

CHAPTER 7

THREATS TO AFRICAN CHRISTIANITY

7.1 Threats to the African situation

'I am an African,' said 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. If you think of Africa as a whole, what do you see? Many see corrupt governments with ceaseless and devastating conflict throughout the continent; poverty and starving African children; or the grim reality of HIV and AIDS, along with frightening predictions of collapsing health-care systems. People often see a lack of accountability, poor education and the mass violation of human rights. It is not surprising that many people, organizations and even nations believe that globalization holds the answers to all of Africa's evident problems.

However, as a backdrop to this saddening façade of diverse and conflicting images, lie pictures of the true wonders of Africa: majestic mountains; inviting oceans and deserts; beautiful people with rich and diverse cultures; elephants standing proud and firm; lions racing after prey across vast plains covered with zebras, giraffes and antelope, against the azure blue of the African sky. What makes Africa really special, however, cannot be described in picturesque words, recorded as sound bites or depicted in a coffee-table book or travel brochure. The real treasure of Africa is found in the hearts of her people. Although many Africans do not possess what their counterparts in other lands do - comfort, basic amenities

- they have something that is often a lost element of many western lives: hope. The injustices of the past and the struggles of the present leave the African with the dream of a better future, a brighter tomorrow. The question, as posed by both Neville (2008) and Turaki (2000), however, is how does globalization affect this picture of the future?

Oming (2005:49, 50) states:

Africa, along with the rest of the world, is caught up in the new era of globalization. The world has become so dynamic that it is threatening to spin out of control. The Global North is constantly invading the Global South by means of modern science and technology in the form of communication systems, mass media, military hardware... to the extent that Africa has become a dumping ground for the West, including for the West's un-African and unbiblical codes of moral conduct. Despite all this, Africa still plays the most significant role in the resurgence of faith, with the result that Christianity's centre of gravity is shifting from the North to the South (Oming 2005:49, 50).

There exist, however, various real threats to the future of the African continent. These are not to be seen as challenges to be overcome, as by definition challenges suggest a situation being faced with something requiring great mental or physical effort in order to be achieved successfully. The word 'threat' suggests that something unpleasant will happen unless a particular action or order is followed. Although this word is stronger, it reflects the true nature of the situation we face as Africans living within the global village (Oming 2005:50).

Roxburgh (2009:87-111) suggests that there are eight (global) currents of change that will challenge the shape of the mission of God in years to come. Roxburgh, although reflecting from a North American perspective, has some important insights and names a number of currents of change that will have global impact.

The eight currents of change are:

1. Globalization
2. Pluralism
3. Rapid technological change
4. Post-modernism
5. Staggering global need
6. Loss of confidence in primary structures
7. The democratization of knowledge
8. The return to Romanticism

The Lausanne Theological working group, in their deliberations with respect to the whole Church taking the whole Gospel to the whole world, affirms that we live as broken and sinful people in a broken, sinful world. This extends to the following: the negative effects of globalization (alongside its acknowledged benefits); escalating global poverty and economic injustice; the challenges of population growth and urbanization; the destruction of the natural environment and human-generated climate change that is already affecting the world's poorest. Additionally, the scourge of HIV and AIDS; the culture of violence that pervades society from domestic to international levels; the threat of nuclear disaster; the dangers of terrorism and its underlying causes and the stoking of ethnic and religious dividedness all represent the heart of the threat we face in Africa (cf. Lausanne 2010, *Three Wholes*).

Edinburgh 2010 (cf. Balia & Kim 2010:139-141) gives some strategic priorities for the twenty-first century:

1. Urban mission: The city of God or the city of goods.
2. Youth agency in mission engagement: The silence of the lambs?
3. Mission methods: Aggressive or defensive?
4. Conservative ecumenism versus true ecumenism.

In the pages to follow, I will be dealing with a few key global trends directly impacting Africa and; threatening its future. Although many of these interlink with threats and challenges faced in many parts of the world, they will be dealt with from an African perspective. I have been deliberate in my selection and have to state upfront that I have been selective in order to maintain focus in this thesis - so, there are many other threats that may apply, but only a few are relative to the theme and purpose of my study. This chapter is important insofar as it deals with the macro pictures that affect the context within which BUSA and other denominations function. If BUSA (and Christianity in Africa) is to succeed and thrive, it has to take cognizance of these macro-trends in order to maximize ministry within the micro-spheres of ministry in various African settings.

Before we engage with the crisis we are facing as Africans, it must be stated that crisis can be a catalyst for growth and change (Amaladoss 1991:54). Mission is in crisis; therefore, missions must change! I have listed the various trends and their respective impact on the mission of the Church in the section below. Some trends are more prevalent and important than others and will receive greater treatment in this thesis.

7.2 Important Global Trends Impacting Africa

7.2.1 Globalization

In his trilogy *'The Information Age'*, Manuel Castells presents a comprehensive account of the economy and society in the era of electronics:

A new economy emerged in the last quarter of the twentieth century on a world-wide scale. I call it informational, global and networked to identify its fundamental and distinctive features and to emphasize their intertwining... It is global because the core activities of production, consumption, and circulation, as well as their components (capital, labor, raw materials, management, information, technology, markets) are organized on a global scale, either directly or through a network of linkages between economic agents. It is networked because, under the new historical conditions, productivity is generated through and competition is played out in a global network of interaction between business networks. This new economy emerged in the last quarter of the twentieth century because the information technology revolution provided the indispensable, material basis for its creation (Castells 2000:77).

Manuel Castells, emeritus professor of Sociology at the University of California at Berkeley, and senior professor at the internet interdisciplinary institute at the *Universitat Oberta de Catalunya* (Barcelona) is a preeminent scholar on issues pertaining to globalization and the emerging information technology revolution. Castells' scholarly work underscores the significance of globalization – it cannot be underestimated. Its importance is brought to light in perhaps no more significant way, than through the introduction of *'The Church going Glocal'* (Edinburgh 2010 Series) by Engelsviken (et al 2011:9):

One of the most significant features of contemporary society is what is commonly called globalization. This phenomenon, which, as this book will show, is not unique for our time, is nevertheless more widespread, more pervasive and more rapidly changing the world in which we live than ever before. Just as globalization has become a reality in areas such as

communication, culture, economics and politics, the two largest religions in the world, i.e. Christianity and Islam, have also become global in an unprecedented way. One hundred years after Edinburgh 1910 the global vision of that conference has been fulfilled in ways and places that nobody at that time could imagine. The global reality of the church and the globalization of the world happen at the same time – and in our time (Engelsviken et al 2011:9).

On globalization, Cole (2010:15) rightly states: “Not since the great flood of Noah’s day has the world changed so rapidly as in the past twenty years. Population has increased at an exponential rate. Advances in technology have changed the very way we relate to one another...” It is a certainty; the world today is in many respects getting smaller. “Impressive developments in electronic communication and means of transport, in transnational flows of capital, goods, people, information, and symbols have bounded the world together in ways that reach even the most remote human settlements” (Engelsviken 2011:88). Castells’ (cf. 2000:77-79) timeframe for the emergence of this ‘new economy’ or ‘global economy’ coincides with what is also referred to as ‘globalization’. According to Castells (1993:20), contemporary society is based on two defining characteristics. First, the continued existence of the capitalist mode of production, based on the generalization of commodity production, the employment of wage-labour, and the accumulation of capital. Second, the recent growth of an informational mode of development, which has its origins in capitalist restructuring and (autonomous) technological change. It is this new development that provides the basis for the reorganization of social practices in time and space. Informational networks lead to a culture of ‘real virtuality’ based on electronic media, particularly information technology and the internet. For Castells, then, “the enhancement of telecommunications has created the material infrastructure for the formation of a global economy, in a movement similar to that which lay behind the construction of

the railways and the formation of national markets during the nineteenth century” (1993:20).

Cole points out something observed from Thom Wolf regarding the similarities between the contemporary context and that of the first century. Cole (2010) lists six corresponding characteristics tying the first century to the current one, that in turn, “create opportunities and challenges for the church” (Cole 2010:16). Cole’s (2010:16-21) list comprises the following common characteristics:

- A single and dominant superpower (Rome then, USA today, Asia tomorrow?)
- A single, global trade language (*Koine* Greek then, English today)
- Technological advances create a global community (Roman roads then, computer chips, satellites, telecommunications and jet travel today)
- Relativistic philosophy
- Pagan and occult activity (Paganism then, Wicca, witchcraft, occult worship today)
- Sexual promiscuity, perversion, and chemical addictions

This is accentuated by the prevalence of modern communication systems and social networks that enable access to all kinds of information at any given time. People from across the globe can seem to be right across the room at almost any point in time. Unfortunately, the pornography industry has been able to prosper through this form of communication, and music and the arts have been able to popularize and sexualize the industry to attract younger people. I agree with Giddens (2002:4) where he states:

Globalization is restructuring the ways in which we live, and in a very profound manner... It is now possible for more people than ever to collaborate and compete in real time with more people on more different kinds of work from more different corners of the planet and on a more equal footing than at any previous time in the history of the world – using computers, e-mail, fiber-optic networks, teleconferencing, and dynamic new software” (Friedman 2006:8).

Pocock et al (2005:21) describe it this way: “whether you look at the label on your shirt (from Guatemala), your shoes (from China), your watch (from Taiwan), or the newest English-language issue of the World Evangelical Alliance’s (WEA) *Connections* (printed in India), it is clear that you are wearing, using and thinking on a global scale.” In the twenty-first century, global interaction continues to intensify; “The dynamics behind globalization, its meaning, and its implication for missions need to be understood by everyone involved in living for Christ and making him known in our global context” (Pocock et al 2005:22).

Friedman (2006:8) describes it as ‘Globalization 3.0’, “a phenomenon that is enabling, empowering, and enjoining individuals and small groups to go global seamlessly in the ‘flat-world’ platform.” This new global era is described by Miller (2004) as a shift to a new digitally defined culture that is much more than just a change in technology, attitude, and understanding. It is a *sensory change where change itself becomes the only constant and the organizing principle*. For the first time since ancient times, we have the perceptual capabilities to see the world not just as our little corner of the globe, but as an interconnected multidimensional whole. Malcolm Waters captures the idea that globalization lifts restraints on interaction at every level. Waters (2001:5) helpfully defines globalization as: “a social process in which the restraints of geography on economic, political, social and cultural arrangements recede, in which people become increasingly aware that they are receding and in which people act accordingly.” Pocock (2005:23) pertinently summarizes globalization and its effects: “Taken as a whole, globalization is a trend of accelerating, compressed interaction between peoples, cultures, governments and transnational companies. It is a heightened multi-

directional flow of ideas, material goods, symbols and power facilitated by the Internet and other communication, technologies, and travel” (Waters 2001, cf. Robertson 2000:53). For the future success of the *missio ecclesia*, Globalization must be taken seriously!

I agree wholeheartedly with Pocock et al (2005:24) on the importance of globalization: “Globalization matters because it fundamentally changes the contexts in which we minister, the way people and cultures perceive each other, how people think, and the means available to reach them. We cannot dismiss the effects of globalization on ourselves as communicators of the gospel message.” An important sentiment for the church in mission is that it continually needs to minister at both extremes - to the beneficiaries and to the marginalized losers of globalization (See Pocock 2005:29). Pocock *et al* (2005) continue to describe four inter-related aspects of globalization and their respective impact on ministry: world migration, air travel, the Internet and the Free-Market Economic System, which remain important emerging themes to be considered by the church.

7.2.1.1 What is the impact and Missiological importance of globalization?

Globalization has brought with it great depravity as a negative spinoff; this can easily be seen from an economic standpoint where the wealth of a minority in the world can be directly linked to the impoverishment of some 70% of the world’s

population (cf. Pocock 2005). This has, in part, led to the rampant consumerism seen today, competing against authentic Christian expressions of faith.

With globalization, has come the rise of a global *monoculture*. This has positive elements attached to this, if meted with tolerance, respect and cultural appreciation; however, often one culture is elevated over another and seen as more desired, which leads to the decay of traditional values in many African countries as their youth look to the Global North as role models. This is largely prevalent among the younger generations within the African continent; however, not restricted to them alone as seen in the emergence of various urban tribes that are adequately described by Chang (2012) in his recent work '*Urban Tribes of South Africa*'. Simultaneously, the values and morality of the global élite are filtering through to all the nations of the world, impacting countless family units and individuals, influencing choices, values, worldview and morality. Value is increasingly defined in terms of economic worth and happiness is defined in terms of this worth too.

With monoculture and the other effects of globalization, we are seeing the global transformation of authority and culture - this can easily be illustrated by the revolutionary protests and uprisings experienced in Egypt and Libya, which led to change in the highest order/ structures of the day. Additionally, rapid technological growth and the emergence of a knowledge-based economy have impacted our lives in many respects. This can be illustrated through the proliferation of social networks like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, MySpace, Google Plus+, Pinterest and the like, which has transformed the way we interact and communicate on a daily

basis. A recent news article on All Africa website (2012), entitled 'South Africa: Social Media 'Breaking Barriers' in SA' highlights the significance of social media within South African society. In their report on 4th October 2012 they highlight the following important information:

- Social networking in South Africa has crossed the age barrier, the urban-rural divide, and even the relationship gap. The South African Social Media Landscape 2012 study, released last month by World Wide Worx and Fuseware, shows that the fastest growing age group among Facebook users in South Africa is the over-60s.
- The proportion of urban adults using Facebook is a little less than double rural users, but rural users are now at the level where urban users were 18 months ago. Similarly, Twitter's urban penetration is a little more than double its rural penetration, and the rural proportion has also caught up to where the urban proportion was 18 months ago.
- WhatsApp has become the leading instant messaging tool among South Africans aged 16 and over, living in cities and towns, with a user base of 4.6-million.
- The youngest mobile instant messaging tool to emerge on the measurement radar in South Africa, 2Go, has close to a million adult users.
- The most common "check in" sites for Facebook in South Africa are airports and shopping malls.
- The biggest tweeting day of the week is a Monday, with an average of 9.6-million tweets sent by South Africans on the first working day of the week. Friday is next, with 9.6-million, while Saturday is the slowest Twitter day, with 8.4-million tweets.

There is no doubting of the impact social media is having on our society at large, and the connections made via this form of media. Another positive outcome of globalization is the greater emphasis being placed on highlighting our responsibility to the poor, marginalized and disenfranchised in the world today. Young people, in particular, want to make a difference in their world and they show great interest in working with those less fortunate than themselves in the hope that they may be a part of something 'bigger than themselves'.

The launching of www.forgood.co.za is indicative of this trend, particularly among younger South Africans. "*Forgood*" is an initiative of *Heartlines*, a non-profit company that uses various forms of media to encourage a return to living out good values in order to build a healthier, better South Africa. Their dedicated team does this through films, books, training and resources aiming at South Africans having conversations that will inspire people to take action to make South Africa safer, healthier, greener, more compassionate and focused on values⁸. The "forgood" team (2012) explain their approach as follows:

The revamped and current forgood social networking platform offers more intricate online connections, extensive practical advice and communication, and allows everyday heroes a platform to share how they are living for good in their own lives. All of that from one man's childhood dream to change the world!

Figure 20 (below) is a screenshot taken from their 'needs' section, indicating the level of practical involvement social networkers are able to engage:

⁸ See <http://www.forgood.co.za/Pages/AboutUs.aspx#allabout> for more in-depth information on this initiative.

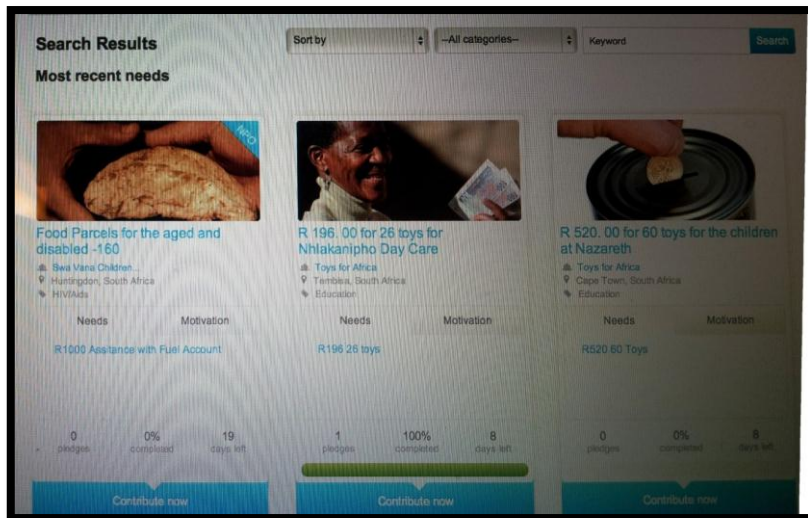


Figure 20 Marketplace needs Forgood.co.za 2012

Kling (2010:32) confirms the above from a global perspective by saying: “Social justice has become a global imperative, especially among youth and young adults. For Christians, this will lead to an increasing emphasis on meeting physical needs in addition to continuing the long-standing emphasis on evangelism.” Kling (2010) states that as we see a continued growth in the number of natural disasters around the world; “There has also arrived a new generation of students and young adults who view service to others as a defining expression of their faith” (Kling 2010:41). Frederick Buechner aptly summarizes the emerging generation’s heartbeat: “The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet” (1973:95). Kling (2010:41) looks to the future and states: “In the coming years, respect and relevance will flow to the global church when it does what it was created to do: to fill gaping holes, both spiritual and physical, in the lives of unnoticed, unwanted people. This is the heart language of the next generation, non-Christians and Christians alike....”

Prominent New York pastor, Tim Keller (2001:n.p.) agrees with the above sentiments and adds:

We live in a time when public esteem of the church is plummeting. For many outsiders or inquirers, the deeds of the church will be far more important than words in gaining plausibility. The leaders of most towns see ‘word-only’ churches as costs to their community, not a value. Effective churches will be so involved in deeds of mercy and justice that outsiders will say, ‘we cannot do without churches like this’ (Keller 2001:n.p.).

Interestingly, globalization has yet another positive impact on the mission of the church in how the ‘Mercy generation’ (cf. Kling 2010:39-63) engages in mission:

Young people engage in a nearly constant search for fresh experiences and new sources of motivation. They want to try things themselves. If something doesn’t work for them, or if they are not permitted to participate in the process, they quickly move on to something that grabs them. They view life in a non-linear, chaotic way, which means they don’t mind contradiction and ambiguity

Ultimately, this is good news for the church, as young people in this emerging generation do not expect permanency, knowing that they are statistically likely to have three careers and change jobs every three-to-five years during their lifetime. “They care about the world, knowing that they can go far away and return at any time they need to... short-term mission trips foster perceptions of international Christian ministry as an experience, not a final destination” (Kling 2010:46-47). With this global/ local mindset, Christians among this emerging generation are far more likely to do full-time Christian work for a season. Proof, that despite the negative aspects of globalization, the Church can and must harness and redeem it for good! As illustrated above, through Chang’s missional, faith-based youth (2012) and the launching of www.forgood.co.za and other similar initiatives,

globalization's spin-offs can add great value to BUSA's continued ministry into the future.

7.2.2 Reactionary theologies

In chapter 6 I engaged importance and inter-relatedness of the ongoing global conversation relating to the missional and emerging church respectively. I concluded that the concerns of both the Global North and South converge on this issue within a Postmodern or Postcolonial setting. Bosch describes a new, emerging paradigm/ reality within this new milieu: there has been an evident shift in the dominant worldview of people around the world (cf. Cupitt & Norman 2003:111-116, Erickson 1998:13). David Bosch rightly described this new movement in terms of a paradigm shift. Yet, there is somewhat of a mystery unfolding before our eyes, as we do not know the full extent of what we are facing locally, nationally or on a global scale. Avis (2003:83) conjectures that Post-modernity is an elusive concept. This is further confirmed in the fact that two decades after Bosch described this new paradigm shift (Bosch published *Transforming Mission* in 1991 and died tragically in April 1992), we can still say that it is emerging, as we do not yet fully perceive its width and depth and reach. This is due, in part, to the various definitions one ascribed to the epoch preceding it; modernism, and the fact that Post-modernism is inherently difficult to define because the cultural epoch it represents is intrinsically non-conducive to stable definitions and clear distinctions (cf. Avis 2003:83).

Contemporary discussions pertaining to the church, from emerging postmodern congregations to mainline and missional ones, are increasingly grappling with philosophical and theoretical questions related to what can be termed 'reactionary theologies' (cf. Raschke 2008:23). I prefer to use this broader term as it encompasses an overarching reality as opposed to one manifestation of this (e.g.: Postmodernism, Post-Christian, Postcolonial etc.) By reactionary theologies, I mean that *both* concepts Post-modernism and Post-colonialism describe, in some finite measure, the struggles faced today in a world searching for ultimate meaning and greater significance - this is certainly true in South Africa. Pocock (2005:106) helpfully critiques modernism (what post-moderns react against) as:

Scientific method, marked by the use of hard data, rigorous and reproducible experimentation, and conclusions based on observation and logical deduction. Modernity has led to the exclusion of issues of transcendence, meaning, or metaphysics because these concerns cannot be studied using scientific method. Modernity relegates issues of ultimate meaning to a realm outside science, making them unknowable or even 'unreal' (Pocock 2005:106).

Pocock (2005:107) further reminds us that "Post-modernism, by contrast (to modernism) is characterized by an awakening to the limitations of modernity or... its bankruptcy, particularly when it comes to providing final answers about existence or to resolving problems of human depravity and intractability." Post-modernism according to Stanley Grenz (2006:579) is a "reaction to the modern mind-set in which knowledge is not objective. Truth is entirely dependent upon the community in which it resides, and human reason is not the sole faculty for determining it." "Post-modernity is a broad awareness of modernity's limitations with regard to attaining knowledge or absolute truth. Post-modernists are disenchanted with a system that represents its methods and conclusions as irrefutable..." (Pocock 2005:107). Pastor and author Brian McLaren, quoted in

Grenz (2006), believes Post-modernism is “not an age or a generational issue but primarily a shift in the way people process information and view the world. And this worldview will soon become the dominant epistemology” (Grenz 2006:579). Additionally, Avis (2003:84-91) states that amid the flux of this emerging paradigm, there are important and persisting features that need to be considered. Firstly, Postmodernity is corrosive of overarching metanarratives that provide purpose and meaning for life and society as a whole. Within our reaction, there tends to be a selective deconstruction of reality that is dependent upon individual suspicion. Self-authenticating experience, rapid consumerism and loss of hope are intrinsic to Postmodern reaction, and form some part of the overarching reactionary theologies rampant in post-Apartheid South African society. Carson (2005:95) confirms: “Postmodern epistemology modifies or challenges or overthrows every one... of modern epistemology”.

I include Wikipedia’s definition (2012) here as it reflects something of the ‘layman’s’ understanding being more of a fluid, open-source platform for definition and description. It is not conventional to include references from Wikipedia in scholarly writings, however, the very nature of missional studies in mission almost necessitates an ‘open source’ approach in addition to adequate peer-reviewed material. Wikipedia defines Post-modernism in the following way:

Post-modernism is a tendency in contemporary culture characterized by the rejection of objective truth and global cultural narrative or meta-narrative. It emphasizes the role of language, power relations, and motivations; in particular it attacks the use of sharp classifications such as male versus female, straight versus gay, white versus black, and Imperial versus Colonial. Post-modernism has influenced many cultural fields, including literary criticism, sociology, linguistics, architecture, visual arts, and music. Postmodernist thought is an intentional departure from modernist approaches that had previously been dominant. The term “Postmodernism” comes from its critique of the “modernist”

scientific mentality of objectivity and progress associated with the Enlightenment.

Furthermore, Modernism and Post-modernism are understood as cultural projects or as a set of perspectives. The concept 'Post-modernism' is used to describe or refer to a point of departure for works such as literature, drama, architecture, cinema, journalism, and design, as well as in marketing and business and in the interpretation of law, culture, and religion in the late 20th and early 21st centuries (Wikipedia 2012). Indeed, Post-modernism, particularly as an academic movement, can be understood as a reaction to Modernism in the Humanities. Whereas Modernism was primarily concerned with principles such as identity, unity, authority, and certainty, Post-modernism is often associated with difference, plurality, textuality, and skepticism.

Bringing the discussion closer to home, and within the Christian domain; the history of Christianity's reaction to the prevailing dominant culture is further evidence of what can be termed a reactionary theology (for instance Justin Martyr in response to persecution by Rome), its own influence upon sects of Christianity (e.g.: Gnosticism), or independent groups within Christianity (e.g.: Arianism), or even reaction against the power within Christianity (e.g.: the Protestant Reformation).

This is the nature of things, and it hasn't changed much today. The Mainline Church and the emergent Church are good contemporary examples of reactionary theology that works both ways. Despite the inherent danger in this saga, it ultimately helps us to define our theology within an ever-changing landscape.

In Africa, the current dominant epistemology is Post-colonialism, not necessarily Post-modernism in its true sense. How should one define this? According to Wikipedia (2012), Post-colonialism is a specifically Post-modern intellectual discourse that consists of reactions to, and analysis of, the cultural legacy of Colonialism. Post-colonialism comprises a set of theories found amongst philosophy, film, political science, human geography, sociology, feminism, religious and theological studies, and literature. It is dominant, therefore, because it is all-encompassing and is multi-disciplinary. Both these concepts are important ones to deal with in the church as it moves toward a brighter future within South Africa, as well as the rest of Africa. Dr Mabiolo Kenzo, a Congolese Theologian assisted Brian McLaren (2007:44) in his journey into what I have termed reactionary theologies. I end this section with the important metaphor raised by Dr Mabiolo Kenzo:

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).

7.2.3 Urbanization

One can confidently say that the world we live in today is an urban-dominated world: “today mankind is being enveloped in a social process in which urban reality pervades the totality of existence...‘future historians will record the twentieth century as that century in which the whole world became one immense city’” (Dubose 1978:21). “The world is in the cities. The cities are the world” (Miranda-Feliciano 2009:240). Christianity has always made its presence felt in cities, and the close relationship between human migration and urbanization focuses on the importance of cities as a legitimate context for authentic religious experiences. Edinburgh 2010 acknowledged the importance of urban contexts for the future of the church (Balía and Kim 2010:43; Kim and Anderson 2011:168). One cannot argue the point made by Greenway (2010:559): “Cities are the new frontier of Christian missions.” Due to the size, cultural influence, diversity and great needs, the cities of Africa present enormous challenges to the Church. “To neglect cities would be a strategic mistake because, as cities go, the world goes.” On his 2010 trip to South Africa Mark Driscoll was quoted as saying: ‘if you change Joburg you change Africa.’ This again reminds us of the importance the challenge of urbanization presents to churches on mission in Africa.

Scriptural examples of great cities abound. The earliest mention of a city that God viewed is Babel (more on this below), however, what is more important than the building of an actual city relates to the view of its people in relation to Yahweh. The citizens of Babel were proud and arrogant and did not follow after God. God’s solution to this continual problem and how God’s people should relate is found within Jeremiah 29.

Jeremiah 29 is a beautiful illustration of what I believe God desires of Christians living in cities in Africa. Jeremiah 29:4-7 states:

This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: “Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.’

While the Jews were exiles in a foreign land and culture, God commanded His people to engage fully in the life and culture of a city that opposed God. God commanded Israel, their own prosperity aside, to seek the good of the city; to work for, pursue and be concerned for the peace and prosperity of that place (Barth 2011:n.p.).

This is not an isolated occurrence where God relents and shows care toward a secular, pagan city. Examples abound in scripture-as early on as Genesis (as discussed briefly above) 4:17: “*Cain lay with his wife, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Enoch. Cain was then building a city, and he named it after his son Enoch.*” In Genesis 11:5 we read of God coming down and viewed a city built by men: “*But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower that the men were building.*” Because of the pride in their hearts and their wicked intentions, God scattered them throughout the face of the world and the city was never completed. There are countless examples of God moving powerfully in cities to accomplish his mission and purpose. Israel’s liberation from Egypt and the rule of Pharaoh is an important example. God preserves the city and the nation through sending Joseph

to interpret a dream for the Pharaoh and through Joseph eventually saves Egypt and Israel - eventually Egypt (Africa!) even saved Jesus. In the New Testament era, Paul embodied this strategy and planted the Gospel in pagan cities, transforming culture, building Christ's church. Simply put:

God cares about people, their suffering and pain, their heartaches and trials, the oppression they experience, the injustice they bear. He is a God of compassion. He wants his creatures to experience joy, love, and peace... cities are where most of them live. Therefore, God cares about cities. And if God cares about the cities and the people who live there, so should we (Barth 2011:n.p.).

Ultimately, God is concerned about the heavenly city - a place where all nations and tribes will gather in worship of our God and King (Rev. 7: 9f). However, God displays great concern for the cities in our world. God was concerned about Nineveh, one of the largest, most powerful and influential centers of its day. In Jonah 4:11 it reads: "But Nineveh has more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left, and many cattle as well. *Should I not be concerned about that great city?*"

However, Barth (2011:n.p.) reminds us of the missiological importance of cities in our milieu:

1. The cities are where people are and increasingly will be.
2. The cities are the key to centres of influence culturally, spiritually, and in nearly every other way.
3. The city is God's invention, part of God's plan and purpose, and as such should not be regarded as evil.

“Life in a city is our eventual destiny - or at least our eternal destiny will revolve around a city.” (Barth 2011:n.p.).

The 20th century can easily be remembered as the century of world urbanization:

When the century began, only 13% of the world’s population lived in cities. By the end of the century, half the world lived in cities. In 1950, only two cities, New York and London, had more than eight million inhabitants. In 2000, there were 25. By the year 2015, 33 cities are expected to have more than eight million. Nineteen of these will be in Asia... the movement of more than a billion people to the cities over the last two decades is the largest population movement in history (Greenway 2010:559).

Jenkins (2007), in his ground-breaking work *‘The Next Christendom’*, outlines the growth of Southern Christianity. This is important for any missiological concern; however, this growth is largely set against the backdrop of *rapid urban growth in the Global South*. Jenkins (2007:34) states that the greatest proportion of population growth will be urban. “Today, around 45% of the world’s people live in urban areas, but that proportion should rise to 60% by 2025, to more than 66% by 2050. The result will be a steadily growing number of huge metropolitan complexes that could by 2050 or so be counting their populations in the tens of millions.” Cities such as Cairo, Mexico City, Mumbai, Johannesburg, Dhaka, Karachi, Kolkata, and, Lagos are highly likely to be among the greatest cities of the Global South. This is notwithstanding the growth of cities like Kano (Nigeria), Casablanca (Morocco), Algiers (Algeria), Abidjan (Cote D'Ivoire), Alexandria (Egypt), Khartoum (Sudan), Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of Congo). Within the past five decades, cities like Chicago, Essen, and Moscow no longer hold onto their title of being among the top 10 largest cities, while, in their place, cities like Mexico City, São Paulo, and Dhaka all moved up in their ranking as being one of the world’s largest cities. It is commonplace today that while industrialized "first-

world" cities once held seven of the top ten positions, now only Tokyo, New York, and Los Angeles make the list. Today, Mexico City, Mumbai, and São Paulo all have millions more inhabitants than New York. And, as you will see, there is a proliferation of evidence to show that this trend is accelerating.

In figure 21a, Johnson & Ross (2009:238), important voices in this field, list the top ten largest cities, these are the same cities with the largest Christian majority in 1910 (year of first Edinburgh Missions Conference) - in the same order (see: Johnson & Ross 2009:242).

1910 Largest cities

City	Country	Population	Christians	%
1 LONDON	Britain	6,958,000	6,680,000	96.0
2 New York	USA	5,405,000	5,135,000	95.0
3 PARIS	France	3,854,000	3,777,000	98.0
4 BERLIN	Germany	2,966,000	2,906,000	98.0
5 Chicago	USA	2,300,000	2,208,000	96.0
6 VIENNA	Austria	1,739,000	1,670,000	96.0
7 Philadelphia	USA	1,654,000	1,588,000	96.0
8 BUENOS AIRES	Argentina	1,464,000	1,435,000	98.0
9 Ruhr	Germany	1,406,000	1,378,000	98.0
10 Manchester	Britain	1,425,000	1,368,000	96.0

Cities listed in ALL CAPITALS are capital cities

© Edinburgh University Press, 2009

Figure 21a Largest cities in 1910

With the global accelerated growth of urban areas, Jenkins (2007:34) reminds us:

... these urban centres will be overwhelmingly Southern. In 1900 all the world's largest cities were located either in Europe or North America. Today, only three of the world's ten largest urban areas can be found in traditionally advanced countries, namely Tokyo, New York City, and Los Angeles, and by 2015 the only one of these names left on the list will be Tokyo. Currently, 80% of the world's largest urban conglomerates are located in either Asia or Latin America, but African cities will become much more significant by mid-century. The

proportion of Africans living in urban areas will grow from around 40% today to almost 66% by 2050... (Jenkins 2007:34).

This is confirmed by Johnson & Ross (2009:242, 243) where they illustrate, on the map below (see figure 21b), the current situation with cities around the world.

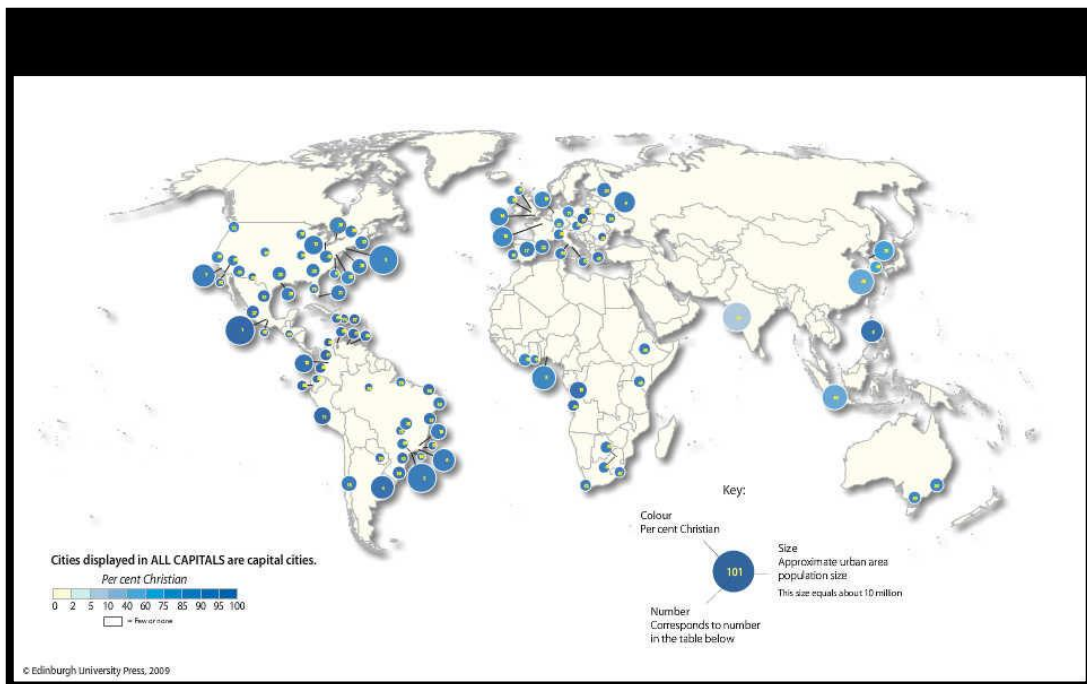


Figure 21b Growth of cities

As the illustration above shows (figure 21b), the Global South is a dominating force. Furthermore, Johnson & Ross (2009:242) reinforce the view of the phenomenal growth of cities in the Global South in figure 22 (below), indicating the greater propensity of urban growth is currently attributed to the Global South.

Number of cities by continent, 2010

All cities							
Continent	Total	Small	Medium	Large	Mega	Super	Giant
Africa	880	391	392	43	48	4	2
Asia	2,850	1,029	1,389	171	220	29	12
Europe	1,338	722	501	56	52	6	1
Latin America	847	392	352	36	57	6	4
Northern America	660	228	320	61	39	10	2
Oceania	46	16	22	2	5	1	0
Global total	6,621	2,778	2,976	369	421	56	21

Cities where Christianity is the largest religion							
Continent	Total	Small	Medium	Large	Mega	Super	Giant
Africa	380	154	166	25	32	2	1
Asia	126	34	72	7	11	1	1
Europe	1,296	695	488	54	52	6	1
Latin America	847	392	352	36	57	6	4
Northern America	660	228	320	61	39	10	2
Oceania	46	16	22	2	5	1	0
Global total	3,355	1,519	1,420	185	196	26	9

Total: ≥ 50,000 Small: 50,000–99,999 Medium: 100,000–499,999 Large: 500,000–999,999 Mega: 1,000,000–2,999,999 Super: 4,000,000–9,999,999 Giant: ≥ 10,000,000

© Edinburgh University Press, 2009

Figure 22 Number of Cities by continent, 2010

In personal correspondence (02/10/2012) with Brian Seim, an urban specialist serving with SIM (Serving in Mission), he advised that I include more concrete data from the United Nations. This data confirms the overall trends described by Johnson & Ross (2009), and gives further credibility to their study and overall reliability. The 2009 UN *“World Urbanization Prospects: The 2009 Revision”* indicates the current growth rates experienced within urban areas around the world since 1950. Current data indicates that Africa’s annual urban growth rate within the 2010-2015 period is 3.28% against the world average of 1.85% within the same period. The significance of this trend can perhaps be better interpreted against the 0,64% world urban growth rate of what are classified as ‘more developed regions’ between 2010-2015; indicating Africa’s five-fold increase within urban sectors. Figure 23 (below) depicts the regional African urban growth rates within the 2010-2015 period.

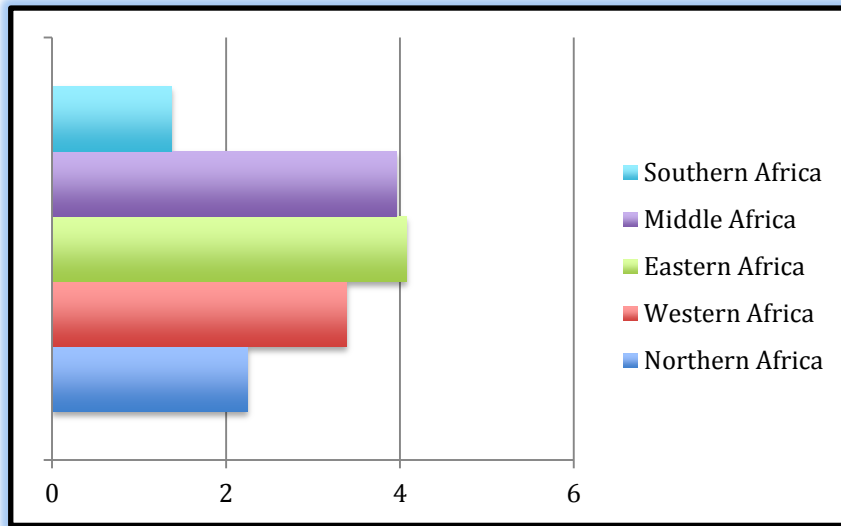


Figure 23 Urban Growth Rates in Africa, by region

Figure 24 (below) indicates the historical movement of people to urban areas and where the growth has been located within regions in Africa since 1950 (Data was taken from the UN “*World Urbanization Prospects: The 2009 Revision*”). One can safely say that urban growth continues to be a dominant feature of our times, and although the urban growth rate has plateaued in most regions (with Southern Africa showing the greatest decline since 1950), it represents an ever-increasing population base-line, which has increased since 1950.

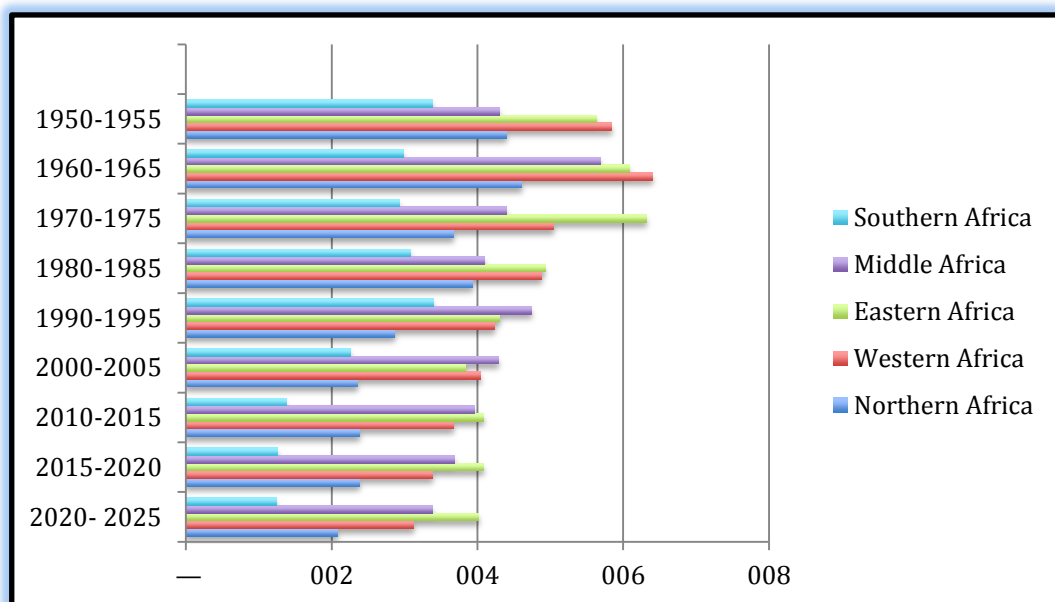


Figure 24 African regional historical and futuristic Urban Growth Rate Figures

When comparing urban growth rates, one cannot escape the importance of Africa compared with the global scene. Figure 25 (below) highlights global urban growth rates since 1950, which provide excellent points of comparison for the African urban growth scenario. This approach, however, gives the regional averages and does not take into account the more detailed data relating to specific growth trends within Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Northern America and

Oceania, which may have an impact on actual variances within continental regions. In brief comparison to the Africa situation, it appears that the urban growth rate within Africa as a whole (perhaps excluding Southern Africa) is far higher when compared to gross averages around the globe. Dealing with urbanization within Africa (and Asia) will present a great challenge to the fidelity of Christian churches.

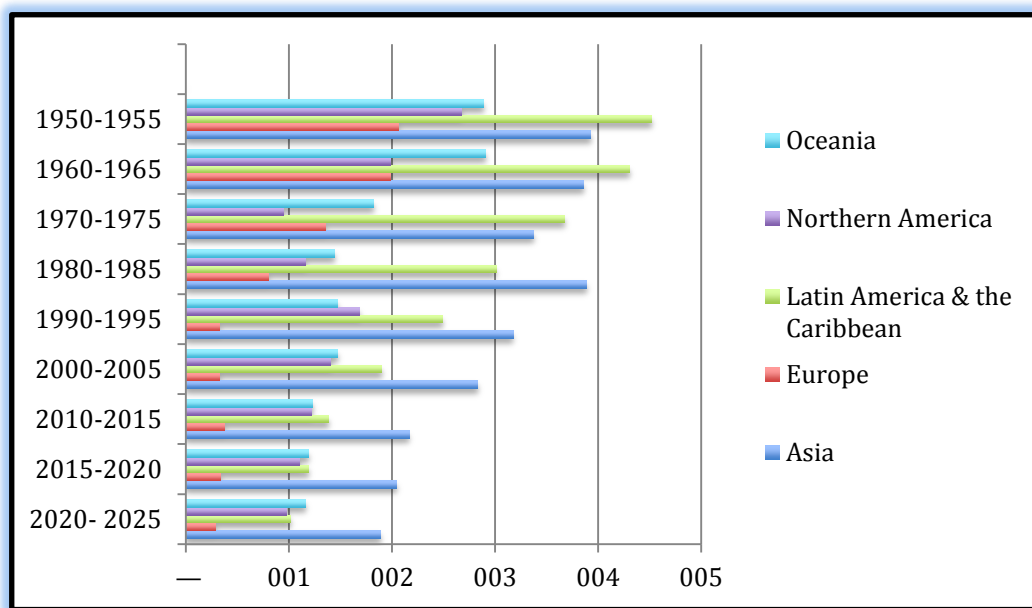


Figure 25 Regional Continental Urban Growth Rates averages, taken from UN data

Importantly, Johnson & Ross (2009:242) have tracked urban growth between 1910 and 2010 (100 years of mission significance, between Edinburgh 1910 and 2010) and have come up with the following conclusions that are important for any ‘Citiology’ (theology of the city), and for missiology:

- Research indicates the percentage of total urban population in 1910 to have been around 18% in 2010, 100 years later, 50.7% of total population are urban dwellers.
- Additionally, there was a reported 2.43% growth rate per annum over the

past 100 years. However, over the past 10 years (2000-2010), the growth rate dropped slightly to 2.03% per annum.

- Research indicates that 32% of the urban population in 1910 were Christians. In 2010, 64.2% of the urban population were Christians.
- Between 1910 and 2010 the Christian growth rate in urban centres was recorded to be around 2.04% per annum, marginally lower than the average population growth rate annually. However, there is a downward trend observed in the 2000-2010 figures where the ten-year growth rate was recorded at 1.57% per annum. This is a concern for the mission of God in reaching cities.
- The same trend observed in 1910 with the growth of cities and Christian population remained the same in Africa in 2010. The two diagrams below (see: Johnson & Ross 2009:244, 245) list the 50 largest urban areas in Africa, and then the largest Christian urban population in Africa respectfully.

Figures 26 and 27 (below) are also indicative of the phenomenal growth in population and modernization of the African continent. What is more pertinent is the continued growth among urban Christians, albeit at a lower rate than previously experienced. However, as stated above, when compared to an increasing population base the numbers remain greatly significant for Christian mission.

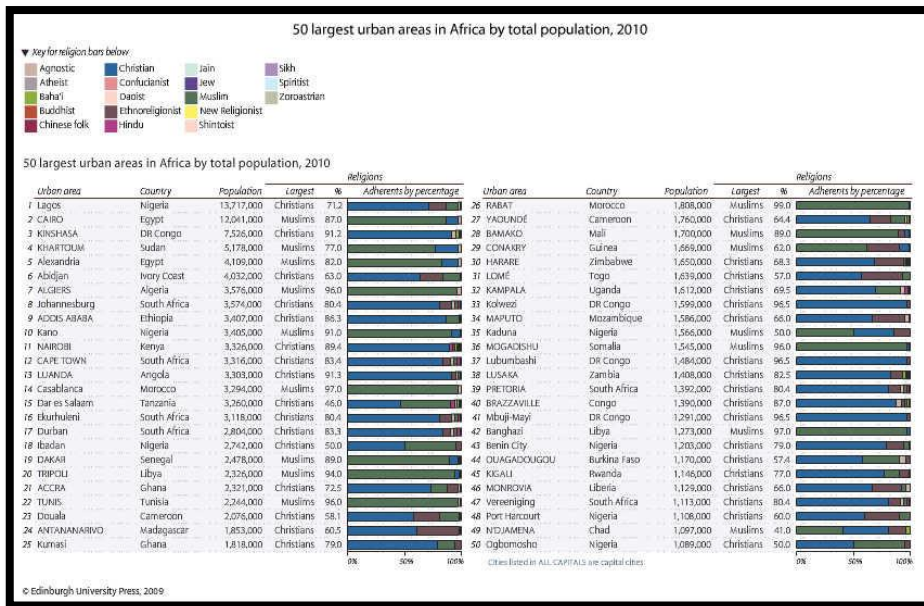


Figure 26 Largest urban areas 2010

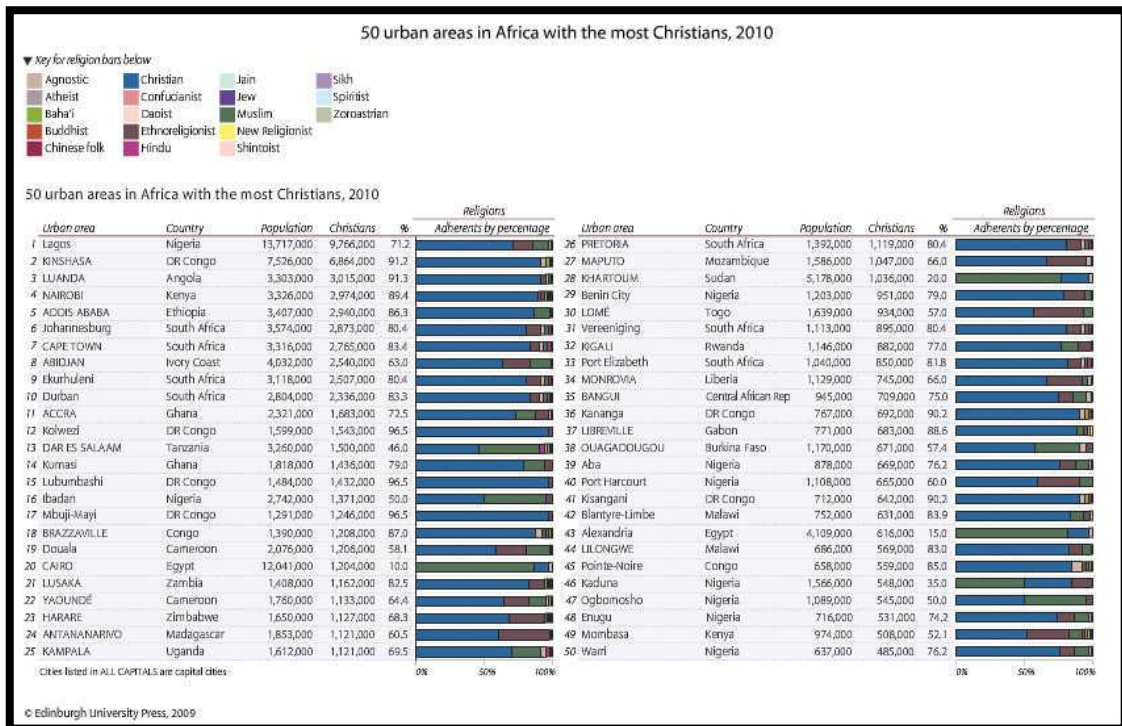


Figure 27 50 urban areas with the most Christians

Johnson & Ross (2009:245) vividly illustrate the urban Christian growth rate in 2010 below (cf. figure 27). Notice the growth rate intensity in Northern Africa, where we are seeing rapid growth in Christian numbers in urban areas (confirmed by UN data).

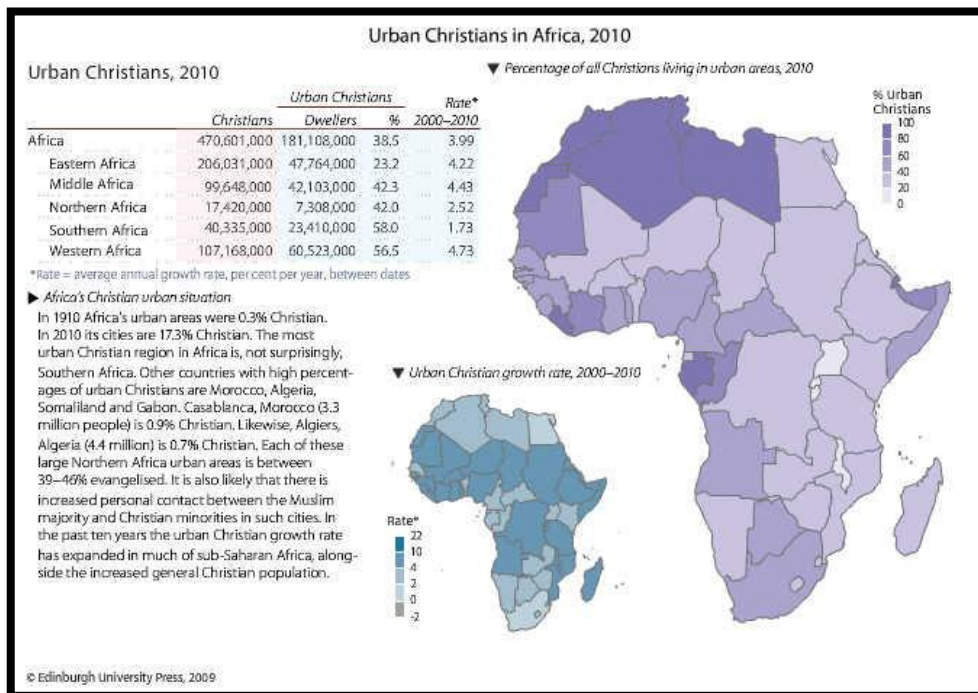


Figure 27 Urban Christians in Africa

7.2.3.1 History of urban centres in Africa

Despite their current growth, cities or large settlements of people have not been uncommon in Africa since the days of Alexandria in Egypt. “At its zenith the Afro-Hellenic city of Alexandria was larger than either Rome or Antioch, and of far more importance in the world of ideas, literature and learning. Alexandria stood for centuries as one of the three leading cities of the ancient world” (Oden 2007:16).

It is commonly recognized that the earliest known cities of Africa emerged around the Nile Valley. This valley, in addition to the Medjerda valley played a significant role in early Christian thought (cf. Oden 2007). There were also many early cities in Africa south of the Sahara. One of the first and most notable was Meroe (in present Sudan), capital of the Kush kingdom. It prospered between the 14th and the 4th century BC. Axum, capital of the Ethiopian kingdom exercised significant influence from the first century A.D. until about the 10th century AD. It had an extensive trade network with the Roman Mediterranean, southern Arabia and India, trading ivory, precious metals, clothing and spices.

Oden (2007:13) speaks of the influence of Africa on Christianity in the early Christian milieu:

The global Christian mind has been formed out of a specific history, not out of bare-bones theoretical ideas. Much of that history occurred in Africa. Cut Africa out of the Bible and the Christian memory, and you have misplaced many pivotal scenes of salvation history. It is the story of the children of Abraham in Africa, Joseph in Africa; Moses in Africa; Mary, Joseph and Jesus in Africa; and shortly thereafter Mark and Perpetua and Athanasius and Augustine in Africa (Oden 2007:13).

Oden, speaking of the importance of Asia, Africa and Europe in the early Christian memory, reminds us that Judaism and Christianity have their roots in the story of a people formed in the interface between Africa and Asia.

Jews and Christians would travel from Egypt to Jerusalem to Samaria to Antioch, and from there, to the uttermost parts of the earth. From Pentecost on, Africa would always have Christians. Dating from the first century, there are references to Apollos of Alexandria, the Libyans at Pentecost, Simon of Cyrene and Ethiopian

believers. These first-century African witnesses have continued without cessation in different generations and nationalities as a living testimony of African witnesses today, neither Jews nor Christians are new to Africa.

Cities are important centres of political power, economic activity, communication, scientific research, academic instruction and moral and spiritual influence. When cities are reached with the Gospel, history shows that nations are changed.

The 2006 world population chart developed by the United Nation's Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division (Downloadable: www.unpopulation.org) indicates:

- Developed countries have a higher percentage of urban dwellers (with a lower urban growth rate) and least developed countries have the lowest percentage of urban dwellers when compared to global averages (with a higher urban growth rate).
- Africa, in totality, is only 39% urban, Asia 41%, Europe 72%, Latin America and the Caribbean is 78% urban, Northern America are 81% urban, and Oceania is 71% urban.
- In Africa, Eastern Africa is 23% urban, Central Africa is 41% urban, Northern Africa is 52% urban, Western Africa is 44%, and Southern Africa is 57% urban.

7.2.3.2 Defining Urbanization and its effects in Africa

Urban areas (made up of cities, suburbs, slums, high and average-density areas encompassing metropolitan areas) are unmistakably the purveyors of culture, values and belief, states Barth (2011:3). Cities and their surrounds are where culture is formed and where the centres of education, entertainment the arts, music, literature, television and film and other media lie. Cities influence regions and nations due to the rapid rate of urbanization in Africa. If we continue to marginalize mission and ministry in urban areas, we do so at our own peril, discounting the eschatological 'character' of cities. Neal Peirce (1993) wrote in the Philadelphia Inquirer: "Great metropolitan regions-not cities, not states, not even nation states-are starting to emerge as the world's most influential players".

Barth (2011:3) makes a number of important points regarding ministry within the urban environment:

1. The city is God's invention and is part of his cosmic plan and purpose and should not be regarded as wholly evil.
2. Cities tend to stimulate and focus the gifts, talents, capacities and deep potential of those living within their borders.
3. Cities are often places of significant spiritual searching - here are often two kingdoms vying for control. Augustine (African theologian of the North African city of Hippo in the fourth Century) spoke of them as the City of Man and the City of God.

How did we get to where we are in Africa today with the vast number of growing cities in existence today? What is urbanization?

Urbanization refers to a process in which an increasing proportion of an entire population lives in cities and the suburbs of cities. Historically, it has been closely connected with industrialization and development. It is said that when more and

more inanimate sources of energy were used to enhance human productivity (industrialization), surpluses increased in both agriculture and industry.

Increasingly larger proportions of the population could live in cities; economic forces were such that cities were ideal places to position factories and labourers. In fact, cities are magnets for younger people, as earning potential in the city may be up by 300% from what would be earned in the rural context (cf. Seim 2012). This makes urban slums (whether progressive or regressive) of far greater appeal than rural/village contexts in Africa. Saunders (2010:2, 3), author of *'Arrival Cities'*, a fascinating journey into the future of our urban-posed world, states:

What will be remembered about the twenty-first century, more than anything else except perhaps the effects of a changing climate, is the great, and final, shift of human populations out of rural, agricultural life, into cities. We will end this century as a wholly urban species...if we make a... mistake today and dismiss the great migration as a negligible effect, as a background noise or a fate of others that we can avoid in our own countries, we are in danger of suffering far larger explosions and ruptures. Some aspects of this great migration are already unfolding in front of us: the tensions over immigration in the United States, Europe and Australia; the political explosions in Iran, Venezuela, Mumbai, Amsterdam, the outskirts of Paris... (Saunders 2010:2, 3).

Although *'Arrival Cities'*, as Saunders (2010) puts it are of paramount importance as relates to the great migration of people into creative urban spaces, a small part of the urban trend includes the fact that a number of people are moving to declining rural areas: "These urban escapees may be classified as: (1) the prosperous retired and semi-retired, (2) the mobile affluent person and vocational specialist, (3), the long distance commuter..." (Dubose 1978:23).

However, modern society is unmistakably urban, but "the shape and style of this modern urbanity have features unknown in the urban expressions of the past"

(Dubose 1978:24); neither do we do know, nor could we begin to imagine the shape of things to come in the urban landscape, especially in Africa.

African urban growth is diverse, and along with it comes suburban growth as the masses of predominantly middle-class people strive to live in the suburbs surrounding the city centre, and making up today's mega-cities. Vidal (2010), in The Guardian (UK), highlights the importance of this urban growth in Africa:

Africa has joined India and China as the third region of the world to reach a population of 1 billion people, and it is expected to double its numbers by 2050, the UN says. By then, there will be three times as many people living in Africa's cities, and the continent that had fewer than 500,000 urban dwellers in 1950 may have 1.3 billion.

The breakneck transformation of a rural population into a predominantly urban one is neither good nor bad on its own, says UN-Habitat, the Nairobi-based agency that monitors the world's built environment. But in a report it implored African countries to plan their cities better, to avoid mega-slums and vast areas of deprivation developing across the continent. "The pattern is ... oceans of poverty containing islands of wealth. Conditions in African cities are now the most unequal in the world. They are already inundated with slums and a tripling of urban populations could spell disaster, unless urgent action is initiated today. This situation threatens stability and also entire nations," it said (Vidal 2010:n.p.).

As the above report indicates, the greatest growth of many African cities relates to what can be called slums (and defined as either progressive or regressive). These slums require urgent attention as they represent the bulk of urban growth trends within the African context today. Figure 28 below (taken from UN-HABBITAT Urban Indicators) illustrates the growing importance of slums within developing countries - particularly within Africa, which has possibly the world's fastest urban growth rate. The darker colours illustrate an increased percentage of urban

population living in slums (most of Africa being over 50% with the greatest percentage in the world, 90%, seen in Middle Africa).

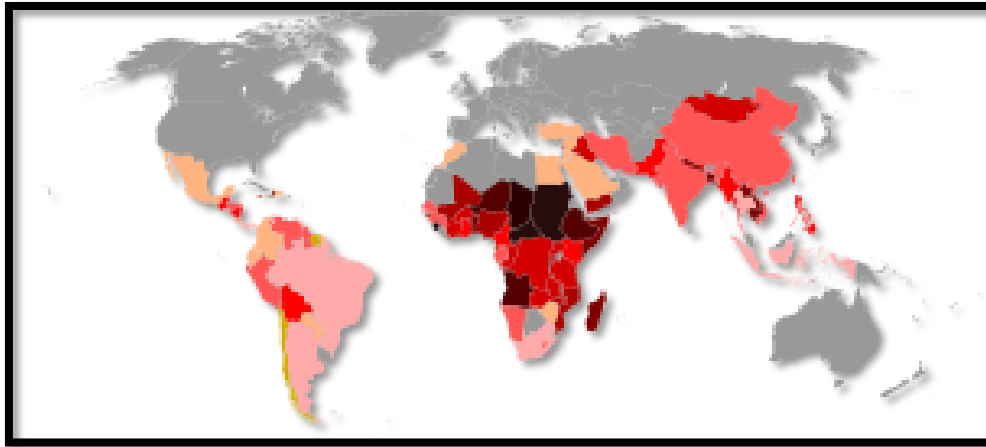


Figure 28 UN-HABBITAT

Some well-known slums in Africa include the following (cf. Wikipedia 2012):

- Agege, Nigeria
- Blikkiesdorp, Cape Town, South Africa
- City of the Dead, Cairo, Egypt
- Gatwekera, Nairobi, Kenya
- Kibera, Nairobi, Kenya
- QQ Section, (also known as Tambo Park) Khayelitsha, South Africa
- West Point, Monrovia, Liberia

Well-known slums in South Africa include the following (cf. Wikipedia 2012):

- Alexandra, Gauteng
- Cape Flats, Western Cape
- Freedom Park, North West

- Inanda, Gauteng
- Joe Slovo, Western Cape
- Kennedy Road, Kwa-Zulu Natal
- Cato Manor, Kwa-Zulu Natal
- Soweto, Gauteng
- Wallacedene, Western Cape

Vidal (2010:n.p.) gives a sense of hope that it is possible to decrease urban slums and cites examples of cities that have managed to reduce slum populations:

The report found many countries struggling to reverse the tide of slums. Egypt, Libya, Morocco have nearly halved their total number of urban slum dwellers, and Tunisia has eradicated them completely. Ghana, Senegal and Uganda have managed to reduce urban slum populations by more than 20%. More than 75% of Nigeria's population lived in slums in 1990, but that is now 61.9%. In South Africa, slum numbers dropped from 46.2% to 28.7% of the population between 1990 and 2010 (Vidal 2010:n.p.).

The image below (figure 29) indicates the expected growth of Africa's top urban centres, and further highlights the urgent need for a redefined focus on urban areas.

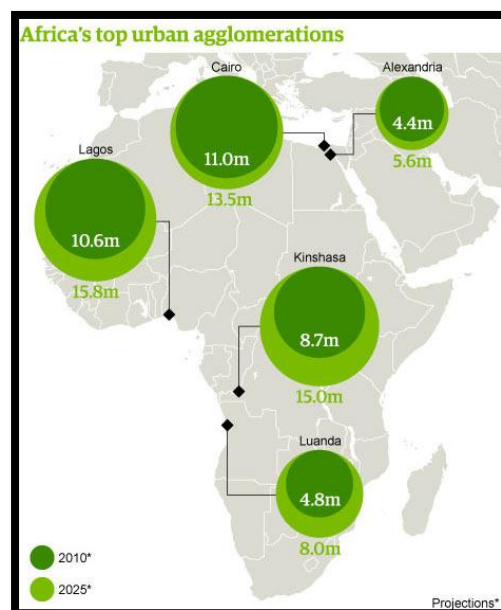


Figure 29 above: African Urban Agglomerates, taken from The Guardian(UK) report (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/nov/24/africa-billion-population-un-report>)

To close this section, I quote Saunders (2010:3):

The great migration of humans is manifesting itself in the creation of a special kind of an urban place. These transitional places, arrival cities, are the places where the next great economic and cultural boom will be born or where the next great explosion of violence will occur. The difference depends on our ability to notice and our willingness to engage (Saunders 2010:3).

7.2.3.3 Exegeting life in African cities

Life in the city is anything but what would be expected by someone who has grown up in another context. The World Bank Region Reports, Spring 2001 (World Bank 2001) state that the rates of urbanization in Africa are among the highest in the world. The problem comes in when there is a higher rate of urbanization, and a low rate of urban economic growth. There needs to be some form of sustainable development in urban areas to keep up with the increased urban growth rate.

Africa is a troubled continent; it has been plagued with the baggage of colonialism and western exploitation, with wars centering on issues of ethnicity, power, religion and politics. Political crises, famine, natural disasters, and the modern pandemic of HIV and AIDS are taking their toll on Africa's populace. Because most of the population of Africa, historically speaking, was rural, they sought hope for the future, empowerment, employment etc. and thought that migrating to major urban centres would alleviate their suffering. It did not; it continues to be a large source of disappointment, disillusionment and despair. Large urban migration, spanning over a continent at times, has contributed to increased levels of poverty, which is becoming predominantly an urban issue.

Life in the city is difficult, especially for the most vulnerable groups. Poverty is on the increase; food, shelter, water, sanitation, and employment are issues many have to cope with on a daily basis. The inner city is a merciless place that denies many the rights to very basic human needs. Cities draw migrants with the hope of higher standards of living, but the wealth produced does not result in prosperity for all. Crime is on the increase in many African cities, violent crimes are becoming more of a norm for residents in the city (especially in Johannesburg, South Africa). The young are targeted for gangsterism, drug and substance abuse and prostitution. They are unable to sustain themselves and so they easily fall easily as prey to drug lords and pimps. The aged are being 'land-locked' by crime and are isolated from the world at large; struggling to survive.

Public health is being addressed in the city, there are many clinics that treat patients at a minimal fee. The spread of sexually transmitted diseases (Including HIV and AIDS) in these areas is shocking, in fact the rate of infection in the rural areas is also being affected as workers migrate home and spread what they picked up in the city. There is, however, a glimmer of hope as the government and many Christian organizations are partnering to clean up the city and empower people with life skills to transform their lives. Although the process is extensive the results will only be seen in years to come. For many of South Africa's urban centres, the 2010 FIFA World Cup gave great impetus to cleaning up our cities and dealing with the many issues faced in these areas. Additionally, job creation and urban economic and aesthetic improvements during the preparation for the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup contributed greatly to the relative peace and improvement of main urban centres within South Africa.

7.2.3.4 Mission and the three spheres of life in South African urban centres

As far as I can see, the three main contexts found in urban South Africa are the Inner city, informal settlements, and the suburban areas. Understandably, these are broad outlines that can be broken up further if we are talking in economic terms of RDP (Rural Development Programme) or sub-economic housing, middle-income housing, and higher-income housing. This can be further broken down into social terms, with the various social strata. Religious, ethnic and political divisions are also a helpful way of understanding the South African urban context.

Because of the history of South Africa, most of the informal settlements would be located, geographically, outside the main city and suburban areas. The previous regime's policy of 'Apartheid' promoted segregation on the basis of ethnicity, and white superiority. Local black, Indian and coloured people were separated into townships with their own governing bodies and set ups. Development in Johannesburg today is so extensive that it almost seems to be blurring the lines of past divisions as the city of Johannesburg unfolds.

In South Africa we are moving away from racial, social, religious, economic and socio-political divisions, so that within one community one could now find a reasonably balanced microcosm of the liberated South African society.

The population living in RDP or sub-economic housing is made up mostly of South African migrants (in-migrants). These are largely the previously disadvantaged of

our society who are living on government pensions and irregular support from family. There are some foreigners there too who rent from South Africans who chose to remain in informal settlements. These developments are fairly recent and some of them are being built in the suburban areas where informal settlements developed.

The suburban areas cater for people from low, medium and higher income brackets. The inner city has been largely over-run by criminals and illegal landlords, and is home to all kinds of people from all walks of life. Companies and businesses are relocating to a more aesthetically attractive location and tend to move out towards Sandton, Fourways, and Midrand.

7.2.3.5 What is the impact and missiological importance of urbanization?

With the move to urban areas from other regions in South Africa increasing fragmentation of the family -unit is common-place. This contributes to the lack of role models for Africa's youth and the perpetuation of moral misconduct, loneliness and crime, as moral and value degeneration prevail.

Due to the mass migration of individuals to urban areas throughout Africa, poverty due to false hopes of employment and a better and brighter future, continues to be the dirge of many African migrants. Additionally, exploitation and the violation of human rights is the undercurrent within African cities and urban areas.

Unique to South Africa is what could be termed '*micro-migration*'. This phenomenon occurs within urban areas due to the demographic change post-1994 in the South African context specifically. With newfound equality prevailing within the '*new South Africa*' in the economic, political, social and religious sphere there has been increased freedom in migration and spending patterns. Additionally with the growing South African economy, South Africans (mainly whites) living in the suburbs have seen an influx of previously disadvantaged blacks, coloureds and Indians move into the suburbs as the middle-class segments of these strata increase in the *Rainbow Nation*. This presents the Church with a new challenge in integrating the diverse communities, now present within urban areas, into previously homogenous congregations (as data will show later, previously white-only BUSA Churches are multi-cultural, moving toward inclusion at all levels of church life and leadership). Traditional Churches in urban areas find themselves having to deal with more diversity in this mobile age too, with members and adherents continually moving to better jobs and new locations.

From a religious perspective there is the continued rise and efficiency of African Independent churches and Newer Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches (cf. Jenkins 2006:1) to the detriment of traditional and mainline Churches. As migration increases, Africans (including South Africans) introduce their respective brand of church/ Christianity wherever they relocate, thus growing the Christian faith through *en mass Diaspora*. In South Africa, there are increasing tensions between nationals and international migrants in all respects (economics probably being the most significant), but also in the religious sphere; foreigners are largely seen as an unwelcomed intrusion and as parasites feeding off the weak,

vulnerable and disenfranchised in South African cities. Xenophobia is on the increase due to macro-migration trends in the SADC region.

Economically speaking, a vast reduction in agricultural productivity can be seen with the growth of urban areas. Botswana illustrates this perfectly as since independence their agricultural output has changed from being the main contributor to GDP to a minor economic factor. With development and prosperity, Botswana experienced agricultural laxity, of which a small portion was large commercial farms. This means that the vast majority of the Botswana population are now dependent on imported goods from South Africa-at a price!

From a geographical and climatological perspective, increased urban patterns contribute to the global challenges with regard to climate change and increased pollution (urban islands⁹). This presents a challenge to churches to lead the way in being 'green' and teaching their members and adherents regarding creation care (cf. Wright 2006:397f).

7.2.4 Christian churches

At first it may seem incorrect to assert that Christian churches will pose a 'threat to African Christianity' in the near future, after all, Christianity is so intertwined with life in Southern Africa particularly, that it seems inseparable from culture and life. Additionally, should Christians not be more concerned about the rise and growth of

⁹ An urban heat island (UHI) is a metropolitan area which is significantly warmer than its surrounding rural areas. The phenomenon was first investigated and described by Luke Howard in the 1810s, although he was not the one to name the phenomenon. The temperature difference usually is larger at night than during the day, and is most apparent when winds are weak. Taken from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Urban_heat_island.

Islam within Africa rather than the 'church'? although this may be true, it needs to be a 'both and' approach, rather than an 'either or'. However, African churches in particular MIC and AIC will have to deal with a threat that comes from another family of churches. Oduro et al (2008:2-13) describe this concept accurately. This challenge will come from a group of what can be termed New Pentecostal-type churches (NPC) or newer Pentecostal and Charismatic churches (PPC's- Jenkins 2006) that are on the increase and Oduro et al state that their numbers are so large and the movement so remarkable and complicated that it almost defies understanding. They do not address NPC significantly in their book "*Mission in an African way*", however, they state that what differentiates NPC from AIC is their view of and approach to contextualization and their ways of getting the Gospel to the poor (transmission). AIC contextualize their churches to fit the values of a traditional Africa, whereas NPC contextualize their churches to fit the values of modern Africa - this is more appealing today no matter what the audience. In another sense, the NPC's target audience differs tremendously, and because of its appeal to the younger generation, NPC's will grow significantly in Africa as a far larger proportion of the African populace is between the ages of 15–35 than above that age group.

NPC see poverty as a curse and promote their churches as the solution to poverty, whereas AIC are the churches of and for the poor (Oduro et al 2008:209). NPC will impact the face of African Christianity significantly due to the nature of the movement itself. However, we cannot fully define the effects of this movement as it is still in its formative stages of development. With their current emphasis and attitude, they will most likely cause more schism and division among African

Christians and will no doubt be accused of ‘sheep stealing’ by both AIC and MIC in the near future. This movement will have an increasing appeal to the younger ‘modern’ African generation and will force AIC and MIC to think differently, and perhaps even drag them into the twenty-first century context, forcing them to deal realistically with the challenges to be faced within its purview. This presents a challenge, yet therein lies opportunity.

7.2.4.1 What is the impact and Missiological importance of Christian Churches?

- NPC’s are increasingly influencing the younger ‘up-and-coming’ communities located in poorer (often slum) areas within urban centres. They have a strong cultural appeal, but are often lacking in theological training.
- NPC that started out as single-site churches are fast becoming multi-site churches with campuses wherever members from the mother church may find themselves. Unfortunately, these churches (part of the African Diaspora) are not always culturally inclusive and will have an expiry date as far as reaching the next generation growing up within another cultural landscape.
- Opportunity for solidarity in action and theological dialogue between groupings. “These may serve as a framework for further theological dialogue and partnership. At the end of the day, African theology may be richer for it” (cf. Maluleke 2007:421). However, this is increasingly difficult

within the NPC as there are few links between churches and leadership within these churches may be bi-vocational, or untouchable!

7.2.5 Leadership Enigma

Leadership has been dealt with at various levels in this dissertation and a major part of Chapter 10 encompasses the specifics of leading toward missional change, which is an integral aspect of my argument development and central thesis. In this section, I will outline some of the broader issues at stake and will deal with these in greater detail in the chapter to follow. Adeyemo (2009:1) rightly states:

Leadership is the measure of any nation, institution or organization. If the people in leadership are intellectually and morally bankrupt and moribund, chances are that the nation, institution or organization will be non-progressive and backward. But where there is dynamic, visionary, altruistic and integral leadership, you will find that the followers are forward-looking, engaging, committed and generally optimistic (Adeyemo 2009:1).

Maxwell is correct where he states that everything rises and falls on leadership, as what is at stake over leadership is of high importance. Nations rise or fall, governments prosper or fail, and institutions thrive or collapse based on leadership. Africa's leadership is enigmatic. During the height of the Colonial era there evolved the fight for freedom from imperial rule on the continent. A number of freedom fighters became well known for their efforts to free Africa at all costs from oppression, poverty, illiteracy, disease and human indignity and unite previously shattered fragments of a bitterly divided continent. Names such as Nelson Mandela (South Africa), Walter Sisulu (South Africa), Julius Nyerere (Tanzania), Patrice Lumumba (Congo, DR), Kenneth Kaunda (Zambia), Samora Machel (Mozambique), Nnamdi Azikwe (Nigeria), and many others that cannot be mentioned here, are synonymous with the liberation cause in Africa. During an

unparalleled time in African history when the foreign flags were replaced by national flags, and the governing power lay in the hands of Africa's population, expectation was at its highest ever. However, almost half a century after Africa's independence many are left wondering what all the fuss was about. After all, Africa is still the most poverty-stricken continent on earth, illiteracy is high, and xenophobia is prevalent. Africa is still known as "the bleeding continent" (cf. Adeyemo 2009:3). Adeyemo (2009:3) quotes an important Yoruba saying:

'When the drum beats change, the footwork of the dancers must change'. Otherwise, the dancing will be uncoordinated and the dancers look absurd. African leaders (especially the policy and decision makers) are still dancing to the old tune... Africa has moved on and her contemporary issues and challenges call for a different class of leadership that will move her forward.

7.2.5.1 What is the impact and Missiological importance of Africa's Leadership enigma?

- Currently, within BUSA and in the broader context, an administration focus (maintaining the 'system' or programmes) prohibiting pastors/leaders from leading in a visionary manner, leading to an inability to move forward and onward.
- Jealousy and in-fighting for power and prestige attached to leadership positions (can be tribal).
- Lack of service focus within areas of gifting.
- Transition in leadership is often unplanned and harmful to the organization, and the people which it serves.
- Younger generations are seen as a threat to current leaders, and are not always given the recognition and rewards due for their effort.

- There is a lack of accountability structures and an unwillingness to be the one responsible for taking a decision or implementing one. Perhaps this is due to fear?
- Racial issues, particularly within South Africa, still dominate the scene, on both church and state fronts.
- As migration trends continue, the influx of foreign 'leaders' into our communities poses a threat to locals which is often met with outbreaks of violence and large scale xenophobia.
- Corruption continues to be one of the greatest, and most obvious challenges to leadership today.
- Self-preservation and community development are often not balanced well.
- Self-identity issues pervade African leadership as traditional values continue to erode against the ever-increasing tide of Western Capitalism. Which system is better? Which system provides resources needed for prosperity? Which voices have the greatest influence?
- Change, especially in the sphere of mission, must be owned and driven by leaders in order to have a lasting impact.

7.2.6 Emerging grass-roots theologies

The agenda for theology is no longer being dominated by the West, and will continue to take a backseat to emerging issues within the Global South (See Jenkins 2007). African scholars, as well as those of the Global South in general, are awakening to their respective roles within the on-going global theological discourse. The Bible has enjoyed a respected status and place within African

theology, so much so that Mbiti (1979:90) states; “Any viable theology must and should have a biblical basis.” Similarly, Fashole-Luke (1975:141) declares that the Bible is the basic and primary source of African Christian theology. The primacy of the Bible in African Christianity (and within the Global South) is highlighted in Jenkins’ book, *‘The New Faces of Christianity’* (2006), where the faith of the Global South is proved to be, first and foremost a biblical faith (with varying, largely fundamentalist interpretations).

Throughout Africa Scripture is held in high esteem, although, previously many within the African Protestant spectrum tended to ‘absolutize’ Scripture, many have observed an encouraging development where “attempts are being made not only to develop creative biblical hermeneutic methods, but also to observe and analyze the manner in which African Christians ‘read’ and view the Bible” (Maluleke 2007:417).

There are a number of African theologies, which have historically ‘dominated’ African theology. African theology of Liberation and South African Black Theology are among those which need to be recognized. Maluleke (2007:418) argues that the historic distinctions between these African theologies are no longer adequate. “With the changing ideological map and the sweeping changes on the African continent itself, the agendas of what has been termed ‘African theologies of Inculturation’ as opposed to ‘African theologies of Liberation’ plus South African Black Theology are moving closer together” (Maluleke 2007:418). This does not mean, however, that certain strands are redundant or about to be phased out, rather, our search is for something real and authentic shaped by the contours of

life in Africa within the twenty-first century context. This means that within this next milieu we will need to begin to 'speak and do' African theology differently. There are four emerging models (excluding reconstruction theology) of significance that Maluleke (2007:419-424) presents as being current indicators of the new directions into which African theologies will move within the foreseeable future.

7.2.6.1 Theologies of the AIC's

The proliferation of AIC throughout many parts of Southern Africa has been phenomenal and its impact undeniable. Many authors, including David Barrett, and Christian Baeta, to name two, have in recent years added to academia great works on AIC's which has resulted in a flood of theses and books on AIC's. The AIC is of great importance to the Southern African religious scene specifically as its numerical growth in many regions has been so significant that one could say that in many parts of Africa they have become the mainline churches (cf. Maluleke 2007:420). They are seen as the fifth major Christian Church type after Eastern Orthodox Churches, the Roman Catholic Church, Protestant Churches and Pentecostal-type Churches. Maluleke cautions readers not to romanticize the AIC by thinking that their praxis is more African and more grassroots-based or genuine than expressions found within other African Churches, or even mainline ones. They must be studied together and in doing so will enrich the African theological heritage moving forward.

7.2.6.2 African Charismatic/ Evangelical Theology

It can be said that African Christianity is generally evangelical, even Pentecostal in orientation. This has, in many cases, resulted in great theological tensions between various groupings that claim to be evangelical. All over Africa, evangelicals exist in organized and confessional communities. They are, of course, no less heterogeneous in theological outlook than 'ecumenical' African Christians. Makuleke brings to our attention the fact that within South Africa one may think of Ray McCauley's Rhema Bible Church and its affiliates, Michael Cassidy's African Enterprise, and a grouping which has recently been called 'the Concerned Evangelicals'. There have always been, and will continue to exist, great tensions and suspicions between groupings in Africa. However, I agree with Maluleke's (2007:420, 421) observation that within the twenty-first century we can no longer ignore these issues or try to smooth them over. "One of the challenges we face, is to seek out all expressions of African Theology and Christianity, however inadequate and suspicious, so that we may expose them to serious and dialogical theological reflection".

Despite the various tensions that have existed, there are also cases of tremendous solidarity in action and theological dialogue in many places. These serve as a framework for further dialogue and partnership and ultimately further enrich African Theology. These efforts are commendable and necessary in such as time as this.

7.2.6.3 Translation Theologies

Both Sanneh and Bediako agree that the Gospel's inherent translatability was the determining factor of the vast numerical growth experienced throughout Africa, as the Christian message was accepted by the masses. Sanneh (2008) argues that it was the logic and translatability of the Gospel into African vernacular languages rather than the efforts of missionaries (whether good or bad) that led to its growth and acceptance in Africa. Bediako on the other hand is highly critical of some African theologians who see the Christian faith as 'foreign'. Bediako states that Christianity is a non-western religion, thus our preoccupation with the foreign-ness of the Christian faith is no longer necessary.

Maluleke (2007:422) cautions that the translatability of the Gospel does not eliminate the significance of the role of the missionary enterprise or Colonialism. "While the Gospel may indeed be eminently translatable, human intervention can affect the pace and quality of such translation even arresting it into all sorts of orthodoxies".

7.2.6.4 African Feminist/ Womanist theologies

The rise of African feminist events, organizations and publications since the early 1980's has been tremendous. However, agreeing with Maluleke (2007:421), "... it is a serious indictment of African male theologies that women's issues have not received immediate and unreserved acceptance". Maluleke (2007) described the rise and importance of this movement as well as relevant implications at some length, however, what is of great importance to recognize is that feminist

organizations have succeeded in creating space for Feminist/ Womanist theologies to grow and blossom, both in Africa as well as internationally. These movements are beginning to contribute significantly and perhaps prophetically to a critical theological evaluation of African culture and what it means to be both Christian and African today. “African Womanist theologians are teaching us how to criticize African culture without denigrating it, showing us that the one does and should not necessarily lead to the other”. (Maluleke 2007:423) By all indications, twenty-first century African theology will be more gendered. We are duly advised and should begin to take heed.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

A consideration of change on a global level is of paramount importance to any mission conversation within Africa, as what happens on the global Christian scene impacts upon local African theologies and Christianities. This chapter has dealt with a select few macro trends, challenges and threats to Christianity in an African context. Volumes more could be said regarding Islam, gender issues, technology and the like which pose a similar threat to the growth and development of Christianity within Africa. However, I have tried to focus specifically on issues that may impact directly upon the ministry of BUSA currently and in the foreseeable future. What has been covered in this chapter is sufficient for the purpose and application of this dissertation; being directed toward BUSA. These threats also illuminate the context within which BUSA churches minister and should assist BUSA churches to identify with trends that can help shape future ministry within our churches.

What this chapter has shown is that our context of ministry is one of discontinuous change; as Baptists, we need to acknowledge that the world around us is changing and continues to challenge us in our ministry focus moving ahead. BUSA and its leaders cannot assume that the world we live in today is the same as even a decade ago. Leaders need to understand the times we live in and gain greater appreciation for scientific inquiry and cultural mapping/ exegesis as both our text (Scripture, unchanging authoritative reality) and context (in a place and at a specific time, ever-changing) shape the way we engage people as we fulfil the *missio Dei* under the direct Lordship of Christ. Ministry strategy needs to be determined as the text and context dialogue and co-mingle through intentional, deliberate exposure and dialogue which does not seem to be the case in much of what BUSA strives to achieve in its ministry within this emerging era.

PART THREE

THE NEED FOR AN AFRO-CENTRIC MISSIONAL ECCLESIOLOGY

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the overall significance/ importance of an Afro-centric missional ecclesiology, taking into consideration both local and global trends and conversations?
2. How important is the missional concept for Africa's Christians?
3. What is a missional church and how should one define an Afro-centric missional ecclesiology that is relevant and valid for Africa's Christians?

PURPOSE STATEMENT

This section will substantiate the role and importance of what can be termed missional ecclesiology-taking both local and global trends and conversations into consideration. Additionally, the main aim of this section is to objectify the necessity for a missional ecclesiology and define what this would mean for Africa specifically. How this may develop within BUSA (case study) will be developed further in Part Four.

CHAPTER 8

THE ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF AN AFRO-CENTRIC MISSIONAL ECCLESIOLOGY

8.1 Setting the record straight

There is no denying it; the Church in Africa has grown exponentially since the onset of the mission century (20th Century). However, there is an urgent need to recognize that for the current church renewal to bear lasting effects, special attention will need to be paid to the doctrine of the church - especially through a missional lens!

This ecclesiological (and missional) resurgence has been largely evident in the West through the proliferation of books written about the church. For example; *The Church on the Other Side* (McLaren 1998), *Changing World, Changing Church* (Moynagh 2001), *Church Next* (Gibbs 2001), *The Provocative Church* (Tomlin 2002), *Liquid Church* (Sweet 2002), *Mission-Shaped Church* (Bayes 2004), *The Emerging Church* (Kimball et al 2004), *The Church Invisible* (Petrelli 2004), *God's New Community* (Beynon 2005), *Organic Church* (Cole 2005), *Emerging Churches* (Gibbs & Bolger 2006), *Church Unique* (Mancini 2008), *Reveal* (Parkinson & Hawkins 2009) and *Move* (Parkinson & Hawkins 2011), *Comeback Churches* (Stetzer and Dodson 2010), *AND - The gathered and Scattered Church* (Smay 2010), *Barefoot Church* (Hatmaker 2011).

In recent days it has become increasingly difficult to open a ministry book or attend a Church conference and not be accosted in some way or other by the word 'missional'. In the preface to *'The Church Going Glocal'* (part of the Edinburgh 2010 series (cf. Jorgenson et al 2011:25, 26) conclude that within the twenty-first century it has become colloquial, in many settings, to talk of the church as being missional. It seems that today, many within traditional, only 2% of respondents to my missional church survey indicated that being missional was a 'passing fad'; the remainder of respondents thought relatively highly of what a missional ecclesiology can mean for church life in post-Christendom, post-Colonial/ post-modern Christianity.

In similar fashion to the proliferation of books on the Church, there is an increasing number of books being written on missional theology. Some examples include; *The Open Secret* (Newbigin 1995), *Missional Church: A vision for the sending of the North American Church* (Guder 1998), *The Continuing Conversion of the Church* (Guder 2000), *Treasures in Jars of Clay* (Barrett 2004), *The Forgotten Ways* (Hirsch 2006), *The Mission of God* (Wright 2006), *The Ministry of the Missional Church* (van Gelder 2007), *Planting Missional Churches* (Stetzer 2006), *Exiles* (Frost 2006), *The Mission of God's People* (Wright 2010), *Introducing the Missional Church* (Roxburgh & Boren 2010), *The Missional Church in perspective* (van Gelder & Zscheile 2011), *Right Here, Right Now* (Hirsch & Ford 2011). These titles are only a small proportion of the publications on this topic currently! One can only surmise that the reason for the preponderance of material relating to the Church and its mission relates to a pressing need for a reinvestigation of the role and importance of Christ's Church in society today. Edinburgh 1910 indicates to us

that it was not always like this; Jorgensen et al (2011:26) reminds us of the missiological/ ecclesiological journey travelled since Edinburgh 1910:

Another global perspective of Edinburgh 2010 has to do with the change in forms of missionary engagement and with the missional identity of the church. Edinburgh 1910 was a missionary conference with a focus on traditional mission, mission societies, missionaries, and the missionary encounter in foreign lands. The past century has radically changed our way of thinking. We have come to see the church as essentially missionary, it exists in being sent. Missionary activity is not the work of the church but the church at work. God is a missionary God (*missio Dei*) wherefore God's people are a missionary people. Edinburgh 1910 talked about church and mission; today we must talk about the mission of the church (Jorgensen et al 2011:26).

The Edinburgh 2010 Common Call represents another example of the growing need for and awareness of missional thinking:

...affirming the importance of the biblical foundations of our missional engagement and valuing the witness of the Apostles and martyrs, we are called to rejoice in the expressions of the gospel in many nations all over the world. We celebrate the renewal experienced through movements of migration and mission in all directions, the way all are equipped for mission by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and God's continual calling of children and young people to further the gospel.

Additionally, the Edinburgh 2010 Common Call (ibid.) focuses ecclesiastical attention to where it is most needed; Christo-centric missiology:

Remembering Jesus' way of witness and service, we believe we are called by God to follow this way joyfully, inspired, anointed, sent and empowered by the Holy Spirit, and nurtured by Christian disciplines in community. As we look to Christ's coming in glory and judgment, we experience his presence with us in the Holy Spirit, and we invite all to join with us as we participate in God's transforming and reconciling mission of love to the whole creation.

However, as church leaders continue to pile onto the missional bandwagon, the true meaning of the word may be getting buried under a pile of good assumptions.

Some earnestly ask: "Is it simply updated nomenclature for being purpose-driven

or seeker-sensitive? Is missional a new, more mature strain of the emerging Church movement” (cf. Hirsch 2006:60)? Jorgensen et al (2011:27, 28) adds to the importance of defining and understanding the term missionary and missional:

Edinburgh 1910 often used the word *missionary* to refer to specific mission activities of the church. That word and concept will remain on the mission agenda of the twenty-first century. But increasingly the word *missional* will be employed when we want to talk about *the nature of the church* as sent by God to the world. The primary form of missionary engagement in the new century will most likely be such missional congregations and churches in both the West and the Global South, using missional structures that go beyond the hierarchies of the past and providing a balance between worship, community and mission.

In such churches a primary missional vocation will be *witness*. Mission has always been and will always remain *witness*. *Martyria* is the sum of *kerygma*, *koinonia* and *diakonia* – all three of which constitute important dimensions of the witness of the church in mission (Jorgensen et al 2011:27, 28).

In our defining ‘missional’ holistically it is important to note that, contrary to popular belief, missional church is not synonymous with the emerging church movement (as established earlier). The emerging church is primarily a *renewal movement* attempting to contextualize Christianity for a largely post-modern audience. Thus, it is primarily and historically tied to the Global North. Missional is also not the same as evangelistic or seeker-sensitive, as so many think these days. The above terms generally apply to an attractional model of church that has largely dominated particularly the North American Church scene for many years. Missional is not a new way to talk about church growth either, although God clearly desires the church to grow numerically, it is only one part of the larger missional agenda. Missional is far more than social justice, for engaging the poor and correcting inequalities is part of being God’s agent in the world, but we should not confuse this with the whole.

There is little disagreement among Christian leaders, pastors and scholars that mission is central to the life of the Church - it is the life of the Church! The fact that the Church is sent into the world by God (*missio Dei*) and therefore is missional is a very fundamental statement about the Church that should influence all other aspects and activities of the Church. Engelsviken et al (2011:66) reminds us to be mindful about using 'missional' terminologically: "Although many of us use it all the time, the phrase 'church *and* mission' may be misleading since the church *is* mission. To be missional belongs to the very essence of the church. It is therefore the local church and universal church as missional church...". Additionally, Hirsh (2006:63) insists; a proper understanding of 'missional' begins with *recovering a missionary understanding of God*. God, by His very nature, is a 'sent one' who takes the initiative to redeem His creation.

Bosch (2007:390), speaking primarily of the influence of Post-modernism and African theologies, aptly states: "We confess God to be a missionary God, a sending God, according to Bosch a 'fountain of sending love'." The Second Vatican Council decreed that mission is "nothing else, nothing less, than the manifestation of God's plan, its epiphany and realisation in the world and in history" (Specifically *Ad Gentium* 2, 9). Thus, God is believed to be a sending (and sent) God by nature and by plan who takes the initiative in dealing with the world. 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. Lausanne Covenant, Article 6). 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. Lausanne Covenant, Article 8) 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.

This doctrine, known as *missio Dei* - the sending of God - is causing many to redefine their understanding of the church in line with its intended Trinitarian orientation. Thus, the Church is missionary by nature, just as God is a missionary God, so the Church must be a missionary Church. "This is the fundamental meaning behind the four attributes of the Church confessed in the Apostle's Creed: one, holy, catholic (universal), and apostolic. Each of these marks of the Church points to the missional character of the people of God" (Bliese 2006:238). Bosch (2007:391) states: The Church, as *missio ecclesiae*, is sent to represent God and God's mission in and over against the world, pointing to God ...in its mission, the Church witnesses to the fullness of the promise of God's reign and participates in the on-going struggle between that reign and the powers of darkness and evil." "*Missio Dei*, then, articulates God's love for the world and God's initiative in saving

it, which precedes and surpasses the Church” (Meiring 2008:792). *Missio Dei* reminds us that church identity and activity are unified. Flett (2010:28) reminds us that mission is not a secondary, optional and derivative thing that churches (or their delegates) do once they have the ‘main thing down’. When we pull apart God and mission, Christian life and mission can get pulled apart too. Sharing the gospel can end up being more like propaganda than the sharing of the gospel.

Furthermore, Peters (1972:27) importantly states:

Missions is the progressive objectification of the eternal and benevolent purpose of God which roots in his very being and character and which embraces all ages, races and generations.... Missions is the historic effectuation of God’s salvation... missions is the practical realization of the Holy Spirit operating in this world on behalf of the eternal purpose of God... missionary theology is not an appendix to Biblical theology; it belongs at its very core. No doctrine of God, Christ or the Holy Spirit has been expounded completely according to the Bible until it has established the Triune God as the outgoing God of mission... (Peters 1972:27).

Bevans & Schroeder (2011:15) argue:

The church comes to be as the church engages in mission...to go into the world and be God’s saving, healing, challenging presence... mission precedes the church. Mission is first of all God’s... almost incredibly - as an act of grace - God shares that mission with women and men. Mission calls the church into being to serve God’s purposes in the world. The church does not have a mission, but the mission has a church (Bevans & Schroeder 2011:15).

Important for our consideration; being missional relates to our understanding the ‘*sending*’ posture of the Church, and as Guder (1998:4) argues, points to the unique call of the Church to be in, with, for and against the world. Because we are the ‘sent’ people of God, the Church is the instrument of God’s mission in the world. As things stand, many people see it the other way around. They believe

mission is an instrument of the Church; a means by which the Church is grown. Although we frequently say 'the Church has a mission', according to missional theology a more correct statement would be 'the mission has a Church' (as is confirmed by Bevans & Schroeder 2011 referred to above).

God sent his Son into the world with a mission, the Holy Spirit is sent by the Father and Son with a distinct mission, and it follows that the Church, baptised in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is being sent into the world on a unique mission empowered and guided by the Holy Spirit.

Mission lies at the heart of the Church's calling. The Church does not (should not) exist to serve its own interests, or to ensure survival and ecclesiastical continuity, rather, the Church is called into being by the *missio Dei*; the Triune God's on-going engagement with the world to reconcile (2 Cor. 5: 17f), transform (Rom. 12: 2, 3), conform and ultimately fulfil the original divine creative intent in it. A statement from the Lausanne Covenant expresses the power of the Holy Spirit in world mission:

The Father sent his Spirit to bear witness to his Son; without his witness ours is futile. Conviction of sin, faith in Christ, new birth and Christian growth are all his work. Further, the Holy Spirit is a missionary spirit; thus evangelism should arise spontaneously from a Spirit-filled Church. A Church that is not a missionary Church is contradicting itself and quenching the Spirit. Worldwide evangelization will become a realistic possibility only when the Spirit renews the Church in truth and wisdom, faith, holiness, love and power. We therefore call upon all Christians to pray for such a visitation of the sovereign Spirit of God that all his fruit may appear in all his people and that all his gifts may enrich the body of Christ. Only then will the whole Church become a fit instrument in his hands, that the whole earth may hear his voice (Lausanne Covenant, Article 14).

The Church, contrary to popular belief, does not exist to do missions, rather it exists to participate in the work of God as it worships and follows Jesus into the

places in the world where God has sent it. The purpose of the Church in mission is to point to the Kingdom of God and through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit ensure that the reign of God takes pre-eminence in the lives of men and women. Therefore, being missional does not presuppose a set of guidelines or rules to follow. Although popularized by some, there is no 'ten step process' or magical formula to becoming missional - it is not another popular fad and claims no quick-fix solution. Rather, being missional presupposes a journey of discernment and will require a fair amount of experimentation and risk (it tends to be counter-intuitive). The missional church concept will be familiar yet new; familiar in the sense that there has always been within the Church a thread of the Gospel that, in every generation and in every place and cultural grouping, has spoken to the deep need people have for a personal relationship with God; for reconciliation with God and others. The Church's missional nature is rooted in the fact that being missional is: biblical, historical, contextual, eschatological and practical (cf. Guder 1998). This encompasses McKnight's (2011) proposal for a gospel culture as opposed to a salvation culture. This is missional and truer to Scripture and what Christ set out to accomplish. This means that being missional is rooted not in philosophy or ideological speculation but in biblical truth; it is rooted in the struggles of the worldwide Church to remain true to its identity and calling throughout history; it is incarnational and universal, yet particular and local; it is contextual. Missional church is eschatological in that the Church is moving towards a goal (*telos* - the end); being God's new creation. The missional church is practical; it is not strictly theoretical, nor is it inapplicable, it affects people at grassroots level, which is one of the movement's greatest strengths.

8.2 Missional's menacing and misunderstood meaning

Although the terminology may be new to many people today, the word 'missional' has been in the dictionary for over 100 years, defined in the 1907 Oxford English Dictionary as something that is of, or pertaining to, missionaries (cf. van Gelder & Zscheile 2011:2). However, those who use the word today do so with broader applications in mind. Missional refers to:

A philosophy of ministry that followers of Christ are counter-cultural, on a mission to change the culture. Missional refers to the specific activity of churches: to build the Kingdom of God in all settings where church members are at work, rather than building up the local congregation, its programs, numbers, and facilities (Reed 2007:20).

In the missional conversation, starting with ecclesiology (things pertaining to the Church) is a grave mistake; our first approach should be Theocentric (it is God's mission!) or Christological. We should be asking 'how can we show Christ's love to those in society?', as opposed to 'how can we start a ministry or church?' Ultimately, "mission doesn't necessarily or directly mean multiplying churches, but finding ways to show God's love and greatness to the world" (Roberts 2007:29). That means 'worship' is of ultimate importance. Piper's (2009:64) statement is true in this respect: "Missions (as we have experienced it historically) is not the ultimate goal of the Church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn't ... worship is also the fuel of missions ... mission begins and ends in worship ...". The point I am making here, in connection with Piper's quote, is that missional Christians are not denominational-focussed, mission-orientated, not church-centred, numbers-driven, programme oriented - being missional is seen as living out the *missio Dei* as one works and worships. The old adage applies here - worship is a life-style! Thus, being missional is less about what we do, and more

about who we are; it is a question of *identity* rather than *orientation*. Van Gelder & Zschiele (2011:3) remind us that the ecclesio-centric formulation and understanding of mission has been replaced in our era by a radically Theo-centric conceptualization of mission (cf. Bosch 2007:390; Guder 1998:4). Ultimately, if one focuses on mission, churches will follow, but if you focus on churches, missions often gets neglected, and in many cases lost. Most churches today have some sort of mission statement/s, or talk about the importance of mission, but where truly missional churches differ, Hirsch (2006:64) states, are in their posture toward the world. A missional community sees the mission as both its originating impulse and its organizing principle. Hirsch (2006:65) continues:

A missional community is patterned after what God has done in Jesus Christ. In the incarnation God sent his Son. Similarly, to be missional means to be sent into the world; we do not expect people to come to the church automatically. This posture differentiates a missional church from an attractional church (Hirsch 2006:65).

Van Gelder and Zscheile (2011:4) give four important themes (insights that redefine how we think about the church) in the North American missional conversation specifically (with application globally):

1. God is a missionary God who sends the church into the world;
2. God's mission in the world is related to the reign of God (kingdom);
3. The missional church is an incarnational (versus an attractional) ministry sent to engage a postmodern, post-Christendom, globalized context;
4. The internal life of the missional church focusses on every believer living as a disciple engaging in mission.

However, in any missional journey, I believe that there are two dangerous distractions to avoid; self-preservation and church growth strategies. Although neither of these concepts, in and of itself, represents any great threat to

Christianity, they represent false and deceiving views pertaining to the life and ministry of churches. Firstly, self-preservation can hinder the work of God as it distracts from what He is already doing in the world and places the emphasis on the church in an unhealthy way. In a missional setting, those outside of the church should receive the same level of concern as those already inside the church. Unfortunately this is not always the case in many more traditional evangelical churches around the world. Thus, many churches are missing out on the blessing of rediscovering the beauty of God's work because they are so caught up in existing for the sake of the church. The result is that the church becomes something of a club where membership is taken out and benefits like marriage, baby dedication or christening (in some traditions) and funerals are taken care of. The church is a mere provider of services of a spiritual nature, catering strictly to those who are 'in the club'. Baptism in many churches (certainly BUSA churches) serves as a point of entry into membership, voting is restricted to members, serving is restricted to members (e.g. deacon nominations in some BUSA churches). Churches are increasingly becoming closed societies. What we often neglect to realise is that the church is not of ultimate importance; the church is, in essence, temporary. This earth and all its trappings are temporary; our citizenship is in heaven (Phil 3: 20). The Kingdom of God and the mission of God are what counts and what ultimately deserve our undivided attention as the church. After all, the church is the means to do the mission. The church is meant to serve mission, not the other way round.

Secondly, an unhealthy focus on church growth strategies and models that seems to be the focus of many churches and denominations where numbers are

diminishing. This is true also of churches/denominations that have seen recent numerical growth, and is built upon the fallacy that numerical growth is always a sign of church health, and even an indicator of a growing influence. However, many churches in Africa (especially in urban settings) often experience growth through transfer of members from one church to another.

Therefore, church growth should not be the ultimate goal of the church. Church growth is the result of many factors, and, as I read the New Testament particularly, is the result of participation in God's mission, and obedience to Christ within a certain setting. We should not invest too much in attractional church ministry as it is built on a faulty hermeneutic. In fact, I am not sure that it is biblical. It is a good idea, but as I see it, not every good idea is a 'God idea', not every good idea is wholly biblically sound and culturally applicable. Not every attractional model of ministry will result in desired growth. If you build it, they may not come. As I write this paragraph I am gazing at an advert in a leading Christian leadership magazine that states "Triple your impact, triple your attendance, church facilities, ministry staff and operating budget in 36 months or less." What a claim! This company embraced the church growth, seeker-sensitive and purpose-driven model of ministry and has built church facilities all over North America. They claim that their network of churches with this emphasis have "tripled their impact by developing strategic ministry plans and state-of-the-art facilities". I am left wondering; where is the mystery of how God works things together for good? Where is the heavenly provision and vision of local leaders for their communities? What if people do not come once buildings have been built and all has been done right humanly speaking? Don't get me wrong; attractional ministry has its place and it does add

value to the ministry of the church as it seeks to be relevant and contextualize within any given context. However, the problem arises when attracting people to church *becomes the mission*. Remember, the mission is not to grow the church; the mission is to participate with God in His activity in the world, showing Jesus' love so that the world may be reconciled to God. That's the mission; growth is a by-product of healthy mission. Attractional ministry can be destructive and counterproductive, yet so many pastors and church leaders buy into it as it perhaps satisfies their egos in that they are doing something (visible?) for the Kingdom. Attractional ministry has its roots in a 'Constantinian model' of church life where 'pagans' were drawn to the church property and became part of the life of the church. This model began with the Roman Empire, especially after Constantine's conversion, when Christianity became the official Roman religion. Since that time, a 'Constantinian model' has led congregations to emphasize that what happens in the physical church building or service is 'church'. Consequently, congregations offer worship services and education programs but are weak in ministry outside the church building. If those in the community want to join the life of faith, they must leave their culture and come join the church; this seems to be the prevailing attitude. The church does not go to them. This 'come to us' model functioned in the Western Church in the culture of Christendom (Claydon 2005b:n.p.).

However, being missional in our era tends to be counter-intuitive. When a church focuses on trying to grow and meet the needs of others (consumer driven) the larger mission suffers and the church becomes less attractive. When a church focuses on how they can join God at work in the world and make adjustments to

make it happen the church activates its missional heart and becomes attractive (and attractional) in the process. Being missional presupposes a three-dimensional calling: *upward, inward and outward*. *Being missional* means that we are upwardly focussed on passionately worshiping God through our lives; inwardly focussed on community among Christians demonstrated practically in relationships of love, compassion and mercy; and outwardly focussed on a world that does not yet know God. Being missional presupposes a journey of continuity and discontinuity, non-satisfaction with the status quo and restlessness in our pilgrim journey. After all, our hearts will be restless until we find our rest in participation with God in His mission to the glory of His name and for the benefit of the peoples of the world. After all; “The Church is only the Church when it exists for others” (Buchanan 2007:44). Instead of asking ‘What are our needs and what would make us feel good?’ ask, ‘What are the needs of the people we are trying to reach with the life transforming Gospel message and how can we do good to them?’ Instead of focussing on what people in the world are doing wrong and what elements of their world-view are incompatible with our values, practices and beliefs (some of which our own may not necessarily be scriptural) ask ‘What are they already doing well that we can celebrate and thank them for?’ As Christians, especially more mature in our faith, this initially seems counter-intuitive, but it is not counter-productive.

The Lausanne Committee of Evangelisation records the reflections of Mark Peske (a missionary to the Ojibwa people), which provides an excellent reflection on his personal journey away from Constantine’s Church life model:

In previous years, I invited people to church when I met them, thinking in that way they will hear the Gospel. I began to see that I was giving the church an unfair advantage. I was asking them to come to my turf, where I was the leader, where I stand and speak while they sit and listen. It was a lack of courage that led me to rely on bringing them to a place where I was the boss and they were the servants. What I had to learn to do was speak the Gospel on their terms – in their homes, in their boats as a friend and as an equal (Claydon 2005b:n.p.).

True missional theology is not simply content with mission being a church-oriented work. Rather, it applies to the whole life of every believer. Every Christian disciple is to be an agent of the Kingdom of God, and every disciple is to carry the mission of God into every sphere of their life. In this sense, then, we are all ‘missionaries’ sent into a non-Christian (perhaps even anti-Christian) culture. Missional represents a significant shift in the way we think about the church. As the people of a missionary God, we ought to engage the world the same way He does by going out, rather than just reaching out. To obstruct this movement is to block God’s purposes in and through His people (cf. Hirsch 2006). When the Church is in mission, it is the true Church. The Lausanne Committee for World Evangelisation aptly states:

Every local congregation is only a true representative of the body of Christ when they serve the world in mission. If the local church fails to go and instead waits for others to come, they are disobedient. If the church’s witness is only within our walls and not outward to ‘Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth’ (Acts 1:8), the church neglects their primary calling as priests to the world. William Temple, former Archbishop of Canterbury, once noted that the Church of Jesus Christ is the only cooperative society that exists primarily for the benefit of its non-members. The local church must regain the reputation as mission-driven and intensely passionate in responding to the world for the glory of the Lord (Claydon 2005a:569).

Missional churches, however, don’t all look alike. Although there are some common commitments among various churches and believers there are no models that can be employed to make any church more missional. In fact, on

today's church scene there are many 'missional imposters'; there are many churches who have simply adopted the new buzzword 'missional' yet mask a cell-based church, seeker-sensitive, mission focussed mega-church or even a purpose-driven Church. These ministries do not understand that being missional is a journey, not a new model. Being missional implies being radically biblical, contextual, risk-taking, entrepreneurial and generous in giving. It is not about models, it supersedes denominations, and it is theologically diverse and multi-layered. Those who are missional see the importance of holistic redemption; they do not see Christianity as an anaesthetic for human pain or need and are outwardly focussed. Finances are directed outward (with no strings attached) and assets are often seen as both opportunity and burden. "Missional communities are discontent with spiritual formation as primarily cognitive (*I believe this to be true*). Instead, it's presented as a way of life, a rhythm of being. It emphasizes faithful living during the week rather than worship at a weekend event" (Conder 2007:48, 49).

The Lausanne Committee for World Evangelisation outlines some vital characteristics of what it could mean to be missional (cf. Claydon 2005b:n.p.).

These are expressed as follows:

- Missional congregations abandon a 'Constantinian model' of church life. Missional congregations build relationships.
- Missional congregations address different cultures.
- Missional congregations meet needs.
- Missional congregations maintain a long-term perspective.

- Missional congregations are called by the Holy Spirit.
- Missional congregations pray for renewal.
- Missional congregations pray with those outside the community.
- Missional congregations create holistic structures.
- Missional congregations structure for a lay-leadership orientation and broad delegated authority.
- Missional congregations structure for worship, community and mission.
- Missional congregations structure for 'clan, synagogue and temple'.
- Missional congregations structure for 'come and go'. Every member serves in mission.
- Missional congregations reflect the priesthood of all believers.
- Missional congregations create multiple options for maximum involvement. Missional congregations train their members as 'missionaries'. Members are trained to be disciples.
- Missional congregational leadership flows out of a new understanding of the priesthood of all believers.
- Missional leaders share leadership.
- Missional leaders model a way of life. Missional congregations utilize many models of leadership. Leaders remind the congregation of their vision. Missional congregations are interconnected.
- Missional congregations connect with other congregations.
- Missional congregations connect with mission organizations.

8.3 Missional makeover

Where to from here? What is needed to be more missional? Is it possible? I have been 'haunted' by some of those very questions myself. One of the reality shows that I have come to enjoy recently is called 'Extreme Makeover'; where a team will assess the wants and needs of a particular family and will draw together a network of resources in order to improve the life of worthy recipients. This often means demolishing their old house and rebuilding it. It means replacing the old with new, incorporating values and ideas from the old into something that better serves the

purposes of the deserving family. This reality show often elicits emotional responses from various people, especially from the recipients who are then able to enjoy a better life that they would never have imagined. What they now have is a new and improved home that superseded their wildest imagination. I have often, albeit hesitantly, thought that many churches need an 'extreme makeover'. What we have no longer satisfies the purpose which its owner (God) intended. In many ways, due to our sinful nature and tendency towards complacency, we need repairs to the nature and existence that we perhaps have come to see as normal. We are unhealthy, less productive (despite our best efforts), hazardous to our environment and in many cases irrelevant to our communities. We need a missional makeover; we need a rediscovery of our calling to 'Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth'.

How is this possible though? What do we need to do? This is such a human cry as we think that by mere human effort anything can be solved. However, being missional is not an event, programme or quick-fix solution until things go back to 'normal'. Being missional means *transitional transformation* with time. The journey will be arduous as there are no maps to navigate through this hostile landscape, with few in ministry and academia willing to engage this contemporary rediscovery of the nature of God's mission and our role therein.

Being missional requires a paradigmatic shift in our thinking. We are in uncharted waters now where our old navigating systems cannot help us. We

need new maps to guide us through this territory. In order for us to navigate safely, we need to think differently about the church; its nature, role, identity and purpose.

This shift in thinking is expressed in this way by Ed Stetzer and David Putman (2006) in their book, *“Breaking the Missional Code”*:

- From programmes to processes.
- From demographics to discernment.
- From models to missions.
- From attractional to incarnational.
- From uniformity to diversity.
- From professional to passionate.
- From seating to sending.
- From decisions to disciples.
- From additional to exponential.
- From monuments to movements.
- From services to service.
- From ordained to the ordinary.
- From organizations to organisms.

Making this shift can be difficult for many traditional evangelical churches, but to fully appreciate what the missional church is, we must look outside of our traditional understanding of how we do church and re-align ourselves with the biblical narrative. In this missional makeover, people are committed to holistic evangelism, and seek to faithfully proclaim the Gospel in *both word and deeds*. Words alone are not sufficient; how the Gospel is embodied in our community and service is as important as what we say.

Also, the missional community aligns all their activities around the *mission of God*. Nothing should be done for self-preservation or church growth; rather in obedience to the call and command of Christ to ‘go’ into the world (Mt. 28:20), into) - a community where they seek to earnestly and authentically apply and practice the teachings of Jesus. They primarily seek to put the good of their neighbour over their own. This results in a loving, caring, outwardly-focussed community.

However, it’s not always about the sending posture, but also about a receiving ‘space’. There is a strong emphasis in certain circles regarding being a place that practices hospitality by welcoming the stranger into the midst of the community dependent on prayer. A people that gather for the purpose of worship, mutual encouragement, supplemental teaching, equipping, and to seek God’s presence and to be realigned with God’s missionary purpose for their community. Their (missional) meetings both reaffirm and renew their purpose.

8.3.1 What does the missional church look like?

J.R. Woodward in his recent post; *‘A Working Definition of Success’* (30/01/2010) provides a helpful working definition of what a missional church might look like.

Here it is:

Not simply how many people come to our church services, but how many people our church serves. Not simply how many people attend our ministry, but how many people have we equipped for ministry. Not simply how many people minister inside the church, but how many minister outside the church. Not simply helping people become more whole themselves, but helping people bring more wholeness to their world. (i.e. justice, healing, relief). Not simply how many ministries we start, but how many ministries we help. Not simply how

many unbelievers. We bring into the community of faith, but how many 'believers' we help experience healthy community. Not simply working through our past hurts, but working alongside the Holy Spirit of God toward wholeness. Not simply counting the resources that God gives us to steward, but counting how many good stewards are we developing for the sake of the world. Not simply how we are connecting with our culture but how we are engaging our culture. Not simply how effective we are with our mission, but how faithful we are to our God. Not simply how unified our local church is, but how unified is the church in our neighbourhood, city and world? Not simply how much we immerse ourselves in the text, but how faithfully we live in the story of God. Not simply being concerned about how our country is doing, but being concern for the welfare of other countries. Not simply how many people we bring into the Kingdom, but how much of the Kingdom we bring to the earth (Woodward 2010:n.p.).

In summary, being missional is less about *definition* and more about *mission*. One cannot exist without the other, but both work hand-in-hand. BUSA churches tend to focus more on the *definition* aspect of mission/s, which often prohibits action. Being missional relates to the intentional sending posture adopted by Christians living in post-1994 South Africa, within the shadows of post-colonialism and post-modernism. The role of the church in mission today relates to her understanding of her essence and divine call, rights and responsibilities *in* the world, *for* the world and *with* the world. Being Missional is more of a partnership in mission with the church acting in concert with individuals and communities through the power of the Holy Spirit to the glory of God. Missional, I believe, is contextual and takes the concerns of the Triune God for the world seriously and is willing, no matter what the cost, to engage others as they practise what Jesus taught - being salt and light.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Being missional in our day and age is more than simply a passing ‘fad’. Being missional, as stated above, is part of a rediscovery of the nature of God, His church and His mission in the world. This concern for the church and mission is correctly reflected by BUSA pastors who completed the survey part of the quantitative research approach. A vast majority of participants in the survey saw being missional as the quintessence of Christianity, and being missional as a rediscovery of the eternal, Triune God’s purpose in, for and with the world.

This chapter has substantiated the role and importance of what can be termed missional ecclesiology-taking both local and global trends and conversations into consideration in seeking to apply something toward local transformation in faith communities. The importance of the missional conversation is of global significance as the concerns and conversations in the West have infiltrated and permeated the contexts and realities in the Global South through both popular Christian media and academia. This can be illustrated through the proliferation of books written on the topic of missional church in recent years. The same can be said of the multitude of books that continue to be written, published and sold on the mission and ministry of the local church; both ‘mission’ and ‘church’ remain important topics throughout the world, although application and conclusions drawn are varying in praxis and theology.

As has been illustrated in this chapter; the missional church concept may be familiar, yet new; familiar in the sense that there has always been within the Church a thread of the Gospel that, in every generation and in every place and

cultural grouping, has spoken to the deep need people have for a personal relationship with God; for reconciliation with God and others. The Church's missional nature is rooted in the fact that being missional is: biblical, historical, contextual, eschatological and practical (cf. Guder 1998). This encompasses McKnight's (2011) proposal for a gospel culture as opposed to a salvation culture, which is an important theological and cultural proposition that is as much relevant to the Global South as it is to the Global North.

The main aim of this section has been to: objectify the necessity for a missional ecclesiology and define what this would mean for Africa specifically. Much of this chapter has been on defining the necessity of being missional, and on defining what missional means generally, and specifically within the context of the Global South in dialogue with BUSA. How this may develop within BUSA specifically (see case study) will be developed further in Part Four.

Despite the importance *being* missional has for BUSA, its *definition* needs to be clearly understood to avoid confusion and irrelevance. After all, if everything is missional, nothing is missional. Both mission and definition are key to unleashing the mission potential of Churches within BUSA's sphere of influence. There is an evident need for a missional ecclesiology that is centered on South Africa (and Africa!). This concept is relevant in Africa within the twenty-first century, and is needed as the church in Africa participates in the continuation of the work of Christ until He comes.

PART FOUR

CONTEMPORARY BAPTIST WITNESS IN SOUTH AFRICA

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What denominational trends have occurred within BUSA since 1994?
2. How have the trends of the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries differed from the trends experienced within the late nineteenth and mid- twentieth centuries of BUSA's history?
3. Which relevant sample of BUSA churches stand out as having experienced significant and *holistic* growth (in mission specifically) since the end of the twentieth-century to the present day? What has lead to this growth?
4. What hope does a missional ecclesiology offer local BUSA churches?

PURPOSE STATEMENT

Part Four is the climax of the dissertation, under-scoring the importance of Part One (Baptist history and mission development); Part Two (The importance of Africa and threats that impact BUSA ministry on a macro level) and Part Three (the need for, and overall importance of, an Afro-centric missional ecclesiology).

Within this section BUSA will be set within the context of South Africa as a Rainbow Nation, post-1994. Within this new framework of ministry, a number of important realities are addressed to set the scene for the case study in chapter 11. Additionally, a number of pertinent questions will be dealt with in the areas of denominational trends since the inception of democracy and our Rainbow Nation

in 1994, against the backdrop of early BUSA growth and development. How should one see South African society today? What are important trends for consideration (e.g. growth in membership, ministries of BUSA, Baptist and church life)?

An equally important aspect of this section pertains to the current trends within BUSA churches that were drawn from quantitative research (deduced from the researcher's national Missional Church Survey, BUSA archive records, and from a nationwide research and listening tour, representing qualitative data). Chapter 10 deals with much of the quantitative data as it relates to BUSA records and the results of the national Missional Survey. Together with this quantitative data, qualitative data will be added in chapter 11 in the form of a case study, to further analyze and interpret the current trends and their impact at grass-roots level giving priority to qualitative research findings as per the original research design. The case study is an important element within this study as it shows the implication and application of data at grassroots level within BUSA.

The case study will be applied as the point of reference for the mixed-methods approach, with further insights, concerns and implications for research within the context of BUSA. This case study should illustrate the practical relevance and importance of my research in both missional ecclesiology and Baptist ministry within the South African setting.

CHAPTER 9

MINISTRY AND MISSION WITHIN A RAINBOW NATION

9.1 Understanding South Africa's urban tribes

As South Africans (indeed as Africans) we can celebrate all that God has done since the early days of settlement and colonialism. Africa has, above all, moved from being 'missionized' to being a growing sending partner in global mission initiatives. Additionally, Africa is an emerging giant and a major role player on the global front in issues relating to trade, resources and religion. South Africa is one of the continent's leaders, and has a great deal to contribute to the emerging African scene especially. South Africa is described as a middle-income country and is reasonably well developed when compared to other African countries. It plays an influential role within political, economic and religious fronts. 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). I would like to think that this statement could easily be applied to South Africa in that the rest of Africa (particularly Sub-Saharan Africa) needs South Africa!

What has become clear these days, however, is that around 19 years on from the birth of what Desmond Tutu described as the 'Rainbow Nation' in 1994 with the first democratic elections, South Africans can no longer simply be categorized as black, white, coloured or Indian. These established stereotypes are no longer the best way to describe a diverse populace, and have been replaced by new 'tribes',

or categories of people, that approach life, love, brands, religion, friends and social interaction from very different perspectives. This is an important trend to recognize, especially within BUSA with its current preoccupation with what can be termed, by its General Secretary, as an Affirmative Action approach (cf. Scheepers 2008:4,11, 12, 15, 17, 58). As established earlier, given the prevailing global mono-culture, these changes have undeniably been influenced by global 'cosmopolitan culture', and continue to be informed by traditional belief systems (albeit in reaction to their heritage). However one looks at the contemporary kaleidoscope of South African society, there is the current reality that we live as complex, three-dimensional people who cannot be accurately described by traditional demographic segmentation models as in the past. Dion Chang's (2012) latest work; *'New Urban Tribes of South Africa'*, identifies and brings to life, in descriptive detail, twelve distinct new urban tribes contributing to our Rainbow Nation's life, economy and spirituality. I present Chang's 'exegesis'/ mapping of South Africa's culture/s as a more productive way to see BUSA - one that does not neglect the lessons of history, but is, at the same time, not afraid to engage the prevailing contemporary 'winds of culture change' and development, further breaking down the traditional walls of separation.

There is little doubt that life in South Africa post-2010 has been substantially different to life pre-1994. These changes have been so dramatic that they can easily be described as a 'paradigm shift' within the history of South Africa. One of the most helpful ways of assessing these changes is from a *cultural perspective*, which will be most helpful given the Humanities focus of my thesis.

Dion Chang's work, *"New Urban tribes of South Africa"* is a substantial work when it comes to detailing some of the cultural shifts that have taken place within largely urban settings in South Africa. Chang's contribution is significant for three reasons; firstly, Chang's focus on 'urban tribes' is indicative of South Africa's fast growing populace (which is still substantially higher than most places within the developed world); Secondly, culture flows from urban areas to rural areas and South Africa's cities are centres from which culture flows outward - indicative of the importance of Chang's contribution (and the emphasis BUSA needs to be more intentional about given our bad track record in this area). Having some insight into cultural structures in the South African scene will be helpful in shaping missional thinking and ecclesial structures within this new Rainbow Nation. Any serious attempt at chartering new territory within the church scene within South Africa in the foreseeable future will need to take this work and what it represents on the cultural and anthropological front seriously as we engage South African society post-1994 (and post-2010). This, I believe, is foundational if BUSA (and perhaps other denominations) are to move onward and forward in post-1994 South Africa.

Chang's work is highly important in this global era of emerging technological genius for a number of reasons:

Technology has leveled the playing field in many ways. It has made electronic devices smaller, cheaper and faster, democratized media channels and connected people (via the social media) to such an extent that geographic, cultural and racial boundaries have begun to dissolve. In their place is a brave new world where communities with shared interests grow and thrive (2012:3).

Chang leads the way when it comes to clustering people into 'tribes' as opposed to the established way of using 'Living Standards Measures' (hereafter referred to as LSM's), created by the South African Audience Research Foundation (hereafter

referred to as SAARF) to categorize people and systematize South African 'market segmentation' from an anthropological and marketing perspective.

This line of thought first emerged in 2008 with Seth Godin's book, *'Tribes: We need you to lead us'*, in which Godin identified an emerging pattern of new communities now connecting with each other outside of conventional/ socio-economic benchmarks developed earlier (cf. Chang 2012:1-3). Prior to Godin's book, the *'Black Diamond'* report (2005 UCT Unilever Institute Report) represents the last attempt within South Africa to cluster or profile South Africa's fast-changing society. This profiling will be of great significance in reaching various, and varying people groupings within South Africa and because of this, it is of importance to any missional theology, taking seriously both 'text' and 'context', the Bible and prevailing worldviews, mission and culture.

Chang argues:

Segmenting people solely by virtue of their ownership of cars and home appliances is becoming obsolete. It still tells part of the consumer story, but it does not give the full picture. For example, a teenager in a South African township who has a Smartphone has the same access to digital media as his counterpart in the suburbs. They may be from completely different socio-economic groups, but their interests may be the same. Similarly, in many informal settlements, ramshackle 'houses' made from corrugated iron sport satellite dishes, destroying the neat segmentation based purely on purchasing power (Chang 2012:4).

Chang's (2012) analogy of describing South Africa as a 'cappuccino society' is both true and helpful in unpacking the various structures and substructures within our Rainbow Nation.

In a Mail & Guardian Online Reporter article (08/06/2012), the cultural, political and economic influence of Chang's work is highlighted:

Flux Trends founder Dion Chang's latest eBook *New Urban Tribes of South Africa* – breaks down contemporary urban groups into bite-sized characters packaged and wrapped for the retail market. These are not meant as a new set of stereotypes, nor is it meant to be an exhaustive list... but rather these 12 tribes represent a cross-section of contemporary South Africa, chosen because of cultural influence and spending power (2012:n.p.).

9.2 Brief Outline of the 12 urban tribes¹⁰

Tribe one: The Diamond Chips

These tech-savvy, stylish, affluent, urban twenty-somethings may be too young to remember what it was like to live in apartheid South Africa, but they are not too young to have benefited from the new South Africa. Diamond Chips can be spoilt yet free-spirited and passionate about changing the world. Famous for splurging on clothes and cars, they are sometimes known to have more flash than cash, maintaining their lifestyles through highly financed credit-card debt. Diamond Chips often feel extreme pressure to succeed as the first generation in their families to have benefited from expensive private schooling and university education. They live in fear of falling back into the old African poverty trap their parents escaped from in the 1990s.

Tribe two: The techno-hippies

Techno-Hippies are tech-savvy geeks with hipster tastes and hippie ideas about saving the planet by going green and being sustainably self-sufficient. Although they are passionate about changing the world on an abstract level, they prefer passive activism to actually getting their hands dirty and, as such, have gained the nickname "slacktivists". They turn on their computers, tune in to blogs and drop out of school in pursuit of internet entrepreneurship. They are modern nomads who can live and work whenever and wherever they want, without being bound by a clock or a full-time boss. Techno-Hippies try to purchase locally made or recycled items, as well as second-hand or "upcycled" clothing from flea markets with a "post-manufacture story".

Tribe three: The Faith-based youth

Faith-Based Youths have strong Bible-based beliefs, but they have turned away from the hierarchical religious institutions they grew up with. These new crusaders are more interested in making a lasting difference in the world through missionary action than in preaching from a pulpit. They do not like to refer to their work as outreach as this would imply that they are superior to those they are helping. Faith-Based Youth can be found gathering in coffee shops early on Friday

¹⁰ Outline adapted from the Mail and Guardian's Online article which can be downloaded from: <http://mg.co.za/article/2012-06-07-the-rainbow-nation-from-black-pinks-to-diamond-chips>.

mornings, in each other's homes and even in bars, engaging in lively discussion of global issues, all from within a moral, biblical worldview. Many are aspiring philanthropic entrepreneurs with a burning desire to create strong Christian business and networking opportunities in South Africa.

Tribe four: The Bieber Brats

The Bieber Brats are the spoiled nine- to 12-year-old kids of today. They have never known life without the internet and cell-phones and have grown up with Hanna Montana madness and Twilight hysteria. They are a well-educated tribe with refined taste, despite their age. They tend to be enrolled in posh extramural activities including archery, horse riding, computer programming and Mandarin classes. They were brought into the world wearing Gucci baby grows and have been dressed in Baby Dior and Armani Kids ever since. The Bieber Brats have the first real level playing field in South Africa - many Bieber Brats do not even "see" the skin colour of their peers unless prompted. A Bieber Brat's cell-phone tells more about their popularity than jewelry.

Tribe five: Afrikaans Artistes

The Afrikaans Artistes want to preserve their culture and express their tribal identity through the creative arts. One sub tribe, the 35- to 55-year-old Creative Collective, are "culture vultures" who love promoting local (and especially Afrikaans) art and design and dress to emphasize their alternative mindset with tribal jewelry, arty frames, and dyed and cropped hair. They travel to quaint art towns to spend their weekends searching for antique treasures. The Liberal Millennial sub-tribe, in their 20s and 30s, are just as free-spirited, but want to clear their Afrikaner culture of its apartheid-era associations. They look back to the "pure" Voortrekker era, growing bushy beards and full moustaches, and collect ox-wagon memorabilia. They are Afrikaner culture's answer to the hipster, carrying Moleskin notebooks and taking up retro hobbies, such as knitting their own clothing.

Tribe six: The Empowerment Kugels

Empowerment Kugels are either wives of political royalty or 'tenderpreneurs' in their own right, with vague struggle credentials, who have come into money in the new South Africa. They now reside in McMansions in Sandton, Atholl or other upmarket residential estates and dress in a smart mix of traditional African outfits and Western designer clothes. They invest in their appearance with frequent spa days, with family being the only thing that tops their need for status. Traditional Empowerment Kugels will go back to the same township hair salons they went to before they "came into money". Most depend on their husbands to support their lifestyles and turn a blind eye to their husbands' infidelities in exchange for privileged lives with platinum cards. These matriarchs are the force pushing their men forward, ensuring their husbands make the right decisions to maintain the family's lifestyle.

Tribe seven: Domestic PAs

Domestic PAs are more than maids: they are home managers. They not only rear the madam's children and cook the supper, many also wield decision-making power as consumers. Because, although madam might write the shopping list, it is

the Domestic PA who makes the final brand choice in the supermarket. By and large Zimbabwean, Domestic PAs see their somewhat menial jobs as a stepping stone to better things. And this often pays off. Employers will sometimes assist them to obtain a driver's license, or even pay for their children to go to the same private school as their employer's own. Ever enterprising, Domestic PAs also take great pride in their appearance and will often spend a large portion of their salary on good weaves, nail extensions and smart street clothes.

Tribe eight: The Indo-Asians

Although making up just 2.5% of the population, the Indian and Chinese community is taking a big share of the South African economy. Holding the financial upkeep of generational family relationships dear, they treasure education and favour the "serious" professions of medicine, law and accounting. But a generational culture clash is emerging, with younger people resisting the dictates of their traditional heritage and choosing instead to immerse themselves in contemporary South African culture. As self-made business people, Indo-Asians embrace branded items, gadgets and cutting-edge technology. They are also community driven and enjoy socializing online, and channels such as BBM, Mxit and WhatsApp are immensely popular.

Tribe nine: Then Black Pinks

The black gay community in South Africa is flashy, flamboyant and highly aspirational. Often from backgrounds of modest means, they aim for financially secure futures and like being seen in vibey urban spaces. But discrimination from their families and communities has meant the "out" black gay population is smaller than its white counterpart. The Black Pinks are further divided into two sub-tribes: the Skinny Jean Creatives and the Pink Chino Corporates. The Skinny Jeans thrive on things with shock value and consider themselves visionary trend leaders. The Pink Chinos are more serious and subtle, focusing on looking and feeling healthy. But they are known to flaunt their wealth in flashy cars such as BMWs and Audi convertibles.

Tribe ten: Single Parent, Double Life

These are young ladies affected by the scourge of teenage pregnancies in South Africa and although many come from underprivileged rural areas, a growing number can be found in suburban homes. Parents often take over child-rearing, leaving the new mum free to go back to where she left off. But the babies remain a priority for many even when they head for the glamorous life of the city. Aspiring to be famous actresses, models, singers or businesswomen, some may take on wealthy boyfriends who shower them with gifts and help to support their lifestyles. Single moms hang out in bars and clubs in search of single men. They spend much effort on their appearance, often funded by the men they snag.

Tribe eleven: The Lost Generation

The Lost Generation is the coffee in South Africa's cappuccino - undereducated, unemployed and very angry - they are the 90% black that sits below the 10% white at the top. There are really two Lost Generations: the Lost Elders – the men and women who stood up and rallied for the struggle – and the Lost Millennials, bred

by the anti-apartheid elders who trusted that their fight would be rewarded with a better future for their children. Twenty years on, they are left with an abhorrent education system, a lack of job opportunities and a continuous inflow of foreigners who they feel “steal” the jobs of young South Africans. Their only hope is to resort to crime or be consumed by a growing fantasy of being rich and famous, a dream that has begun to breed a generation that is a toxic, ticking time bomb.

Tribe twelve: The Rainbow Revolutionaries

Rainbow Revolutionary families often come from a very educated, well-travelled and well-read stratum of the population and identify with a global culture of democracy and liberalism in which all ethnic and religious groups belong to a single community and respect each other through a shared morality. Some Rainbow Revolutionaries try and bring their children up in the post-modern “trans-human” philosophy, focusing on what individuals have in common rather than on their different rituals and appearances. Rainbow Revolutionaries include all the various South African tribes and this means they cannot be identified in terms of style or tastes; they are united though their desire to show the world that character, heart and humanity can transcend racial identity.

9.3 Implications of Chang’s approach to BUSA:

- In this brave new world, where lines of culture, geography and racial boundaries have begun to erode (cf. Chang 2012:4), there is the recognition that BUSA should move beyond its current system of profiling, which is along similar lines to that of our old political system under the Apartheid paradigm of doing ministry and mission. This approach is outdated and is no longer helpful in defining a plethora of contemporary realities which need to be confronted within the contemporary scene.
- BUSA needs to move beyond a reactionary approach to a more constructive, integrative and holistic model of leadership and ministry.
- BUSA needs to ‘understand the times’ and grow in the area of what can be termed ‘continuous education’ for pastors and lay leaders within churches. Training that is rooted in our heritage and geared to our times. Corporate

and other denominational examples abound (the DRC is one such example alongside the American fast-food brand, Chick-fil-A! More on this later.

- There is a great need in this era for cultural mapping of communities within which BUSA churches operate; many BUSA churches operate without taking their immediate communities into consideration. This was highlighted by some BMD leaders in an informal interview on 30/10/2012 at Baptist House, where they shared their vision and focus in mission to the researcher based on Acts 1:8. Missiological discernment needs to be employed at the highest levels of BUSA ministry offices and be voiced alongside its current vision.