. *Our theology will have to shift from being Western-centred to being Afro-centric in its epistemology* and in order to achieve this, relevant continental interlocutors will need to be continually engaged in conversation about what the Church can be and do. After all Theology isn't done within a vacuum, it is always done within a context, and thus is always contextual. As an African, I long to see greater theological discourse from an African perspective, as we awaken to the importance and significance of our own contribution locally, nationally, continentally and globally. This has partly been fulfilled in the Baptist tradition by the All African Baptist Fellowship's conference on Theological Education held at Baptist House in late October 2012, further affirming the need for further engagement and the importance of written African theological and missiological discourse.

Additionally, Africa has a significant contribution to make to the emerging global concern relating to what the Church can be and should do. The Church has a valuable role to play in the shaping of things to come within denominations, and on the Christian scene as a whole. We have all we need in terms of resources (human and other) and aptitude to effect change in a remarkable and lasting way that will secure the future of our faith for generations to come.

Today, Africa is great, tomorrow she shall be remarkable. Today Africa strives for success; tomorrow we shall surface as significant. What needs to be clearly understood is that the root of our greatness does not lie solely in our splendid

scenery, majestic mountains, nor within the hearts of our people and leaders; Africa's greatness emanates from *Yahweh* who thought of such a place and spoke it into being. We are today because of Him, and shall be because He is the same yesterday, today and forevermore. Thus, we need a Theo-centric worldview to retain remnants of God's fingerprints within the 'sands of time'.

4.2 Africa's Enriching Heritage

To many people today, Christianity and Africa have always been linked with regards to the great missionary century and Colonial rule on the continent. However, Africa has both shaped and been shaped by the Christian faith prior to its encounter with Europeans. While the origins of the Church in Africa are lost in obscurity, biblical and historical traditions trace the introduction of Christianity into the continent back to the earliest times (Parratt 1995). Oduro et al (2008) are correct in their assessment that Africa is often described as a continent that is less important than other continents when it comes to world affairs, yet there is another side to Africa; religion forms the foundation and the all-governing principles of life for Africans (cf. Gerloff 2001). Africa has unquestionably contributed to the global Christian tradition, and, although discounted in the Colonial / missionary era, has a voice that needs to be heard and appreciated on a global level today. John Mbiti goes as far as to say that the centres of the Church's universality are no longer in Geneva, Rome, Athens, Paris, London, New York, but in Kinshasa, Buenos Aires, Addis Ababa and Manila. Despite various and sometimes conflicting opinions, Christianity in Africa is not simply surviving, but is thriving. Sanneh (2008:275)

states: “The pace of religious expansion in Africa entered its most vigorous phase following the end of the Colonial and missionary hegemony, with the dramatic collapse of postcolonial states fuelling the expansion ... [the growth of Christianity in Africa] is a continental shift of historic proportions.” *‘Ex Africa semper aliquid novi’* (out of Africa always something new) can be applied to the very foundations of human existence, perhaps even to the origins of human beings. Paleanthropologists currently agree that Africa is the ‘cradle of Humankind’. In South Africa, there is located a place officially called “The Cradle of Humankind”, which is a World Heritage Site first named by UNESCO in 1999. This area is located around 50 kilometres northwest of Johannesburg. It contains a complex web of limestone caves, including the cave where the famous ‘Mrs Ples’ was found in 1947 by Dr Robert Broom and John Robinson. Imagine an early African Church much stronger and more influential than even the best historians thought, ponders Oden (2007:12, 13). Imagine a Church whose gift –*‘ex Africa semper aliquid novi’* - to the Western Church was the major part of its theology and culture. Imagine the flow of a great intellectual and spiritual river from the South to the North. Even modern day African theologians were not prepared for the breadth and the power of the evidence stated by Oden (2007:13) on the contribution of Africa to global Christianity. It has been well said that in early Christianity, Christian Africa looked across at pagan Europe. And for many centuries it was Africa that was the seedbed of Christian theology (cf. Parratt 1995), Christianity can be argued to have first been Afro-centric before being rooted in Europe. Of course most of us recognize the names and influence of famous African theologians such as Augustine and Athanasius. But to this influential pair of theologians the legacy of a constellation of African scholars must be added: Clement of Alexandria,

Cyprian of Carthage, Cyril of Alexandria, Didymus the Blind, Fulgentius of Ruspe, Lactantius, Origen, Tertullian and the Desert Fathers (cf. Gibellini 1994:2- 8). Of course most of us know about the Church in Alexandria and even in Carthage, but Oden describes an African Church extending in influence deep into Africa and as wide as the known world of the ancient near East (cf. Parratt 1995). When Oden speaks of early African Christianity, he is referring to all the antecedents of Christianity in the first millennium in the millions of square miles of Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco, and possibly further south than we now know. The geography of the continent shaped the fact that African Christianity happened first north of the Sahara in the first millennium, and then its second millennium saw exponential growth in the south. Both north and south have been blessed by an enduring heritage of centuries of classic Christianity. Oden's thesis is unconventional and has been contested in scholarship as it relates to how one defines 'African-ness'. Another question is raised in relation to whether location (being Africa) influences the writings of individuals. Although there are some concerns relating to Oden's view of the importance of Africa, it serves as a wonderful reminder of the role Africa has played in early Christian thinking and breaks the mold of traditional conceptions of thought flows as being strictly from North to South. Oden (2007:42- 56) mentions seven ways in which Africa shaped the Christian mind; what can be termed 'seven gifts of Africa to humanity'. These, as described below, significantly contribute to ones understanding of Africa's role in shaping the Christian, albeit Western mind:

The Western idea of the University was conceived in Alexandria. We know about the famous library - it comprised a Peripatos walk, gardens, a room for shared

dining, a reading room, lecture halls and meeting rooms. This model's influence may still be seen today in the layout of university campuses. For more than five centuries, this great African library was home to the most important collections of books in the world.

Christian exegesis first matured in Africa. Responsible exposition of the Bible was formed in Africa with the important work of Origen, and later Didymus and Augustine. Origen can, even if one cannot support all of his viewpoints, can certainly be appreciated for his ground-breaking work in the sound understanding of the Bible.

African biblical interpreters powerfully shaped most of the important Christian doctrines. The orthodoxy of the East and West with their definitions of Christology and the Trinity, were shaped by definitions and concepts defined earlier in Africa by Tertullian, Cyprian, Athanasius, Augustine and Cyril.

Africa was the region that first set the pattern and method for seeking wider ecumenical consent on contested points of scripture. The methods of the consular movement were well established in Africa before employed at meetings such as Nicaea and Constantinople.

The African desert gave birth to worldwide monasticism. The introduction of monasticism into the West may be dated from about A.D. 340 when St. Athanasius visited Rome accompanied by the two Egyptian monks Ammon and Isidore,

disciples of St. Anthony. The publication of the 'Vita Antonii' some years later and its translation into Latin spread the knowledge of Egyptian monasticism widely. Christian Neo-Platonism emerged from Africa and the work of scholars such as Plotinus plays an important role.

Africa has a wonderful heritage and past, it is certainly a great continent filled with beauty and brawn. Despite the legacy, what shall become of Africa and her people within the twenty-first century? How is Africa being shaped and shaping its people within this new world?

4.3 Africa in the Twenty-first Century and Beyond

Africa's heritage is both rich and enriching. Africa has both shaped and been shaped by the global community and will continually be formed and reformed as Africa faces the future. Africa today is characterized by great diversity, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, religious and otherwise. Yet, in the midst of this diversity Africa is finding a unity of purpose that defines her as being a part of something greater than what separates us. This is revealed in the prevailing pride in being African as opposed to being European or American. Despite national pride in many African countries, there is something special that binds Africans together, and proudly so. 'I am an African' said impassioned former South African President Thabo Mbeki in 1998 as he began a famous speech with these words that echoed through the hearts of all who are passionate about Africa. Describing Africa within the twenty-first century is a difficult, perhaps impossible task, as there is no single descriptor

that would do justice to the paradigmatic change that continues to define our existence in so many ways. Where once colonizers rule, now independent, mostly democratic nations rule and reign. Where families were united and tied into village life, now they are mostly divided due to economic pressure and the migration of the populace from rural areas to emerging urban centres. Where once the greatest percentage of the population was rural and made up of subsistence farmers and tradesmen, vast metropolitan areas now exist which threaten to swallow entire regions in their gaping mouths. Where once the population of most African countries was homogenous; now many nations are a melting pot of cultures and ethnicities. It is commonplace today to see a microcosm of African society within one city, both in Africa and elsewhere. The world is becoming smaller with the passing of each new day; newness and change are renewed as surely as the sun rises upon the African landscape.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Africa is a great and important continent whose influence and resources extend beyond what many in the West (Global North) could ever imagine. This section worked toward an Afro-centric missional ecclesiology for Africa, by African theologians and interlocutors. Far too much of Africa's history has been written by those from outside of the continent, which leads to a Western centered survey of historical accounts. This section engaged the *overall importance* of Africa globally and showcased the phenomenal growth, beauty and potential of possibly the world's greatest powerhouse potential. As the research shows, the perception of

Africa as the 'dark continent' is no longer relevant and the research will engage the overall global importance of Africa and the many ways its progress has been hindered in the past. Africa is indeed the world's powerhouse in terms of its natural wealth and spiritual heritage and current growth. As my research will indicate in the chapter to come, Africa has a prominent role to play in the shaping of things to come in both spiritual and economic platforms. Africa is indeed an important role player on the world scene, and has a part to play in global politics, economics, Christianity and world religions. This influence, as stated above, flows from Africa's rich and enriching heritage, that guided by leaders of integrity, would lead Africa away from the perception of 'dark continent' toward being a vital global partner and role player.

CHAPTER 5

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICAN CHRISTIANITY

5.1 Historical paradigm-shifts and African Christian dominance

5.1.1 Western Christianity?

Roels (2011:7) rightly states that Christianity has become a world religion; “Faith in Jesus Christ is celebrated today in more languages and in more lands than any other living faith because of a seismic shift in patterns of belief and commitment.” Johnson & Ross (2009:8, 9) vividly illustrate the extent of global Christian permeation since 1910 in their encyclopaedia. Sanneh (2003:1-13) proves a pertinent point relating to the movement of the Christian Gospel from the West and the current global resurgence of Christian faith. Christianity was not always a prolific, global religion celebrated in both Northern and Southern Hemispheres within a multiplicity of nations, languages, people groups, cultures and worldviews. Interestingly, Jorgenson et al (2011:18) speak of the theme of the Edinburgh 1910 conference in a way indicative of the locus of Christianity in 1910:

As a young student I remember people quoting the so-called Edinburgh 1910 by-line *The Evangelization of the World in This Generation*. In my mind that became the watchword of what happened in Edinburgh. Only recently did I discover that this motto, coined by John R. Mott, was never adopted as the Edinburgh 1910 watchword, maybe because the German missiology pioneer Gustav Warneck did not like it. Instead the rallying call was the title of the first of the eight commissions *Carrying the Gospel to the Non-Christian World*. I mention this because it calls attention to the basic working assumption of Edinburgh that Christian mission was a movement from the Christian world of the West and the North to the non-Christian world of the East and the South (Jorgenson et al 2011:18).

Today one can easily criticise Edinburgh 1910's mistaken foundational assumption that Christian mission should be viewed as a movement from the Christian nations of the West to the non-Christian nations of the East and South. However, the dire need, at that time, of the nations which had not yet been evangelized drove and motivated the innate (colonial?) desire and excitement of living in an age of discovery, colonization and greater freedom. The division was so stark that the only way to describe it was in religious terms; Christian and non-Christian.

Figure 6 below indicates the global Christian population in 1910 and the second illustrates its far-reaching impact today; also indicating the epic shift of the gravity of the Christian faith from the Global North (Western Christianity) to the Global South. One of the publications marking the centenary is the *Atlas of Global Christianity* from 1910 to 2010; the various maps and diagrams used in this section come from this momentous work⁶. Jorgensen et al (2011) confirms that the salient trend documented in this atlas is that Christianity moves South and East from 1910- 2010. In a century we have seen an epic shift whereby the Christian faith is no longer a European or American phenomenon (cf. Jenkins 2007, Sanneh 2003: 1).

⁶ Although some criticize it in terms of precise numerical accuracy and on clear and concise terminology when coming to Urbanology (cf. Seim 2012).

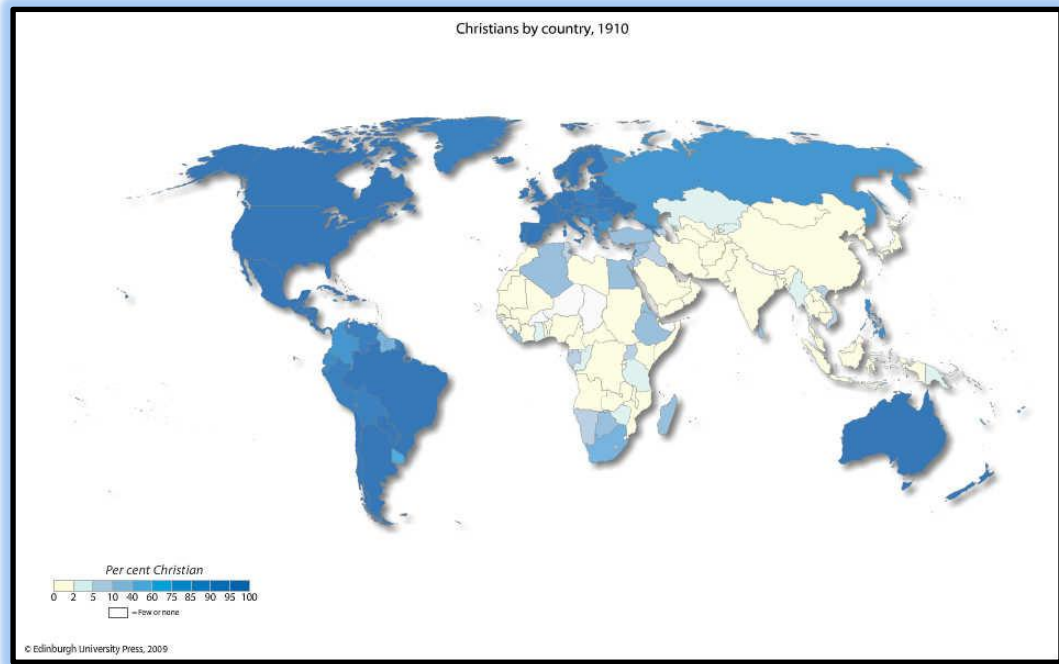


Figure 6 Percentage Christians in 1910

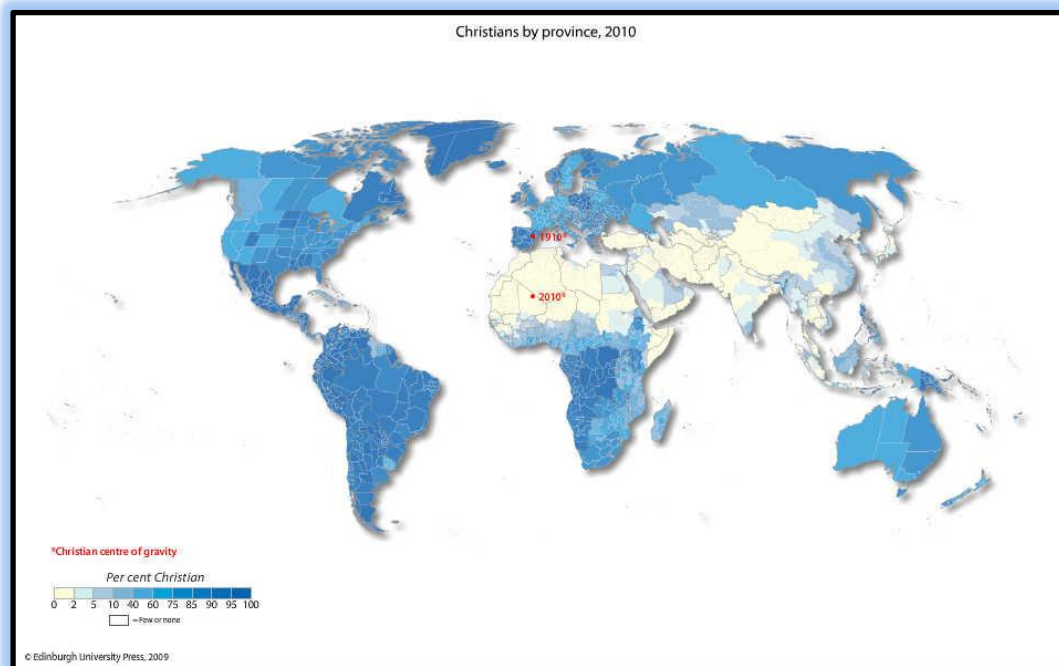


Figure 7 Numbers of Christians in 2012 and the shift of gravity in the Christian Faith

This seismic change has taken place in one century and leaves many within Christianity with great expectations for the future- especially within the Global

South. Since 1910, there is no denying that the century has shown that the gospel can take root in every culture across the world and result in fruit in church and society wherever the Gospel is planted. The maps above are indicative of this trend and display the effect of 100 years of missions flowing from Edinburgh 1910 and the direction taken (with its obvious limitations, danger and pitfalls).

As the Gospel has taken root in new contexts, different approaches and varieties of church life and praxis have emerged. More specifically, over the past thirty years new varieties of the Church have appeared worldwide with each claiming to be an *authentic expression* of the reign of God. However, such expressions of the Church around the world are a new, dynamic phenomenon, as for the last two thousand years most Christians have understood the Church to have a fairly fixed form (stemming from either Roman Catholic or Protestant heritage/ tradition). This seismic shift concerns the fact that “a century ago, 80% of all the world’s Christians lived in Europe and North America with the prevailing established denominations. Today, more than 60% of all Christians live outside these regions, in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Pacific Islands” (Roels 2011:7). Additionally, Shenk and Parker (2004) in a Lausanne Occasional Paper (LOP No. 43) speak of the realities of what is experienced as changing expressions of Church that inform our understanding of the history of the dynamic Church movement experienced in Africa and other parts of the world:

After Christianity was recognized as the official religion of the Roman Empire in 375 A.D., the Church became a major institution in society. Christendom promoted the notion that the Church was society’s Spiritual mother and, as such, had priority. The Church was held to be the visible expression of the Kingdom of God. Functionally, Church and kingdom were treated as one. The Church was as much a special place of worship as a community of people seeking to follow Jesus Christ. Peter’s confession (Matthew 16:18b) was used

to confirm that the Church was a permanent bulwark against the forces of evil and death, and thus unchanging in its form as well as its function. The Church was held to be the mediator between humankind and God. As a particular territory came under the control of Church and State the people would be baptized and that society was then proclaimed to be Christian. The Church's role was to provide pastoral services and help maintain civil order. The territorial church did not need mission since mission was only one among several functions and the mission task had been completed once the entire society was Christianised (Shenk & Parker 2004: 7).

Thankfully, this is changing, and churches throughout the world are currently engaging in an emerging conversation regarding the nature and role of the Church in missions. Nyomi (2011:11) states: "Through the WCRC, Reformed churches continue to be stimulated toward realizing God's mission today." Furthermore, Nyomi (2011:11) clarifies the Reformed perspective:

The DNA of Reformed Christians links our justification with our sanctification. Once liberated by our Lord Jesus Christ and justified by faith, we are called to live out that faith in gratitude to God through ways that make a difference in the world. This belief inspires us to respond to God's mission, both presenting the good news of salvation in our Lord Jesus Christ and being God's agents of transformation in society. Commitment to justice in a world filled with injustice is one important aspect of the mission to which we have been called... given the broken world in which Christianity lives, we cannot ignore the suffering, insecurity, conflicts, destruction, and many other ways in which the forces of death continue to hold many communities captive. Engaging in mission that makes a difference is not simply an option we can take or leave at human pleasure. The life of obedience in following God's mission calls us to a different reality (Nyomi 2011:11).

An evangelical perspective is found in the 1974 Lausanne Covenant, stating: "We affirm that Christ sends his redeemed people into the world as the Father sent him, and that this calls for a similar deep and costly penetration of the world. We need to break out of our ecclesiastical ghettos and permeate non-Christian society" (cf. Article 6, 'The Church and Evangelism'). Furthermore, the 1989 Lausanne Manila Manifesto added a vital component: "Every Christian congregation is a local expression of the Body of Christ and has the same

responsibilities... we believe that the local Church bears a primary responsibility for the spread of the Gospel” (cf. Article 8, The Local Church). Speer speaking in 1910 (quoted in Peters 1972:55) made this point:

The last command of Christ is not the deep and final ground of the church’s missionary duty. That duty is authoritatively stated in the words of the great commission, and it is of infinite consequence to have had it so stated by our Lord himself. But if these particular words had never been spoken by Him, or if, having been spoken, they had not been preserved, the missionary duty of the church would not be in the least affected.

The supreme arguments for missions are not found in any specific words. It is in the very being and character of God that the deepest ground of the missionary enterprise is to be found. We cannot think of God except in terms which necessitate the missionary idea... the grounds are in the very being and thought of God (Peters 1972:55).

From a Roman Catholic perspective, Bevans & Schroeder (2011:1, 10) state:

The Church is missionary by its very nature, Vatican II taught. If the church is to be the church today, it must also share and continue in God’s healing, fulfilling, challenging, and redemptive work. It must truly be God’s missionary People, the Body of Christ in the world, the presence of the Spirit of God’s Temple, God’s building. The various components of the single, but complex reality of mission today should be faithful, creative and communal acts that reflect the breadth of God’s mission- *faithful* to the essential missionary identity of Christianity, *creative* in responding to changing contexts, and *communal* in engaging God’s Spirit in tradition, history, and human experience... God is mission...this is what God is in God’s deepest self: self-diffusive love, freely creating, redeeming, healing, challenging that creation.... God is like an ever-flowing fountain of living water, poured out on earth through the Holy Spirit... ‘God generously pours out, and never ceases to pour out, the divine goodness, so that the one who is creator of all things might at last become ‘all in all’ (1 Cor. 15:28), thus simultaneously assuring God’s own glory and our happiness’ (*Ad Gentes*) (Bevans & Schroeder 2011:1, 10).

5.1.2 Christianity's Southward mega-shift

With regard to the Southward mega-shift, Jorgensen et al (2011:20) pertinently states:

Christianity has undergone several 'transformations' in the course of the century – from living with Enlightenment to living with modernity and today with post-modernity, the collapse of the Constantine model of church-state relations, the defeat of 'the crusading mind' to 'the crucified mind' (the expression used by the Japanese Kosuke Koyama) – but the greatest transformation is this enormous growth of Christianity in the Global South where more than 60% of the Christians now live (Jorgensen et al 2011:20).

Since the (controversial) conversion of Emperor Constantine, and the dawning of what can be termed Christendom, the story of Christianity has inexorably been linked to the West and it increasingly appeared to be the story of a Western religion (Kalu 2007: 23). This perception continues to dominate African thinking into the twenty-first century. Johnson & Ross (2009) concur that the Global North was 95% Christian in 1910. "In 1910 nine out of the ten countries with the most Christians were in the North" (Johnson & Ross 2009:8). However, appearances can be deceiving when it comes to Christianity's contemporary Western dominance, and it is a well-documented fact that there "are communities in Africa that could claim involvement in the Jesus movement from its inception till today" (Kalu 2007:23). It has been said that when Christianity abandoned its Palestinian roots, its new home within the Greco-Roman Empire included North Africa (known then as the Maghreb). Later, Christianity shifted its centre of gravity to what was then known as Barbarian Europe and adopted the norms of that society in the hope of repackaging the Gospel in Western imagery. Recently, commentators have observed yet another shift in the gravity of global Christianity; a shift from the Northern to Southern hemisphere. Figure 8 (below) was taken from David Barrett's

annual statistics in his World Encyclopaedia (2000) and it reads as follows:

YEAR	WORLD POP.	CHRISTIAN	NON-WEST	WEST
1900	1.620 bil.	34%	14%	86%
1950	2,510 bil.	34%	36%	64%
1970	3.696 bil.	34%	44%	56%
1990	5,266 bil.	33%	56%	44%
2000	6,055 bil.	32%	60%	40%

Figure 8 Barrett's stats

Given the current growth rate, one can expect these figures to be much larger now, however, to illustrate this point further; “There are more Anglicans in Nigeria ... than in England and Europe put together” (Kalu 2007:24). More recently, Johnson & Ross (2009:8) argue:

The Global North was 95% Christian in 1910. Five regions in the Global South, all the recipients of intense Christian missionary activity over the preceding centuries, were also at least 90% Christian in 1910. By 2010 only three of the ‘most Christian’ regions of 1910 (Central America, South America and Polynesia) are still at least 90% Christian, and each one is in the Global South... Of the countries with the fastest Christian growth between 1910 and 2010, six were in Africa and four in Asia... (Johnson & Ross 2009:8)

Figure 9 (below), taken from Johnson & Ross (2009:7), indicates the numbers and growth of religions in terms of their respective global adherents. Christianity has maintained its majority in the global religious sphere, the growth of Islam (22.4% against 12.6%), Hinduism (13.7% against 12.7%) and Agnosticism (9.3% against 0.2%). These growth figures represent a great challenge to the Church in this era and again reflect the initial effects of Western/ Northern Christianity’s demise.

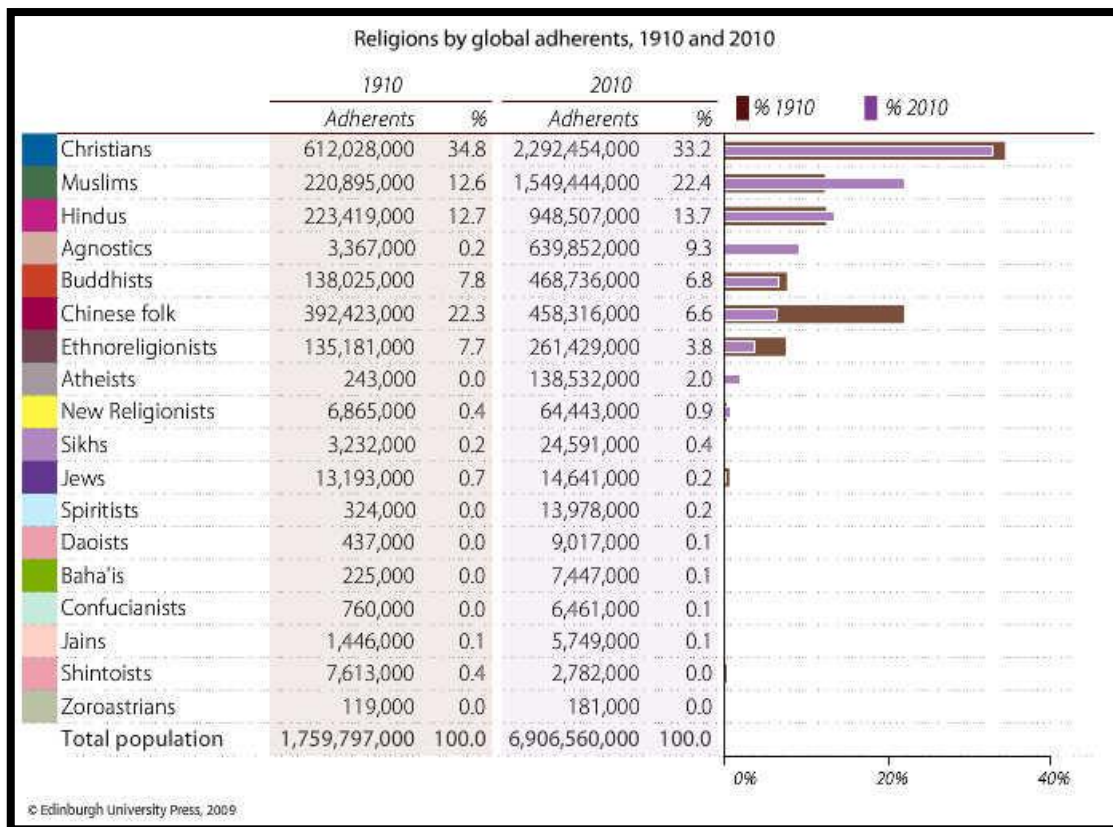


Figure 9 Religion by global adherents, 1910 and 2010

Today, one can easily speak of what may be termed a 'Western religious recession' (Sanneh 2003: 3-4, Sannah 2008: 89), where Christianity has lost significant influence and support in countries once founded on Christian, perhaps Biblical foundations (cf. figure 10 below for more detail). Johnson & Ross (2009:8) describe the severity of this situation for Western Christianity; in 1910 nine out of the ten countries with the most Christians were in the North. Figure 10 (below), drawn from Johnson & Ross (2009:7), indicates the full extent of the situation Christianity faces. If it had not been for the phenomenal growth experienced in the Global South, specifically Africa and Asia, Christianity's share of the global religious sphere would have been significantly lower, as the bulk of the growth in Christianity largely came from the Global South.

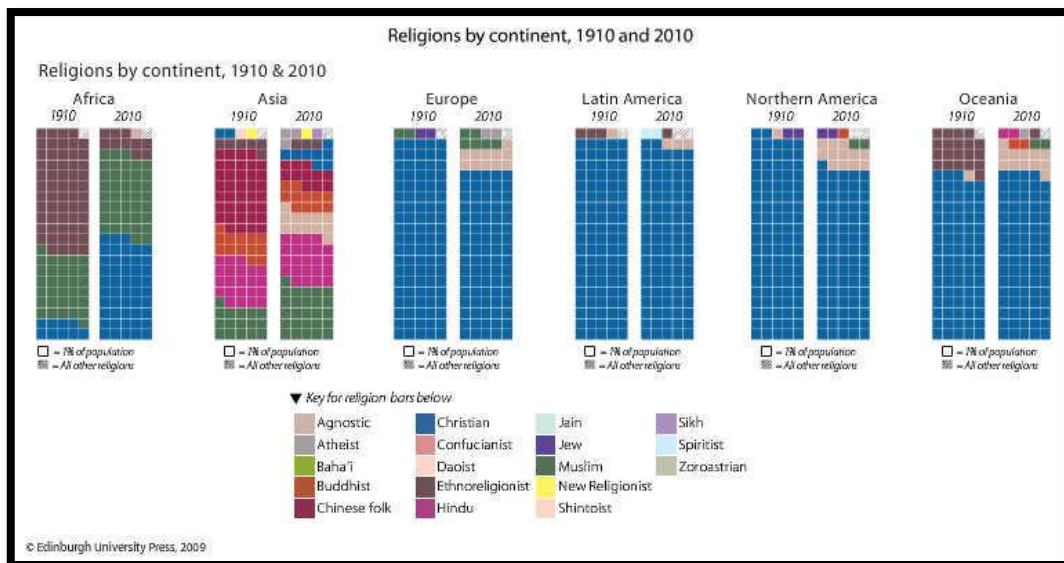


Figure 10 Religions by continent, 1910 and 2010

The shift of Christianity Southward over the following century (1910- 2010) has left the USA, Russia and Germany as the only Northern countries on the list...” Sadly, many European cathedrals once filled with passionate believers are being run as museums, restaurants and some have even been sold to Muslims. Illustrative of this fact; the percentage of Christians in all of 1910’s ‘top ten’ in Christian population (except Poland) declined greatly between 1910 and 2010. None of the mission sending countries other than USA, Russia and Germany were among the fastest growing in the last century (Johnson & Ross 2009).

In stark contrast, Christianity in Africa (as in the Global South) is thriving and is here to stay. Johnson & Ross (2009:8) remind us that between 1910 and 2010: “Middle Africa also saw phenomenal growth in its Christian population, going from 1.1% in 1910 to 81.7% in 2010. Africa as a continent grew from 9.4% Christian in 1910 to 47.9% in 2010. This growth is highly significant. Although three of the

other four regions that were less than 10% Christian in 1910 remain below that level in 2010, the Christian percentages increased over the century, except in Northern Africa”. Figure 11 (below), courtesy of Johnson & Ross (2009:7), clearly indicates the majority religion regionally throughout the world. This map not only highlights the concern of the growth of Islam and Hinduism, but also places this challenge, from a geographical perspective, in the 10/40 window!

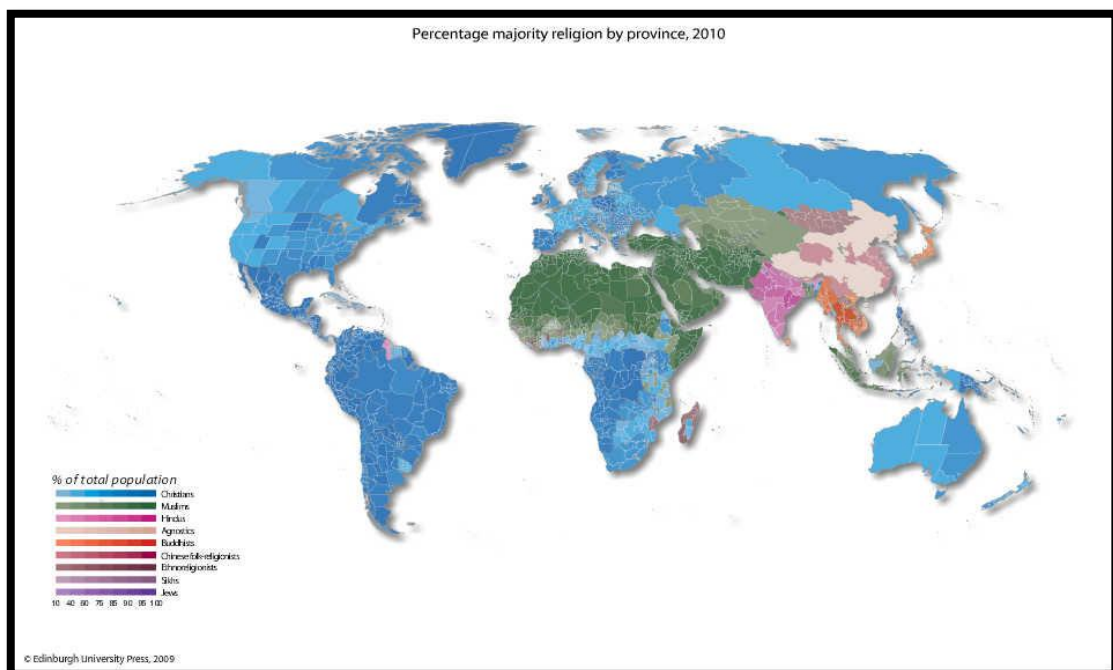


Figure 11 Percentage majority religion by province in 2010

It is clear that Christianity will exercise greater influence upon global Christian trends in years to come thus shaping the face of the future of the Christian faith worldwide - with strong Afro-centric and Asiatic overtones. In particular, Christianity in Africa has grown significantly since its first introduction after the time of Christ. In fact, it is a fallacy to assume that Christianity came to Africa only through the exploits of missionaries in the later centuries, and even a greater fallacy to believe that its growth is due to their work alone. Lamin Sanneh argues that the clue to the

tremendous growth of African Christianity during this century was the logic of the *translatability of the Christian message or Gospel* into African vernacular languages (cf. Maluleke 2007).

What are some of the other factors (social and religious) that have led to the expansion and development of the Global South or the 'Majority World Church' (previously known as the two-thirds world Church)? Ruiz (2005), in the Lausanne Occasional Paper No. 44, recognizes that although the full reasons for such growth will remain unknown, there are some highlights that are of importance to our understanding of Christianity's recent growth in Africa and the Global South particularly:

1. It is clear that there has been *divine intervention*. In His sovereignty, God has moved in the Majority World Church bringing salvation to millions of people.
2. The Majority World Church has generally *remained open to the work of the Holy Spirit*, looking very intensely for God's powerful manifestations and being willing to be an instrument of His grace.
3. In this context of openness and searching, *intercessory prayer* has been crucial throughout the Majority World Church and has been the driving engine of the current awakening.
4. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit has enabled *evangelism to be carried out with signs and miracles*, confirming the preached message and meeting physical, emotional and spiritual needs.
5. We understand that it has also been a time for harvest, that is, we are reaping the fruits of the seeds that others sowed in the past. In Africa *both Western Missionaries and Indigenous evangelists* have had a significant role to play.
6. The *openness to the spiritual world* and to extraordinary manifestations coincided with, and in some way, got ahead of the contemporary post-modern mentality. Such religiosity would have been unacceptable fifty

years ago.

7. The emergence of an *indigenous national leadership*, committed to the mission of the Church, has allowed the presentation of a more contextual and relevant message in many parts of the majority world Church.
8. The Church has involved all its members in its mobilising strategy. The *active participation* in the different Church ministries is high, especially in evangelistic activities.
9. The significant *use of the media*, though people in these regions are not professional enough to use them, has contributed to a massive presence in society.
10. With regard to *Church unity*, not all the countries have advanced to the same level with their unity process. This issue is one of the most relevant in several contexts, especially in Africa.

The Lausanne Movement, as reflected in the LOP No. 44, (cf. Ruiz 2005:8) recognises the achievements and strengths of the Majority World Church, however, they also share their concern for some weaknesses that present a great danger to the Church's health and to mission. Ruiz (2005:8) states: "We see some *spiritual superficiality* showed in lack of commitment to the demands and values of the Kingdom of God".

The Gospel is affecting the *emotional and spiritual* areas of people's lives, but not the totality of them. The status of the Church and success of the ministry is evaluated by *numerical growth*, leaving aside other dimensions of growth that are characteristic of a mature Church. Pastoral leadership is frequently lacking in *theological preparation*, which diminishes its discernment of God's truth.

An emotional, superficial, *unreflective evangelical-religiosity* is being built. There has been emphasis on *doing* rather than on *being* and people are valued for what they do instead of who they are. This represents a ‘wake-up call’ for the African Church; we have not yet arrived and there is much still to accomplish.

Although no one can deny the phenomenal growth of African Christianity, and the contributing factors, there has, historically speaking, been much debate around the transmission of the Christian faith in Africa. However, no matter how the Christian faith came to us, it is undeniable; Christianity in Africa has resulted in the fastest growing, most controversial, most dynamic, and most schismatic Churches in the whole world. It is safe to say that all communities of Christians in Africa (south of the Sahara) are experiencing rapid growth, including Roman Catholics and Protestant denominations, as well as African independent-type Churches. This growth has, in fact, proved to far surpass all predictions by Colonial missionaries.

Although African nations face very serious problems such as poverty and disease, ethnic hostilities, non-democratic governments, and religious persecution, African people are still turning to Jesus by the scores every day.

Shenk and Parker (2004:8,9) speak of the great opportunity that this dynamic Church growth presents and they aptly present several observations that characterize the opportunity at the present time, for what has been understood to be barriers to evangelization can be transformed into new possibilities. In the abovementioned LOP (2004:8,9) Shenk and Parker state:

- There is no context where the Church cannot take root. But wherever it is planted the Church is called to be in but not of the world.
- New forms and expressions of the Church are emerging in order to reach groups of people for whom the conventional Church has not been an option.
- Traditional Churches can experience renewal and be transformed into effective channels of witness.
- The fullness of the Gospel is required to respond to these diverse situations.

This is indeed good news for the growth possibilities of Christianity in the Global South as it expands into new and indigenous forms. Who knows what the future holds for African Christianity? Current trends are encouraging. However, given these trends, where will we be in the next 10–50 years? Philip Jenkins, in his landmark book “The Next Christendom”, provides a scholarly, and what I believe to be a concise, picture of the future of the Christian faith on the African continent (in the area which he terms the Global South). The picture painted is one of great encouragement. It is easy to look at the statistics and feel satisfied, yet in reality, there is much work to be done within the next generation that will leave a lasting legacy for generations to come in Africa.

Figure 12 (below) (extrapolated from Jenkins’ book “The Next Christendom”) details the numbers of Christians worldwide from around A.D. 500 till A.D. 1500. These figures highlight the first paradigm shift that occurred within Christianity; that of moving from an Asiatic centred faith to a Euro-centric faith. Around A.D. 500 there were around 21.2 million believers in Asia, representing the largest bloc of Christians in relation to the general populace at the time. Europe had the second

largest Christian contingent with around 14.2 million believers and Africa trailed behind with only around 8 million believers by A.D 500.

Continent	500 AD	1000 AD	1200 AD	1500 AD
Africa	8 mil	5 mil	2.5 mil	1.3 mil
Asia	21.2 mil	16.8 mil	21 mil	3.4 mil
Europe/Russia	14.2 mil	28.6 mil	46.6 mil	76.3 mil

Figure 12 Jenkin's stats 1

Since Christianity's expansion in Africa under Colonial rule, there has been yet another significant, perhaps paradigmatic, shift that occurred. The Christian faith had not only taken root on the African continent, but it blossomed. Figure 13 (below) illustrates the immense growth of Christianity, as well as Islam, in Africa, and projects where, given current growth rates, we might be by 2025.

Adherents %	1900 AD	1970 AD	2000 AD	2025 AD (Projection)
Christians	9.2% (9.9 mil)	40.3% (144 mil)	46 % (360 mil)	48.8 % (634 mil)
Muslims	32 % (34.5 mil)	40.1 % (143 mil)	40.5 % (317 mil)	40 % (519 mil)
Ethno-religionists	58.2 % (62.7 mil)	18.9% (67.4 mil)	12.3 % (96.8 mil)	9.7 % (126 mil)

Figure 13 Jenkin's stats 2

Over a period of 100 years, *Christianity has grown from 9.2% of the population of Africa to a majority 48.8%*. In terms of numbers, Christianity grew from 9.9 million adherents in the early 1900's to a staggering 360 million adherents to the Christian faith in A.D. 2000. Islam's progress is significant to note and, although the growth rate during the same period has not been as sharp, this should be cause for serious concern among Christians. Today, the largest Christian communities in Africa can be located south of the Sahara while the greatest Muslim communities lie further north of the equator. However, no matter how one sees it, it is unavoidably clear that *Islam presents the single most significant religious challenge to the spread of Christianity in Africa* and must be engaged in a healthy manner to ensure the continued exponential growth rate of Christianity in Africa. Christianity came to Africa before Islam and will surely be the last to leave. The growth rate of the African Church has been encouraging, yet at the same time a matter for concern, as the depth of its permeation within sub-Saharan African society can be questioned. The rise and phenomenal growth of Pentecostal and Charismatic-type Churches in Africa should not be forgotten. Cox (1995) speaks of the importance of this movement globally in his book; 'Fire From Heaven', where he details what he terms a religious renaissance of a Pentecostal nature that has global reach and ramifications (cf. Cox 1995:1, 2). They have contributed significantly to increased growth figures within the last half-century. Sanneh (2008) makes a pertinent observation when he states that Charismatic Christianity has been the driving engine of the Third Awakening and is largely responsible for the dramatic shift in the gravity of religion. The statistics reflect the character of the situation. In 1970 there were over 72 million Pentecostals/ Charismatics; in 2005, nearly 590 million. Projections estimate that by 2025, Pentecostals/ Charismatics

will number nearly 800 million. "... Pentecostal Christianity may become the most widespread form of the religion, with as yet unquantifiable effects on mainline Churches and on global politics" (Sanneh 2008:275). The rise and growth of independent Pentecostal/Charismatic type Churches presents a further challenge to Christianity in Africa that needs to be continually addressed for the furtherance of the Kingdom of God in Africa.

Figure 14 and 15 (see below), taken from Johnson & Ross (2009:34), indicate something of concern to the church in Africa - in the past decade (2000-2010), there has been a sharp decline in the growth of African Christianity throughout the continent. The first diagram shows the growth of Christianity from 1910-2010 and indicates a healthy average of Christian growth specifically in Southern, Central, East and Western Africa - an average of around 14% or above.

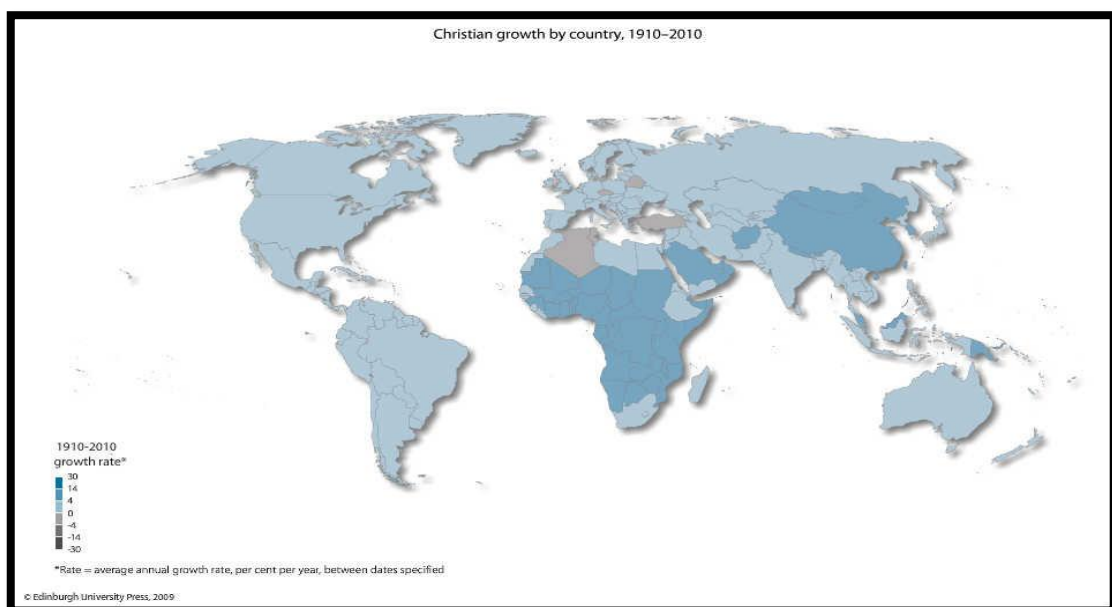


Figure 14 Christian growth by country, 1910- 2010

Figure 15 (below) indicates the slowdown of Christian growth experienced from 2000-2010. According to Johnson & Ross (2009:34), Christian growth rates in

Africa range to a maximum of around 7 % with small patches of growth experienced in Western Africa and a declining Christian population in North Africa.

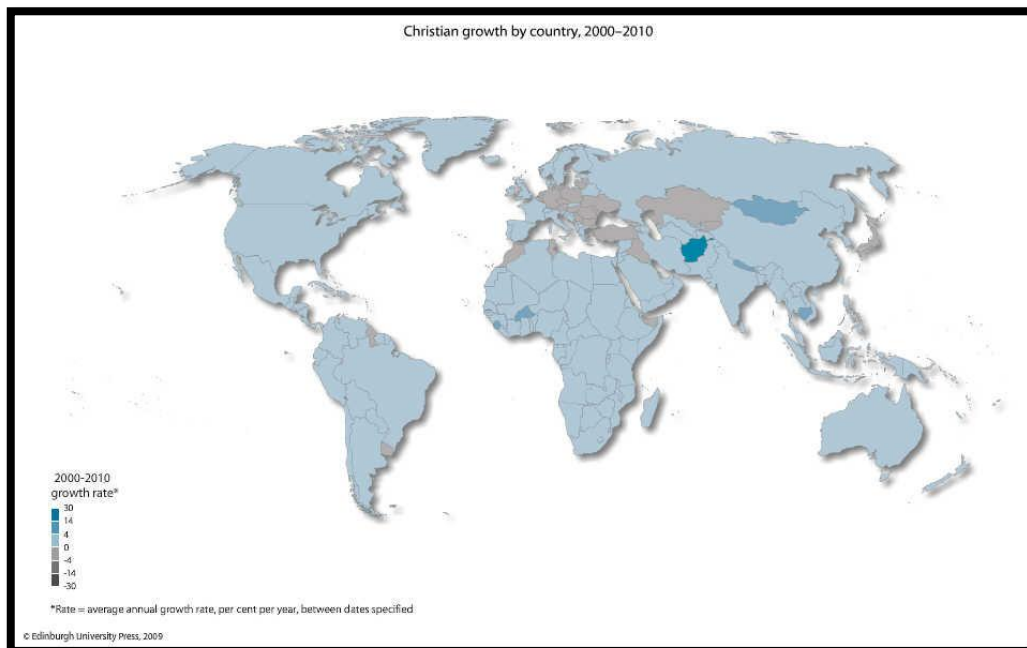


Figure 15 Christian growth by country, 2000-2010

What does the future hold for Christianity, indeed for all global religions? The maps below, courtesy of Johnson & Ross (2009:44, 45) indicate the extent of global religious growth - at first glance the picture does not look too different from what was experienced in 2010.

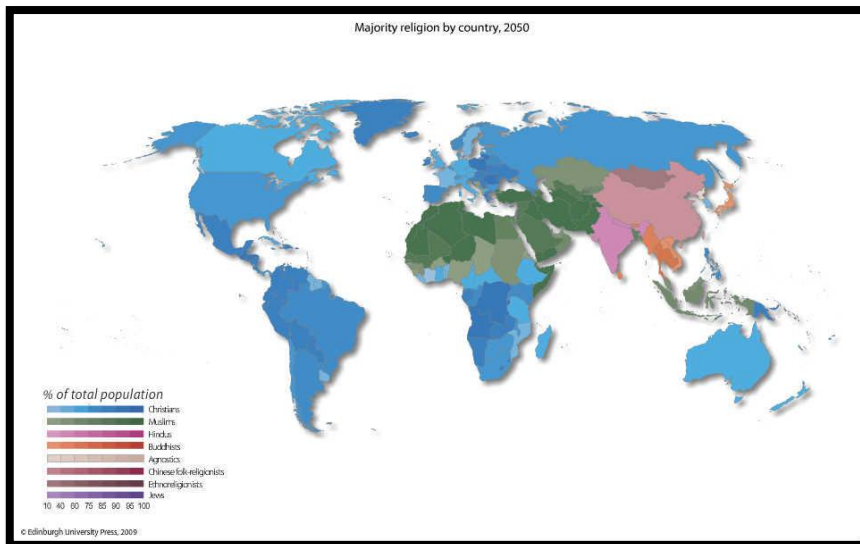


Figure 16 Majority religion by country, 2050

Johnson & Ross (2009:44) reflecting on the predicted state of religion in 2050, (see Figure 17 to the right) note Islam’s growth is due to increase in keeping up with the total world population growth rate – and exceeding it. Much of this growth is by new births and larger families than typical Western ones.

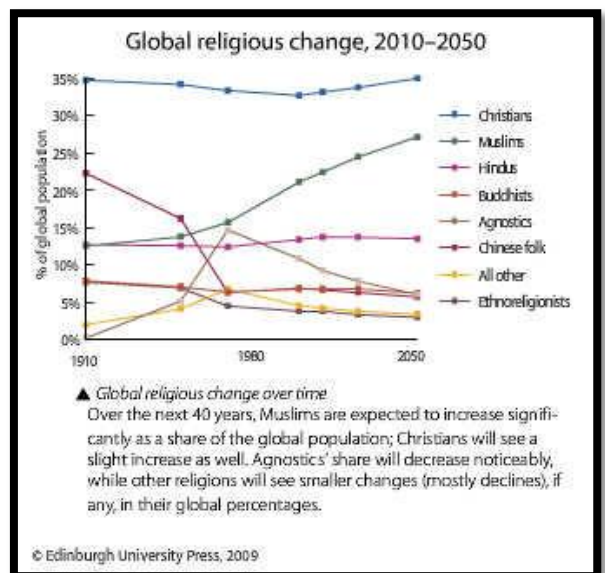


Figure 17 Global religious change, 2010- 2050

Furthermore, Johnson & Ross (2009:44, 45) list the top ten countries in terms of *Christian population* (note that I have adjusted figures below for illustrative purposes):

1. USA (Estimated 301 million)
2. China (Estimated 225 million)

3. Brazil (Estimated 222 million)
4. DR Congo (Estimated 179 million)
5. Nigeria (Estimated 139 million)
6. Philippines (Estimated 125 million)
7. Mexico (Estimated 123 million)
8. India (Estimated 114 million)
9. Ethiopia (Estimated 112 million)
10. Russia (Estimated 91 million)

Likewise, Johnson & Ross (2009:44, 45) list the top ten countries in terms of Muslim population, which poses a significant strategic challenge to the growth and spread of Christianity in years to come (note that I have adjusted figures below for illustrative purposes):

1. Pakistan (Estimated 281 million)
2. India (Estimated 250 million)
3. Bangladesh (Estimated 228 million)
4. Indonesia (Estimated 228 million)
5. Nigeria (Estimated 139 million)
6. Egypt (Estimated 108 million)
7. Iran (Estimated 98 million)
8. Turkey (Estimated 96 million)
9. Afghanistan (Estimated 79 million)
10. Ethiopia (Estimated 62 million)

Figure 18 below (see Johnson & Ross 2009:44) indicates the predicted growth figures of global religions by 2050 in comparison with the current (2010) trend. Islam's rate of growth (despite its increase in the share of world population) will have slowed down considerably between 2010-2050 as compared to 1910-2010 - with a growth rate of 1.20% compared with Christianity's growth rate of 0.85%. This is indicative of Islam's larger family units and continued growth in Islamic regions as opposed to the sharp decline in Western family unit size, favouring smaller families. Islam's will continue to strengthen in North Africa and particularly in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Indonesia, which are predicted to be Islamic strongholds by 2050.

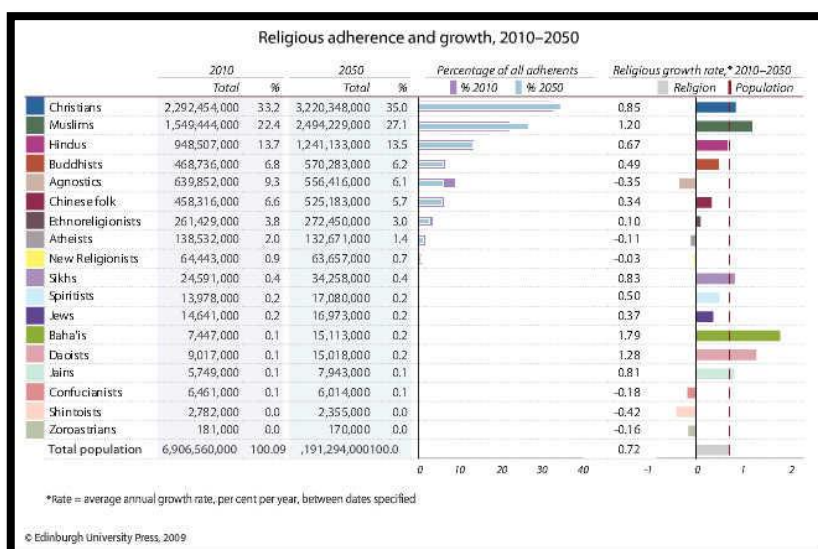


Figure 18 Religious adherence and growth, 2010- 2050

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Christianity within the context of the twenty-first century is no longer a Western-dominated religion; there has been a definite shift in influence and growth, which continues to dominate the Christian scene presently. Christianity today is global, prolific and diverse, extending to both hemispheres. We can celebrate this fact, especially as Christians within the Global South as what has become evident within this era of growth is the phenomenal growth rate experienced within the Global South, of which a large proportion can be attributed to Charismatic or Pentecostal-type churches. It's undeniable; the face of world Christianity has changed dramatically over the last century and continue to change at a fast rate. Traditional Christian strongholds no longer have the power or influence they had in previous generations, and traditional/ mainline churches continue to decline in growth in favour of newer types of churches.

This chapter highlights the fact that Christianity was not always a prolific, global religion celebrated in both Northern and Southern Hemispheres within a multiplicity of nations, languages, people groups, cultures and worldviews through analyzing data on population statistics and growth rates. Jenkins (2007) confirms that in a century we have seen an epic shift whereby the Christian faith is no longer only a European or American phenomenon. As my research indicates, a shift in praxis and mission is on the increase which is confirmed in movements such as WCRC's and Lausanne as well as through Vatican 2 (A Roman Catholic perspective) which states: "If the church is to be the church today, it must also share and continue in God's healing, fulfilling, challenging, and redemptive work. It must truly be God's missionary People, the Body of Christ in the world, the

presence of the Spirit of God's Temple, God's building" (Bevans & Schroeder 2011:1, 10). This chapter highlights the extent and importance of such a shift in the gravity of the Christian faith for the mission of the church of the future (presently).

Although this growth should be celebrated and applauded, Christians should not become complacent, as Islam particularly, and other world religions, continue to grow in size and influence in a continent where the depth of Christian permeation and commitment is questionable. In Africa, particularly, Islam presents a formidable challenge to Christian mission who exert influence in education, economics and politics. Although their numbers are not large in Southern Africa, their influence is great and present an ever-growing challenge to the church as it engages in mission set against the backdrop of the phenomenal growth of Christianity on the African continent.

CHAPTER 6

A SUMMARY OF THE TIMES WE LIVE IN

6.1 Rapid change

Over the last five decades or so we have seen a world unfold that is unlike any we could have imagined, and for which no one could have completely prepared us (Cole 2010). The sociologist, Manuel Castells, certainly agrees with the above sentiment expressed by Cole. His three-volume series, *'The information age: Economy, society and culture'* (2004) is just such an attempt to describe this complex world- one that he defines as the network society, a world where many suffer from an acute identity crisis. The following quote from Castells (2004:1) helps to put into more concrete focus what the researcher claims is taking shape:

This is indeed a time of change, regardless of how we time it. In the last quarter of the twentieth century, a technological revolution, centred around information, transformed the way we think, we produce, we consume, we trade, we manage, we communicate, we live, we die, we make war, and we make love. A dynamic, global economy has been constituted around the planet, linking up valuable people and activities from all over the world, while switching off from the networks of power and wealth, people and territories dubbed as irrelevant from the perspective of the dominant interests (Castells 2004:1).

Within this relatively short period of time, there have been quantum leaps in technology that constantly change the 'face' of the world. We are entering into an era of unprecedented, rapid and dynamic change that Cole describes as paradigmatic. Describing the importance of this shift (or upgrade as Cole metaphorically suggests): "There have been two major upgrades in church formation, since Acts, that have changed the entire system. The first occurred dramatically during the rule of the Emperor Constantine.... I believe the second is occurring now" (Cole 2010:5). Cole (2010) suggests that this upgrade may even allow the church of the future to rise above the early church. After all, would God

not want us to grow and develop in better ways as His people? Did Jesus not say we would do greater things than he did (cf. Jn. 14: 12)?

With the advent of the internet and the growing global village even third-world, emerging economies in the Global South have felt the need to accelerate their growth to compete globally, and keep up with the trend. Today, we have easy access to more information, research, products and ideas than at any point in history. We have undergone what many are calling an *information revolution*, where we can research the most complex topic, plan an entire vacation online, inclusive of flights, hotel bookings and car-hire, and still have time to sift through information regarding tourist hotspots to visit while on vacation. Imagine the impact the Apostle Paul might have had if he lived in our Global Village today. Cole (2010) reiterates the fact that change in the last twenty years has been far greater than at any time in history. Cole (2010:15) states:

Population has increased at an exponential rate. Advances in technology have changed the very way we relate to one another. During the student revolt in Tiananmen Square, footage of a single man stopping a line of tanks symbolized the resistance. During the demonstrations in Freedom Square in Tehran in 2009, there was not one photo but thousands of posts on Twitter, Facebook pictures, and cell phone camera footage instantly sent all over the world. The entire world mourned as it watched a young woman, Neda Agha-Soltan, dying in the streets from a bullet wound. The world has become a smaller place, with immediate connection to anybody at anytime (Cole 2010:15).

The world yesterday seemed simpler, less complex and more predictable. The world we face today is fundamentally different from the one we encountered yesterday. There is no denying it, and, unfortunately, there's no turning back. A few years ago Thom Rainer and Eric Geiger wrote a book entitled "*Simple Church*"

that quickly became one of the biggest best-sellers ever in its genre. Simple church is revolutionary in its approach and claims to transform ministry through simplification! However, why has this book been so popular? Honestly, people, regardless of whether they are from the Global North or Global South are looking for one thing. Pastors, church leaders, missionaries and ordinary Christians (even nominal ones) are craving *simplicity*. Simple Church. Simple life. However, this can only be achieved if we take seriously the quintessence of Christianity. In other words, the intrinsic and most refined essence of living is in simple church and simple mission. After all, *mission is the quintessence of Christianity!* In the table below, Cole (2010:9) highlights some of the changes/ shifts (upgrades) between the existing and emerging paradigms of ministry described in his book “Church 3.0” as Church 2.0 and Church 3.0 (cf. figure 19 on next page):

	Church 2.0	Church 3.0
<i>Seating when Gathered</i>	Rows	<i>Circles</i>
<i>Environment</i>	Anonymous	Intimate
<i>Leadership source</i>	Institutions of higher learning	Harvest fields
<i>Growth</i>	Addition	Multiplication
<i>Results</i>	An audience is attracted	A spiritual army is mobilized
<i>Ministry practitioners</i>	The ordained	The ordinary
<i>Resources</i>	Imported to the harvest	Discovered in the harvest
<i>Primary leadership role</i>	Pastoral teacher	APEST team (apostles; prophets; evangelists; shepherds; teachers)
<i>Learning lab</i>	Classroom-based education	Trench-based education
<i>Cost</i>	Expensive	Inexpensive
<i>Ministry setting</i>	The meeting place	The marketplace
<i>Success</i>	Full seating capacity	Full sending capacity
<i>Church posture</i>	Passive	Active
<i>Attraction</i>	Felt need programming	Life transformation
<i>Model of Church life</i>	Academic	Family

Figure 19 Cole Church 3.0

Along with the accelerated global changes discussed above, many both inside and outside of the Church are asking what Christianity's role and importance is in

society. The answer to this question will undoubtedly be the great determining factors of the Church's success in our age (What Cole describes as Church 3.0). The role of the Church in society was an important consideration at the 24th General Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches when they met in Accra, Ghana in 2004. A statement accepted by the General Council states; "The groaning of creation and the cries of the poor and the marginalized are calling us to conversion for and recommitment to mission" (WARC Accra Confession 2004, Article 5⁷). These are strong words that carry the connotation of complete change and total commitment to mission. However, in order for this to take place there is a great need for a reinvestigation of the role and importance of the Church in the world today. Mission-mindedness is no longer enough, it was never enough, and there is a need for missional churches! Cole (2010:11) pertinently states:

The change to Church 3.0 is a shift from a program-driven and clergy-led institutionalized approach of church to one that is relational, simple, and viral in its spread. Instead of seeing church as something that serves its people, church becomes people who serve God, one another, and a hurting world. The change is from an organization to an organism that is healthy and reproductive. Church is no longer a place to go to, but a people to belong to. Church is no longer an event to be at, but a family to be a part of. Church is not a program to reach out to the world, but a people that bring the kingdom of God with them into a lost world, with a contagious spirit (Cole 2010:11).

Lamin Sanneh (2008:37, 130) confirms that we are currently in the middle of a major cultural shift and realignment with implications that are only now becoming clear. What is not always obvious to those of us in the Global South, especially Africa, is that the 'Western' Church in Europe and North America is facing

⁷ The WARC' Accra Confession is downloadable from <http://www.ucc.org/justice/globalization/pdfs/ACCRA-Confession.pdf>

immense challenges that if not met face-on will see the inevitable death of Christianity in the 'West' within the foreseeable future.

These words seem quite harsh, as the Global North has contributed enormously to the formation and growth of Christianity within the Global South. However, there has been a clear shift in the gravity of Christianity that has seen increased growth in countries south of the equator. It has become clear that in the near future the Global South will overtake the growth of the Global North. Christians in the Global South will outnumber Christians in the Global North 2.5 to 1 (cf. Jenkins 2007:102). We are moving through a period of volatile, discontinuous change (described accurately by van Gelder 2007); "our world is dominated by the extreme, the unknown, and the very improbable ..." (Taleb 2007:27).

William Easum (Erre 2009:19) pointedly states:

We live in a time unlike any other time that any living person has known. It's not merely that things are changing. Change itself has changed, thereby changing the rules by which we live... there is more to this change than simply a linear extrapolation of rapid change and complexity. Quantum leaps are happening that are nothing like evolution. They remove us almost totally from our previous context. Simply learning to do old chores faster or to be able to adapt old forms to more complex situations no longer produces the desired results... running harder and harder in ministry will not work in this new world... (Erre 2009:19).

Established churches are becoming increasingly ineffective because our past has not prepared us for ministry in the future. The discontinuity we have experienced because of these quantum leaps is comparable to the experience of the residents of East Berlin when the Berlin Wall came down. Nothing in their past prepared

them for life without the Wall. Very little in our past has prepared us for ministry in today's world.

The church in Africa, although seen as one of the fastest growing communities of believers around the world, cannot immerse itself in pride, thinking that the challenges that the West are facing will not affect the spread of Christianity in Africa - despite the glowing projections. For, unless we heed the call for a re-investigation of the essence of our faith, we will soon find ourselves in a similar situation to that of the Global North. What does tomorrow hold for Africa? What does tomorrow hold for Southern African Christianity?

The Church - especially in emergent Africa - inevitably, has to change. Conventional Christianity, in its Colonial, post-Colonial and post-missionary packaging, has often compromised the radical story of Jesus in favour of familiar clichés, pat answers to pressing questions, and domesticated and rigid programmes that perhaps tie in with attractional (come to the Church and have all your spiritual needs met) church models employed as church growth mechanisms. This is certainly true of BUSA's focus in the 1990's. To speak truthfully, we have often not done justice to the biblical narrative in our attempts to 'do church'. Therefore, we must begin with a radical assertion that the current trends within African Christianity, although seen as successful yesterday and today, will not suffice for tomorrow. We humbly recognize the need for a new map in this new world, to navigate effectively and to go boldly where few have been - certainly in Africa.

Although Christian mission is always anchored, in fidelity to the past it remains challenged to fidelity in the present. It must preserve, defend and proclaim the constants of the church's traditions; at the same time it must respond creatively and boldly to the contexts in which it finds itself. Christian history is in essence the story of the Church in mission. It is, to borrow the eloquent phrase of Harvie Conn, a story of the encounter of the Eternal Word with changing worlds (cf. Bevans & Schroeder 2006). It is in the 'emerging' new world where "... society is predisposed against anything that smells of our cultural past, including Christianity and its morality" (Brantley 2005:30). This is essentially true for post-Colonial Africa as well; society is predisposed to resist anything that reeks of Colonial Christian forms. For this reason, many people on a global scale are engaging in a conversation about what Christianity is for and what Church (in Africa, for Africa) can be and do (van Gelder 2007). The conversation about the Church today is indeed changing; there is a contemporary rediscovery that the Gospel is indeed good news for the world (McLaren 2007). The Gospel is good news for men and women (cf. Mickelson 2004), Blacks, Whites, Indians and Coloureds. For the Tswana, South Africans, Nigerians etc. The Gospel is good news for isiXhosa, Yao, Bakgalagadi; it is good news for all creation. N.T. Wright's latest book ("Simply Jesus", 2011) confirms today's rediscovery of the Gospel:

Jesus - the Jesus we might discover if we really looked... is larger, more disturbing, more urgent than we had ever imagined. We have successfully managed to hide behind other questions and to avoid the huge, world-shaking challenge of Jesus' central claim and achievement. It is we, the churches, who have been the real reductionists. We have reduced the kingdom of God to private piety; the victory of the cross to comfort for the conscience; Easter itself to a happy, escapist ending after a sad, dark tale. Piety, conscience, and ultimate happiness are important, but not nearly as important as Jesus himself (Wright 2011:1).

The realization that this good news extends further than our own personal salvation to *positive change in society*, resonates with the contemporary conversation about the Church. McKnight (2011:2) has a similar conviction to N.T. Wright, although they may not always fully agree regarding outcomes and tradition, I feel they represent fair, balanced questioning of the nature of the Gospel on both sides of the Christianized West/ Global North:

Contemporary evangelicals have built a 'salvation culture' but not a 'gospel culture.' Evangelicals have reduced the gospel to the message of personal salvation. This book makes a plea for us to recover the old gospel as that which is still new and still fresh. The book stands on four arguments: that the gospel is defined by the apostles in 1 Corinthians 15 as the completion of the Story of Israel in the saving Story of Jesus; that the gospel is found in the Four Gospels; that the gospel was preached by Jesus; and that the sermons in the Book of Acts are the best example of gospeling in the New Testament (McKnight 2011:2).

Another important element to the broader Evangelical mission scene is expressed by the Lausanne Theological working group, who express their desire for the outcomes of their gathering in Cape Town 2010:

Cape Town 2010 must call Evangelicals to recognise afresh the biblical affirmation of God's redemptive purpose for creation itself. Integral mission means discerning, proclaiming, and living out, the biblical truth that the Gospel is God's good news, through the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ, for persons, and for society, and for creation. All three are broken and suffering because of sin; all three are included in the redeeming love and mission of God; all three must be part of the comprehensive mission of God's people (Lausanne 2011, The Cape Town Commitment).

There is an evident need for a rediscovery of the *missio Dei* (see *Bruggemann 2001; cf. Flett 2010:7-10*) and the church's role within God's Kingdom in the Global North and the Global South. A discovery, I believe, that will lead to what so many are calling the *Missional Church - a discovery of pivotal importance to the Global*

South in this era! The mission does not have a life of its own; mission exists by the being, will, intention and posture of a God who is a fountain of all sending love. The church responds to the overtures of love from the father of mission. “Mission is not something the church does, dependent on ecclesiastical management and developed according to some notion of the efficient use of resources. It is justified by neither human capacity nor historical accident...” (Flett 2010:7). It is my belief that this is not alien to us; it is deeply rooted in who we are as Christians, followers of Christ. For whether we like it or not, a paradigm shift of epic proportions has occurred, and the generations to come will see this period in church history as a massive re-evaluation of all things ‘church’. The fact remains; those churches that continue to do things the way they have always done, without discernment, will inevitably suffer from the law of diminishing returns (see Erre 2009:19). The regeneration of the church in our generation is rooted in the fact that the core of Jesus’ message is not only about eternity; Jesus’ message also relates to personal, social, and global transformation (McLaren 2007). Illustrative of McLaren’s point above, McKnight (2011) reminds contemporary readers that most of evangelism today is obsessed with getting someone to make a decision (evangelical focus). This, McKnight states is in contrast to the Apostle’s focus on making disciples. “Evangelism that focuses on decisions short circuits and... aborts the design of the gospel, while evangelism that aims at disciples slows down to offer the full gospel of Jesus and the apostles” (McKnight 2011:17). Similarly, Flett (2010:9, 10) points out that without the *missio Dei*, the mission of the church would simply be grasping at mere straws; it would be salvation by works alone. Mission is more than mere human activity, reliant on the emotion, volition and action of finite beings. Mission, rightly, belongs to God and anything

other than the mission Dei being the starting point and climax of redemptive action is no more than an impediment to the proclamation of the true gospel message (cf. Flett 2010:9).

We must prayerfully seek after new wineskins in order to engage and ‘incarnate’ the Gospel to our fragmented and increasingly fractured world (see Erre 2009:2-18). After all, *both the Gospel and church are inherently translatable*; particular, yet universal (see van Gelder 2007:16). The following quote has been most helpful to me:

One of the most important things Christians need to know about the Church is that the Church is not of ultimate importance! However, to say this is not to deny its divine origin... nevertheless, the point of the Church is not the Church itself. The Church’s foundation and continued existence are not to provide refuge from a sinful world or to provide a warm and supportive community for lonely souls, or even less to be a plank of salvation on a tempestuous sea of damnation. The point of the Church is to rather point beyond itself, to be a community that preaches, serves and witnesses to the reign of God. In doing so the Church shares and continues, through the power of the Holy Spirit, the work of its Lord. So completely does the Church live for God’s reign that, when it finally is fully established, the Church will be subsumed into its all-encompassing reality (Stuhlmüller & Senior 1983:157).

If truth be told: “Only the Kingdom... is absolute and it makes everything else relative” (Bevans & Schroeder 2006:6). Put differently; “the *missio Dei* is not something from which the Christian community can depart. Any other conception of the ground, motive and goal of mission apart from *missio Dei*’s Trinitarian location risks investing authority in historical accident and human capacity” (Flett 2010:9).

6.2 Ever-changing contexts

There is much reflection on the many challenges faced by Western Churches (even within the missional and emerging Church movements). Castell's *magnum opus*, 'The Rise of the Network Society' is of pre-eminence to any contemporary discussion on the changes that have taken place from a Western perspective, especially as it relates to the informational society and the 'IT revolution' experienced at the dawn of the second millennium (cf. Castells 2010:5f) However, it has been my experience that very little is said about the state of the African context, and the multiplicity of challenges facing African Christians. Along with this comes the affirmation that many challenges faced by 'Western Christianity' cannot be ignored; however, there is a need for African scholars to rediscover Christ within their own contexts and extrapolate relevant applications. This in itself is an evident gap in research and is problematic because of the diversity of contexts, cultures, communities and churches.

There is a need to commence with a bold recognition of the fact that the Church-in-mission today is facing a world fundamentally different from anything it faced before. Castells (2010:5), in the light of this evident IT revolution, views information technology as the entry point in analyzing the complexity of the new economy, society and culture in the making. In the light of this quantum leap, Ogne & Roehl (2008:8) rightly state that this calls for a new understanding of mission. "We live in a period of transition, on the borderline between a paradigm that no longer satisfies and one that is, to a large extent, still amorphous and opaque. A time of paradigm change is, by nature, a time of crisis... the point where danger and opportunity meet" (Bosch 2007:366).

One of those opportunities for interaction between the Global North and Global South is in the on-going conversation relating to the missional church and emerging church debate. In fact, having done some preliminary reading on the issues involved, I have become convinced that this is a global conversation regarding the same issue on different sides of the coin.

McLaren discusses his intellectual journey grappling with the concept of Post-modernism, which I have always thought was largely a Western, perhaps even generational problem. However, he states that the shift from Modernism to Post-modernism can be described as that "...from a hyper- confident Western culture to a culture full of second thoughts and profound suspicions" (2007:43, 44). Dr Mabiolo Kenzo, a Congolese Theologian assisted McLaren (2007:44) in this journey by stating:

The term postmodern was one side of a coin that had two sides, and both sides were essential parts of one emerging global conversation... Post-modernity was a key term in a conversation among the excessively confident. This concept helped... the West to understand and undermine our own colonial culture's confidence-mania and uncertainty-phobia... we in the West focused on the field of epistemology, which explores how we have rational confidence that what we call knowledge or truth is really, truly true... postcolonial was the other side of the coin, a key term in a parallel conversation among those who had been dominated and colonized by the excessively confident. The formerly colonized... were trying to rebuild a new kind of confidence among people whose confidence had been shattered and ground into the dirt through arrogant Western colonialism. They needed a restored confidence to face the ugly aftermath of centuries of domination and exploitation. They did not focus on philosophical questions of truth and epistemology, but rather on social questions of justice, which are ultimately questions about the moral uses of power. The only way ahead... was for the formerly colonizers and the formerly colonized to face both sides of the coin together, never wanting truth without justice or justice without truth (McLaren 2007:44).

I find that McLaren's comparison is helpful as it posits the concerns of both the Global North and Global South as important and interlinked - therefore, one cannot talk about one without giving equal consideration to the other. This fits in perfectly to Castells' 'network society' concept (cf. 2010:500), where "dominant functions and processes in the information age are increasingly structured around networks"; the world is more inter-connected and linked socially and culturally in the second millennium than ever before. The paradigm shift that has occurred is important- for both the Global North and South to consider, as it is a global issue pertaining to the Christian faith and deserves the attention of the worldwide Church. Therefore, the missional conversation is as relevant in Africa as it is in the postmodern world, because it represents a united call to redefine Christology (beliefs about Jesus), Missiology (Doctrine of missions) and Ecclesiology (Doctrine of the Church) in the light of Theology (Doctrine of God, Trinity) and what God is up to (*missio Dei*) as we move into the future (Eschatology).

Gibbs (cf. 2009:19-32), in his recent book; "Churchmorph", describes five megatrends currently impacting the Church in the West:

- A shift from Modernity to Post-modernity;
- A shift from the Industrial age to the Information age;
- A shift from the Christendom era to post-Christendom contexts;
- A shift from production initiatives to consumer-awareness;
- A shift from religious identity to spiritual exploration.

Although Africa has been shaped by the shifts that have happened in the West, there have been significant events and trends that have shaped the African, and specifically Southern African context, some of which can be true of most parts of developing Africa. In Africa, we have equally experienced change that has impacted and continues to impact our societies. We have moved from Colonialism

to Independence and Post-colonialism that continues, however, to be influenced by 'neo-Colonialism' which is shaping the face of the region.

We have (largely) moved from poverty to prosperity (in most cases of a select few) through industry and development (Capitalism), but recognize the need for economic diversification and greater poverty reduction among Africans. The 2010 mid-term budget reporting within South Africa has highlighted the South African Government's response to the need to tackle poverty and unemployment through innovation and industry. In order to build a better country, however, there will need to be sacrifices made along the way by various role players (labour, unions, corruption etc.). This is the desire of many African countries.

We have moved (and continue to progress) from missionized (through Mission initiated Churches) to newer forms of Church (African Independent Churches and neo-Pentecostals and Charismatic Churches that are described by Lesslie Newbigin as the 'third wave') as Christians in Africa realize their ultimate calling and the *missio Dei*. This shift can also be described theologically as a shift from a static form of Church (under Christendom) to a dynamic understanding of Church.

We have moved from the traditional era to neo-modernism where traditional values and world-views are continually challenged and corroded. We have moved from least-developed and perhaps underdeveloped to economically diverse in a relatively short period of time that, perhaps, has not allowed enough room for moral regeneration and may be the reason for much of the moral degradation in Southern African societies. We have moved from Mission Churches where historic

ties were important to specific tribes within Southern Africa and where Western ideas and praxis were unquestionably imported and thought to be correct whether or not they were contextually relevant or effective. Mission Churches often focused on Scripture, Christ and Theology where 'Spirit Churches' are more independent and are largely initiated by Africans taking their context and views seriously. These 'Churches of the Spirit' focus primarily on the Holy Spirit's work in and through the life of individual Christians and have a strong emphasis on transformation, empowerment, healing and deliverance. These Churches have proven relevant in responding to the challenging religious questions in the African heart.

There has been much talk in recent history about the missional Church as well as the emerging Church; especially from a Western, First-world perspective. There is an on-going growing global conversation that is of some importance to understand, especially in Africa. What is the missional Church? What is the emerging Church? Do these concepts have any influence over Africa? The table below is a comparison of the two interlinked concepts which will help us understand the issues at stake as there is widespread ignorance surrounding this, especially in BUSA structures. The information was adapted slightly from Eddie Gibb's recent work "ChurchMorphe" (2009:33-55).

	Missional church	Emerging church
Origins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most of the coherent development that arose out of the Gospel and Our Culture Network was inspired by a small group of scholars who further developed the thinking of Lesslie Newbigin, whose concern was for churches in Europe at the time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This has been classified as a renewal movement rather than a missional one, as the organising principle is worship and theology in a postmodern setting. Some in this church say that their emerging communities are missional; however, many are reactionary in that they are orientated towards what their community is emerging from, rather than what they are emerging to.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This church arose out of the fact that the Church, particularly in Europe, had been largely discredited as the result of a lack of evidence of transformed behaviour in the lives of those who claimed to be Christians. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This church can be found within historical denominations, although it is represented by varying new networks and an array of independent initiatives. Its major strength lies at the grassroots level at which it operates within churches.
Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This church emphasises the formulation of a 'domestic missiology'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The theory behind this church arises out of praxis and thus it tends to be diverse and less coherent.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The West has become a mission field again, necessitating the placement of God back into the centre of communities and allowing him to shape and give meaning to life and mission. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This church embraces a wide range of practices and theological antecedents.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It provides a strong challenge to churches (particularly in the USA, Europe and Australia) with a firm theological undergirding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is more spontaneous in nature and is a bottom-up movement, as opposed to one that is a top-down, more orchestrated movement.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The concept of mission as the quintessence of the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This church represents local initiatives and strategic

	<p>Church is the essential contribution and emphasis of this movement.</p>	<p>alliances and is thus difficult to categorise.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It promotes a strong focus on the 'being sent' nature of the Church. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is non-confessional and is not always defined by a 'statement of faith' to which all are expected to subscribe. It is typically non-denominational and rather focuses on being multi-denominational.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This church focuses on the life and ministry of Jesus in and through the Kingdom of God. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emerging church issues are being popularised through Web-based connectivity that reaches beyond denominational structures and traditions; thus, it is becoming increasingly ecumenical.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is not affiliated to any centralised institutions which could block growth through control. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This church often can be clearer on what it does not stand for than what it does stand for (i.e. it is reactionary), which has received some criticism – largely from conservative circles.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In this church, <i>communitas</i> is viewed as superlative to community, in that the most vigorous forms of community are those that come together in the context of a shared ordeal or definition by a God-sized mission. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This church emphasises the role of lay preachers in church life and practice to represent an affirmation of the priesthood of all believers, whereas, the traditional clergy's role is questioned.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This church follows a deductive approach to its ministry. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This church follows an inductive approach to its ministry.
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This church struggles to translate theory into practice within the local church context and has therefore created some 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This church is very diverse and – as its name implies – is still 'emerging', which means that, in many ways, it is still ambiguous in nature.

	confusion, as missional language has been adopted by pastors without any change in its modus operandi.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mission engagement is a weak point in many 'emerging churches' and appears to be clumsy and perhaps misguided at times. • Eclectic spirituality in this church is predominant, which could cause a shift in the focus of its ministry.
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There has been much talk recently about the two movements primarily within the Global North, and many tend to shy away from engaging with missional or emerging Church proponents. Despite the obvious concerns of many evangelicals over many important issues within these movements, as well as questions regarding proponents and voices within these movements, the missional church and a great proportion of the emerging church together represent a somewhat united concern to redefine the Church in Post-Christendom, missional terms-this is what makes this growing conversation applicable and essential globally. Thus, they should not be regarded as conflicting, albeit, contradictory or irrelevant to North American and other Western societies. These approaches should rather be seen as complementary (although divergent in outcomes). It is my conviction that the missional and emerging church conversation in the West needs to be taken into consideration for an African missional Ecclesiology as the church in Africa, or indeed, the Global South, is not isolated from the struggles of the Global North-any such idea is preposterous in today's Global Village. Much of what is represented in these dialogues, although continents apart, represent a united voice for what Gibbs describes in his book as the morphing of the Church in specific contexts. The emerging conversation is like two sides of the same coin.

This interdependence is further illustrated by Shenk and Parker (2004:3) in a Lausanne Occasional Paper by several characteristic trends drawn from fifteen case studies dealing with the realities of changing expressions of the Church world-wide. They reported that the case studies undertaken demonstrate that mission involves change for established Churches and innovation in initiating new ministries. They affirm the fact that there is no template that can be used in effective ministry. Despite the great diversity of form and function worldwide, there were some principles that were common to most of the case studies. The common characteristics described by Shenk and Parker (2004:7-8) are as follows:

- *Intentional outgoing mission* is characteristic of the church, expressed in contextualized ministries, worship and church forms.
- *A powerful vision* of God's love and redemption with an attitude of *continual openness* to His leading and an *explicit expectation* of His intervention in our ministries of evangelism, church planting and compassionate service.
- *Confidence in the Gospel*, its necessity, and its power to transform lives, churches, and communities.
- The necessity of *dynamic and vital Christian discipleship* for individuals and healthy churches.
- *Needs-based and holistic evangelism* and structures and programs which take full account of the actual situation and circumstances of the lives of people in the community so as to present a loving, gracious environment for ministry and witness.
- Recognition of *evangelism as both process and event*, with sensitivity to the pilgrimage of people who are at different stages in their lives and have differing attitudes and perceptions of the Church, the Gospel and God Himself, including those who may have been hurt, puzzled, or misled through their contacts with Christians and the Church.
- A radical commitment to the importance of the *church as the Body of Christ* and its reproduction and multiplication as a strategy for and an outcome of evangelism.
- *Empowering of leaders for ministry* through trust, training, and the establishment of relevant structures and forms of ministry.
- The privilege of the *priesthood of all believers.*, especially through the principle of every member evangelism, supported by practical systems of mentoring, training, and accountability, typically as small group or cell and one-to-one basis.
- Ecclesial streams and patterns can become archaic; *openness to change* in response to changing context should be cultivated.

As the report by the Lausanne working group clarifies and affirms; there is today, an evident *review of the basic understanding about the nature, life, and mission of the Church*. In many documented cases, there is a renewal of the understanding of the Gospel itself. This is certainly the case throughout Africa today and is an exciting journey in the shaping of things to come.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

The church in Africa, although seen as one of the fastest growing communities of believers around the world, cannot immerse itself in pride, thinking that the challenges that the West are facing will not affect the spread of Christianity in Africa - despite the glowing projections. For, unless we heed the call for a reinvestigation of the *essence of our faith*, we will soon find ourselves in a similar situation to that of the Global North. What does tomorrow hold for Africa? What does tomorrow hold for Southern African Christianity? In what ways has the church in Africa learnt from global realities? How should leaders in Africa respond to the ever-changing landscape?

In reality, change is happening at a discontinuous, viral rate and it becomes difficult to keep up in our Global era where the world seems to be one large, interconnected, inter-dependant global village. We live in an era of dynamic, discontinuous change, which affects the way we understand, relate to, and minister within the world. The church in Africa is not exempt from dealing with this global reality, and although Christianity in Africa is growing phenomenally, it will need to heed the lessons learnt within Christianity in other parts of the world if it is

to succeed in transitioning the Christian faith into another generation of Christian leaders in Africa. After all, the church has not always dealt with change in a positive or constructive manner and, like many other institutions responds lethargically to ever-changing contexts as changing things at an organizational level is not as easy as changing things from a local/ grassroots level. Pastoral anxiety over change is also a contributing factor, but equipping the pastor to think missiologically can assist with changes at grassroots level.

The church in mission today faces real challenges pertaining to the essence of the Christian faith and a review of all things 'church'. In Africa, these challenges are very real, and as we live in a global village, African societies are not immune to the effects of changes from accross the seas. One of these changes relates to the view of the next generation in relation to the church and Christianity on a whole. This is an important component of Africa's emerging scene. Global conversations and movements (missional and emerging), are indicative of this trend, and need to be understood correctly and embraced discerningly on a local church basis for the church to grow, thrive and survive in Africa.