THE LOCAL CHURCH

AS AN AGENT OF SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

IN A POOR COMMUNITY:

A Practical and Methodical Approach

P-G.I. Emedi

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BY

Pablo-George Ishimilenga Emedi

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SUPERVISOR: Prof. Julian Müller

CO-SUPERVISOR: Dr. Ronnie E. Davis

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Then the King will say to those on his right,

"Come, you who are blessed by my Father,

inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world.

For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink.

I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home.

I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me.

I was in prison, and you visited me.

Jesus Christ, Matthew 25:34-36 (NLT)

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Go to the people

Live among the people

Learn from the people

Plan with the people

Work with the people

Start with what the people know

Build on what the people have

Teach by showing; learn by doing

Not a showcase but a pattern

Not odds and ends but a system

Not piecemeal but integrated approach

Not conform but transform

Not relief but release

James Yen

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted to any institution for a degree.

Signed: _____Date:_____

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This work is the product of hard work and determination, the pursuit of a vision long held. It is a milestone in the process of achieving what the Lord has called me to do. This journey started with my arrival in South Africa as a refugee, escaping the wrath and insanity of men that brought the beautiful Democratic of Congo, my home country, on its knees, claiming millions of lives on its way. Escaping the tragedy was one thing, turning a new page, collecting oneself and hoping for a brighter future, another. I have to acknowledge that I could not have completed this long journey without the support of a number of people who were instrumental in making my dream come true and to whom I want to extend my gratitude. However, only a few will be mentioned in this page.

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ABSTRACT

The premise of this research is that the local church is called to play a major role in the transformation process of the local community in which it is called to work. This call is rooted in its nature and mission. The outcome of this research is to develop a model of €how to do theology in a local community context, what is described in these pages as "Community-Sensitive Church Model". This premise is developed by revisiting the concept of church and social transformation, church engagement with society throughout history and through analyzing the community of praxis before attempting to develop the model that makes of a local church an agent of social transformation. Lofdal Community Church is presented as an implementation of this model in Maitland.

Key words: Church, Local Church, Social Transformation, Poor, Poverty, Lofdal Community Church.

CHAPTER I:

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

Church and society are and will always be linked. A church is a community of people tied by common life principles that make them different from the rest of society though taken from the larger community. It is in a sense a counter-community, "not a task force whose members' mutual social contacts stem only from the common task itself", "not a periodic encounter of otherwise unrelated individuals" (Mott 1982:131), but a community with social structures and principles embodying "patterns for shared life that God desires for all of society" (1982:131). Stephen C. Mott goes on to say that "because the church is the manifestation of the Reign of God, the norms that guide it exemplify the highest vision of human community" (1982:131). It is these "norms" that demarcate the church from society while at the same time connect it to the same society.

Jesus understood very well that the church and the world will always be linked as the church comes from the world, and they influence each other continually. He said "you are in the world but not of the world". The "called out ones", the church, are in the world but not of it. They live in the world though governed by rules of "another world". The church and the world represent two systems calling for a relationship as in any systems theory. In this regards, it is said that "all elements of all systems are connected to each other in an infinitely complex web of life. When there is change in one, the other has to adapt, which in turn impacts on the source of the change" (CDRA 2003/2004:19). In our

case, the church and the world are interconnected and the change in one will inevitably have impact on the other.

It is this link that calls us to rethink ways of the interaction of these two societies. Our communities face problems ranging from moral deprivation, crime, drugs, broken and dysfunctional marriages, sexual immorality, poverty, etc that need addressing. If not dealt with, firstly, these problems will inevitably affect the church. Secondly, failing to deal with the evil that affects our communities is a failure to be true to the calling of the church itself –that of being the salt and the light of the world.

The purpose of this research is therefore to raise the issue of the relevance of the church in the community in light of the growing societal plight. This research will help discover ways of doing theology in a more meaningful and relevant way resulting in lives changed, saved, and communities transformed. It is about finding a way of doing theology that is both biblical and culturally congruent, as suggested by Stephens (1998:3). This is about calling the church to recommit itself to "biblical strategies of human service and social transformation" (Stephens 1998:3) that will result in an "inside-out" transformational process, shifting "from personal to social, from values and beliefs to actions and interventions" (1998:3) in contrast to the "outside-in" approach advocated by Sider (1977) or the "top-down" change process of Chilton (1981). Stephens emphatically concludes his thoughts by saying that "lasting social transformation will not come from without –only from within" (1998:4). The church

should therefore seek its own transformation before embarking in the facilitating process of social transformation in its local community.

This topic seems to raise the question of whether the church has failed to interact with society. Or more specifically "what has the church done in the area of social concern?" It will appear that the answer to this question will determine the relevance of the question under investigation in this research. But the issue of the church social involvement is very complex and the relevance of the question as posed in this research deserves to be tackled with care. The church is not unanimous in its understanding of the extent of the church social involvement. Some see in social involvement a detractor of the primary mission of the church. For others, it raises the issue of the priority between evangelism and social responsibility of the church. The church is divided on the issue. It is not just a division between the "liberals" and the "evangelicals", but even among the "evangelicals" themselves. As Adeyemo puts it, nine conflicting views are held among evangelicals (in Nicholls 1985: 48-57): social action is a distraction from evangelism; social action is a betrayal of evangelism; social action is evangelism; social action is a means to evangelism; social action is a manifestation of evangelism; social action is a result or consequence of evangelism; social action is a partner of evangelism; social action and evangelism are equally important but genuinely distinct aspects of the total mission of the church; social action is part of the Good News – Evangelism.

These views, held by prominent evangelical scholars suggest how divided the church is on the issue, and consequently, how that may affect the involvement of the church in social transformation process. Evangelicals have met in a number of conferences to discuss the issue and came up with a number of statements and strategic plans (Adeyemo in Nicholls 1985:41). The question is, how much of these resolutions have filtered down to the level of the local church? What is the response of local churches to social problems in their immediate communities? Of all conferences held to discuss the issue of social action among evangelicals, only the Consultation on Church in Response to Human Need, held in Wheaton in 1983 pointed out the importance and centrality of the local church in addressing the question of social transformation (CCRHN, Paragraph 53 as cited by Chester 1993:94). The make-up of all these conferences and congresses and the selective nature of delegates (Chester 1993:28) are sufficient proofs of how much practitioners, pastors, missionaries and "ordinary Christians" are left out of the debate. No wonder why many churches see social action as either something they should not be involved in or the responsibility of para-church organizations and mega-churches only.

The purpose of this research is to come to a biblical and evangelical understanding of the mission of the local church and especially its participation in the social transformation process of poor communities. The local church is therefore called to embrace what Sider (1993:192) calls *Incarnational Kingdom Christianity*, a holistic approach of ministry in which, "…Our evangelistic and church planting programs and structures would nurture a concern for social transformation. Our organizations devoted

to relief, development and structural change would integrate prayer…and evangelism into their social agendas… pastors (are) eager and able to lead wholistic congregations that have an equal concern for inward nurture in the local congregation and outward action in the world for evangelism and social transformation". This is about congregations becoming "powerful demonstration projects of the coming kingdom", sums up Sider (1993:193, parenthesis added). Hughes (2008: 9), in his latest book, *Power and Poverty,* joins the plea by calling for a "concern for theological training", with "curriculum of leadership training courses infused with the spirit of integral mission" in which "Bible, history, dogmatics and practical aspects of the curriculum should all be taught integrally, which means that the whole course should be grounded in the life of God and the people whom the trainee has been called to serve". The result of this will be "more and more church leaders committed to integral mission" and therefore local congregations becoming missional churches in the social transformational sense of the word. *But*, what are the practical implications and steps for a local church? How does it become "incarnational", "integral"?

1.2 Description of Problem

This research will examine various problems destroying the social tissue of communities. These problems are a sign of the resistance of communities to respond positively to the Gospel of salvation. Many people think that the message of the church is irrelevant; that it does not address the needs of the people directly; that the church is simply a spiritual institution concerned about heavenly matters; that churches work for their "own people". It is this perception that we would like to discuss. Is there any validity

to it? Is the church addressing social issues more effectively? Is the church true to its calling or has the calling been narrowed down?

1.3 Motivation

The Gospel must be preached to all people (Mark 16:15). The Gospel must be preached in its entirety (Acts 20:27). It must not only be spoken but lived out as well (James 1:22). In line with the question of social transformation, this "gospel" is a gospel of "release", liberation and transformation of people and not a relief endeavor by a humanitarian organization (Luke 4:18-19). The church is called to preach release of the whole man, spiritually and socially (Matthew 9:5). This has been the researcher's stand for many years. This view has been shaped by his upbringing, seeing too little of "practical theologies" from churches wherever he has been. The model left by Jesus Christ of what His church should be like has been neglected for one reason or another. It is this neglect of "parts" of the nature and functions of the church that led some, either to over-emphasize their concern for social action or the salvation of "souls only" to the detriment of the whole Gospel truth. Most evangelicals have denied the church of its "practicality", whereas the liberals have silenced the need for individual salvation. Yet, there is social crisis and there is need for individual salvation.

It is around this reasoning that the motivation for this research was born. There is need for a shift from a "theology in the pews" to a "theology in the community". There is need to develop a "community-sensitive church", a church with its "ears on the ground", a church that brings Good News to the poor, proclaims release to the captives, recovery

of sight to the blind, and the year of the Lord's favour (Luke 4:18); a church for the orphans and the widows (Psalm 68:5), a church that feeds the hungry (Mark 6:37), not only listens but does the Word (James 1:22). A "theology in the community" understands what the Gospel is all about. This theology can also be described as "theology of transformation" in keeping with the spirit of the Consultation on the Church in Response to Human Needs, held in Wheaton in 1983 (Chester 1993:94). It is transformational because of its pursuit of change, "from a condition of human existence contrary to God's purposes to one which people are able to enjoy fullness of life in harmony with God"[1] (Consultation's Statement, paragraph 11 as cited by Chester 1993:94). Thus, when speaking of the "*local church as an agent of social transformation*", it is the view of the researcher that the local church should play the role of catalyst of change, helping the community to "enjoy the fullness of life in harmony with God". Any understanding of God that does not lead to a changed community has missed its purpose. A church that fails to reach out to its community has failed its Sender.

1.4 Hypothesis

Simply stated, the hypothesis of this research is that a church involved in social ministry:

- is true to the mission of Christ as commissioned to the church;

- proves its understanding of the realities of the community in which it is ministering;

- is relevant and practical in ministry approaches; and consequently,

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[1] Definition of the word *Transformation* by the Statement of the Consultation on the Church in Response to Human Needs, under the chairmanship of Rene Padilla, Wheaton, Illinois, 1983

- is more likely to draw its community closer to God, as it is "doubly" proclaiming the Word of salvation: in both words and works.

Here, it is to be noted that this research does not suggest that social action on its own will bring people to God and therefore bring about social transformation. But rather, echoing the view of Adeyemo (in Nicholls 1985: 57-59), the researcher is of the opinion that social action is implied in evangelism, therefore one cannot talk of the one without the other. Understood in this light a church involved in evangelism/social action ministry is vital to the process of transformation of its community.

1.5 Scope of Research

For the purpose of this research, the present study will be limited to the community of Maitland in Cape Town. The choice of this scope is motivated by an operational church plant following the principle outlined in this research in which the researcher is involved. Reference will be made of communities and local churches in similar situation. The conclusion and model designed as a result of this research can therefore be applicable to other evangelical churches ministering in poor communities throughout the world.

1.6 Methodology

In the process of gathering information indispensable for the present research, the researcher will make use of libraries. Through literature review, this research aims at providing an engaged debate on issues related to the nature and mission of the church, social gospel movement and evangelicalism and social concern. In addition to literature

review approach, the researcher will make use of various statistic data and empirical observation.

The ecclesiology adopted in this research is foundationalist in the sense that it is based on the propositions derived directly from Scripture and as developed throughout church history. But it is also postfoundationalist in its praxis. The praxis of the mission of the church must be a result of the interaction between what the Scripture prescribes and the community's need. It is this interaction that determines the relevance of the ministry of the church in a particular context. A social constructionist view of the church develops a contextual ecclesiology that is informed by both the Bible and the community (Gelder 2000:47). Pope Paul VI (In Boff 1992:87) sums this view up well when he says that "the church always has need of being evangelized". And "it begins (its evangelization of others) by evangelizing itself". This is the process of re-defining the church's ministry in light of its context. The church allows "itself to be evangelized by current society" (Boff 1992:87). It relearns "the gospel from the point of departure in the poor", would stress Boff (1992:87).

Speaking of a Postfoundationalist Practical Theology, Muller says that it "should be seen as a way of understanding within the paradigm of the hermeneutical approach. And yet, it moves beyond hermeneutics as a metaphor for Practical Theology. It even goes one step further and argues for a very specific view of understanding: namely an understanding, which not only includes the local context as one of the hermeneutical

circles…but an understanding that can only develop within and from the context (2005:3). This makes Practical Theology *situational*.

The choice of the postfoundationalist practical theology approach is also motivated by the fact that this research is done in the discipline of Practical Theology. "Practical Theology is only possible as contextual Practical Theology. Practical Theology cannot function in a general context (Muller 2005:6). It is its contextual, concrete and local nature that demarcates Practical Theology from systematic theology or any other discipline in Theology. The present study will be using the community of Maitland in Cape Town as its local context and more concretely looking at the ministry of Lofdal Community Church as its *moment of praxis* (Muller 2005:2). West (1995: Preface). (1995: Preface), in his book *Biblical Hermeneutics of liberation*, advocates a similar contextual hermeneutical approach, though warning that "one of the risks of working contextually is that contexts change". Though this can be considered as "risk", the continuous "movement from context, or praxis, to theory, and back again to context" (Muller 2005:6) as advocated by the postfoundationalist methodology reduces that risk and is conform to the nature of Practical Theology.

The aim of this research is to arrive at a model of doing church that is applicable to churches ministering in poor communities. This model is expected to be "practical and methodical" as expressed in the title of the present research. But it should be noted that the "practicality" advocated in the present research is not "pragmatism" in William James' tradition (MacArthur 1993:xii). Whereas pragmatism "defines truth as that which

is useful, meaningful, and helpful" and that "ideas that don't seem workable or relevant are rejected as false" (MacArthur 1993:xii), the "practical and methodical" approach presented in this research is confined to the limits of biblical truth. It is practical in its systematization of the process and its biblical relevance.

1.7 Research Outline

The general introduction as chapter one of the present research will cover the problem posed, the purpose, hypothesis, motivation, scope of research and methodology followed.

Chapter Two will deal with literature review, covering aspects of definition of concepts, the church and ecclesiological discussion, related to the issue of the nature and mission of the church in relation to the ministry of Jesus Christ as the Founder of both visible and invisible church. This chapter will attempt to show that the mission of Jesus must be transposed and followed at all levels of the "church". Special attention will be given to the Social Gospel Movement and its history as well as evangelicalism and social Concern, presenting the debate within the broader evangelical family on the issue of social action as expressed through its scholarship and conferences. It is at this point that the research intends to look at how the rediscovery of social responsibility by evangelicals has filtered down to other levels of the church (especially local church level).

Chapter three will look at the *moment of praxis* community: Maitland (Cape Town). This chapter will deal with a brief presentation of Maitland, its demographics, development, infrastructure and problems. This will help to evaluate what the church is currently doing in the process of social transformation and what still needs to be done: emerging ministry possibilities.

"Doing Theology in Community: Community-Sensitive Church Model" will form the fourth chapter of this research, proposing a model of church for Maitland. This is a church that is informed by the problem of the community; a church that combats crime, drugs, alcoholism, prostitution; a church that takes seriously the HIV/AIDS pandemic and works towards the restoration of the family system and social upliftment.

Chapter five will be dedicated to conclusion. This will include summary and recommendations based on this research for implementation in communities facing similar plights as Maitland.

CHAPTER II:

LITERATURE REVIEW:

CHURCH AND COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION

2.1 Introduction

What is understood by the concept "church"? Is there any meaning in the concept that can shed light in what should be expected of it? And what is understood by transformation or community transformation? These questions will form the basis of this chapter in order to build a foundation for the model of church to be developed in this research. A good review of literature on the subject will lead to that end.

2.2 Understanding the Church definitional Dynamics

It should be said that "church" is a very broad concept. For some it refers to architectural structures; for others it designates a group of people gathered together for the purpose of worship, in which case that gathering is considered to be the true church; whereas for some others, the concept church is used interchangeably with the word denomination or movement like Protestantism or Roman Catholicism. For Vatican, the church is "visible" in the form of the Roman Catholic Church which is "the only true church" (Grudem 2005: 855), having "descended from the apostles in an unbroken line of succession (through the bishops of the church)" (Grudem 2005:855).

Erickson (1998:1037) suggests that this confusion in the definition of the term church is due to lack of attention and thought given to the concept as a theological doctrine. Throughout church history the church refined its views on other major doctrines such as Christology, the Trinity, Soteriology, etc. It is with the rise of the ecumenical movement that the issue of the nature and definition of the church was given attention. Ecumenism as a movement sought to foster relationships between churches, creating a platform for dialogue. And in order to achieve its objectives, churches had to come to an "agreement" on what the church is. This was fundamental to the movement. However, the ecumenical movement did not bring the church to a common definition as the main purpose of the movement was to create tolerance among churches, uniting while providing room for diversity of opinions. As a theological discipline, ecclesiology received some attention with the rise of the movement in that churches attempted to define what they understood by "church" in an interactive context.

Erickson (1998: 1038-1041) goes further to raise another factor that has affected the development of the doctrine of the church: Is the church static in its essence or dynamic? He claims that that is due to the trend that came with the twentieth century's aversion to philosophy. "Thus modern theology is less interested in the essence of the church, what it "really is" or "ought to be", than in its embodiment, what it concretely is becoming" (Erickson 1998:1039). The church is a social organization, but at the same time it is beyond the confines of sociology. Thus, there must be room to view it in a dynamic, changing way while acknowledging that it is fixed in its essence at the same time. It is this dialectic approach that allows the church to maintain its relevance and

interaction with the world in which it is. It is a realized entity in as far as its nature, but ought to be dynamic in its mission.

It has been noted earlier that too little has been written on the church, especially among evangelicals. Most evangelicals have shifted in their understanding of the church by stressing individual salvation and placing less emphasis on the corporate and structural. "The evangelical indifference to forms and church structures transformed the question about the character of the true church into one about the nature of the true Christian" (Hart 2005:25). According to Hindmarsh, George Whitefield "discarded the marks of the church for the marks of the Christian" (Hart 2005:27) in his attempt to mark this shift. This emphasis on the character of the individual has robbed the church of its role as an agent of grace in the world and consequently left evangelicalism with a weaker or narrower ecclesiology. This led Hindmarsh to suggest that speaking of an evangelical ecclesiology is an oxymoron (Hart 2005:25).

If some blame the disregard to the form and structures as cause of a weaker evangelical ecclesiology, others find the blame in the teaching of classic dispensationalism (Okholm 2005:41-62). According to this theological view the church is not considered as a completion of God's salvific plan, but rather as "parenthetical to God's evolving purposes in the history of earthly redemption" (Okholm 2005:49). Okholm quotes Chafer as saying, "the church has no connection with God's previous acts in history". For chafer the church cannot even qualify to be described as "parenthesis" but rather an "intercalation" as he does not see any relation whatsoever

between the past Davidic dispensation and the present new age-purpose period (Cited by Hokholm 2005:49). Thus, "for classic dispensationalism the church's hope is realized more in heaven than on earth" (Hokholm 2005:51). As a result "the visible earthly manifestation of the church as a body *through* which Christ accomplishes his work is deemphasized". "Dispensationalism tended to leave the evangelical church detached, withdrawn and introverted, waiting to be raptured from the world with its evils" (Hokholm 2005:52). This "separation" from the world and any other organization deemed corrupt has left the evangelical church –being largely affected by dispensational theology-apathetic and suspicious of organized and institutional churches, leaving no space for inter-church dialogue and narrowing its view of the church. This view affects the extent to which the church engages the world's social and political concerns. If one is preparing for an imminent rupture, there is therefore no time to be "sidetracked" by earthly problems, would contend the tenants of this view.

With the influence of dispensational theology on evangelicals –consciously or subconsciously- the evangelical withdrawal from social involvement seems to find some explanation. When the social and earthly is seen as "un-spiritual" and therefore of less value, the ecclesiology resulting from this view will consequently be narrowed down to strictly "spiritual" matters.

2.3 Definition of the Church

2.3.1 Understanding the word ekklesia

The word Church comes from the Greek term *ekkelsia*, which means "the called out ones" (Harrison 1996:95), or as suggested by Erickson (1998:1041), deriving from *kuriakos*, "belonging to the Lord". However, Erickson says that *kuriakos* or any other cognate terms used must be "understood in light of the New Testament Greek term εκκλησία *(ekkelsia)*" (1998:1041). These two terms, *kuriakos* and *ekklesia*, put together help in the definition of the word church. Thus, the church is viewed as a people called out to belong to the Lord. This attempt at defining the word church stresses the fact that the people are called out, not to be isolated or for an undefined purpose, but to "belong", for an allegiance to the Lord, to be subjected to the Lord. The church is also seen as a matter of being ascribed an identity based on this allegiance. Theologically speaking, the church is seen as "an institution given a peculiarly honorable identity and high calling by virtue of her owner who sets the corporate culture into which members are acculturated" (Charry 2005:204). But when attempting to define the church, one should not lose sight of the guiding principles, or what the church is "called" to do. What is the mission of the church? Thus, the Great commission (Matthew 28:18-20) as well as the Great commandment (Matthew 22: 37-40) become determinant in the definition of *ekklesia*. The church is doubly "called out". It is "called out" of the world into becoming "church" in order to be "called out" of the church into the world where the purpose of its calling is found. Gelder (2004:87) describes the "double" calling as a double movement of being "called and sent". And that purpose is summed up in the love of God and of one's neighbor that we have to demonstrate in the world. This defines the church as

missional organism. But for a richer understanding of this concept, special attention must be given to its classical linguistic use as well its Hebrew backgrounds.

2.3.2 Classical Greek and Hebrew Backgrounds

In its secular use, the word *ekklesia*, "signified the assembling of the citizens for the purpose of conducting the affairs of the *polis*" (Hassiron 1996:95). Here also the nature (assembling) and mission (purpose of conducting affairs) are connected. Erickson corroborates Harrison's view by saying that "in the secular sense of the word… εκκλησία refers simply to a gathering or assembly of persons, a meaning that is still to be found in Acts 19:32, 39, 41" (1998:1041). "It was the name of the city council in the Greek city-states, where all male citizens were "called out" to assemble for the business of the community" (Dubley and Hilgert1987:14). Dudley and Hilgert (1987:14) go on to say that the Septuagint version of the Bible served as bridge in the use of the word "ekklesia" from its secular to its Christian use. This clearly is visible in the way the translator of the Greek version of the Old Testament deliberately chose to use a secular word to describe a religious gathering of the people of God. Thus, to understand "εκκλησία" one should take into account both its classical Greek as well as its Hebrew backgrounds. There is a clear correlation between the classical Greek use of the term ekklesia and its meaning and the Old Testament "gatherings" or "assemblies". The Old Testament makes use of two terms in this regard: *qahal* and *edah*. "The former term…derived from the word for voice, refers to a summons to an assembly and the act of assembling" (Erickson 1998:1042). A special mention should be made that "*ekklesia* never renders *edah*, "congregation" which represented the people as a national unit"

(O'Brien 2005:194). But the fact that Israel as a chosen people of God was a different type of nation provides a context in which *edah* can be seen at the same time as referring to the gathering of the people before God who was the ultimate King over Israel even in its monarchical era. Old Testament references such as Deuteronomy 9:10; 10:4; 23:1-3; I Kings 12:3 make use of the term *qahal* in the sense of a religious gathering of people unto God. But also, the fact that the translators of the Hebrew Bible into Greek (LXX) rendered both *qahal* and *edah* (taking into account the context in which it was used) *ekkesia* allow us to speak of "OT church". This is also supported by the "New Testament authors (speaking) of the Old Testament people of Israel as a "church" (Grudem 2005:854, parenthesis added). There is a continuation from the Old Testament "church" to the New. As Dudley and Hilgert (1987:14) (1987:14) put the point, "in using *ekklesia* to designate their communities, Christians thus chose the term that was meaningful both to Jews and Gentiles". In the same way that God called people unto Himself in the Old Testament, so does Jesus in the New Testament times. "Therefore, even though there are certainly new privileges and new blessings that are given to the people in the New Testament, both the usage of the term "church" in Scripture and the fact that throughout Scripture God has called his people to assemble to worship himself, indicate that it is appropriate to think of the church as constituting all people of God for all time, both Old Testament believers and New Testament Believers" (Grudem 2005: 854).

2.3.3 Church: Visible and Invisible – Local and Universal

When studying closely the use of the term church in the New Testament we find a range of categorization of what the church is. Church is seen as both visible and invisible. Clowney (1988:141) renders this differentiation as the church "as God sees it" and "as men see it", whereas Webster (2005:100-101) cautions against this understanding. For him "the "visible" church is the "phenomenal" church –the church which has form, shape and endurance as a human undertaking, and which is present in the history of the world as a special project". "It is what men and women do because of the gospel" (2005:101). The visibility of the church is in its mission in obedience to the command of the Lord. It is an "occupant" church in the physical sense. But because the church is in the world but not of it, Webster (2005:102) -echoing Karl Barth- is inviting the church to what he calls "spiritual" or "special" visibility".

The church is not only defined in terms of its visibility or invisibility, but it is also seen as both local and universal. Floyd makes a distinction between the two in the following way: "a valid distinction between Christ's universal church and the local Christian church is seen in their compositions and in the relation to the Lord. The universal church consists only of saved people who are joined to Jesus by a spiritual union, while a local church might have among its members people who have not been born again" (cp. Rev. 2:14-15). Clowley (1988:141) suggests another differentiation, "that the church may also be viewed as an *organism* in which every member functions and associates with other members, and also as an *organization* in which are exercised the various gifts of the Spirit".

In light of the above differentiation that helps grasp the complexity of the concept, we would say that the church is invisible and visible, local and universal, organization and organism, a people called out of the world in order to belong to God and execute His purposes. The church is a "called out to go out" assembled people. In its local expression the church is the visible representation of the invisible church. As a visible church it is local and called to address local problems. It is this "going" that expresses its missionality.

The issue of the church's visibility is also a question of its expression or "look". This is the question of "how does the church look like?" What is the "image" of the church? The best way to answer this question is to review the Bible and seek to find the various expressions, metaphors and analogies used to describe the church. This gives an insight in what the church is. The next section will attempt to give a list without exposition of the images of the church in order to testify to the multi-faceted character of the church. The church is truly many, diverse but One, Holy and Apostolic.

2.3.4 The Images of the Church in the New Testament[2]

The images of the church in the pages of the New Testament provide the readers of the Bible with the thoughts and understandings of the biblical authors on the question of the church. They provide insights in what the church is and an extrapolation on what the church is not. Edwards (1951) in his article *New Testament* Churches provides us with

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[2] Title of a book by Paul S. Minear, 1977

twelve images depicting a local church in the New Testament: assembly of the saints; church of God; church of Christ; God's cultivated field; God's building; temple of God; body of Christ; chaste virgin espoused; little flock; house of God; pillar and ground of the truth and lampstand. These are facets of the church. They are "meanings of the image of the body of Christ within the context of all the other pictures of Christian community" (Minear 1977:11).

According to Minear (1977:22-24), images play three basic functions:

1. They are rhetorical devices serving to convey the impression of something already known;

2. They help to perceive reality;

3. They deepen understanding in a given situation.

With these functions in mind, the church needs to revisit the imagery given by the Bible to check its understanding of the church, not for rhetoric purpose, but in order to remain in line with the biblical understanding of what the church is. The wide range of imagery will thus serve to balance any attempt at defining the church and preserve the rich variety of the church and what it is called to display in the world (Ephesians 3:10).

Here is the list of images as provided by Minear (1977:268-269) in his book *Images of the Church in the New Testament*, (Note that some images do not make direct reference to the church, but deals with the question by implication):

1. The salt of the earth (Matt. 5:13)

2. A Letter from Christ (II Cor. 3:2-3)

3. Fish and Fish net (Mark 1:17; Matt. 4:19; 13:47-50)

4. The boat (Matt. 8:23-27; Jn. 21:8; Mark 4:1)

5. The Ark (Matt. 24:36-42; Luke 17:26-37; Heb. 11:7; I Peter 3:18-22)

6. Unleavened Bread (I Cor. 5:7)

7. One Loaf (I Cor. 10:16-17)

8. The Table of the Lord (I Cor. 10:21)

9. The Altar (Heb. 13:10, 12, 15; I Cor. 9:13; Rev. 6:9; 16:6-7)

10. The Cup of the Lord (I Cor. 10:16, 21-22)

11. Wine (Mark 2:22; Jn 2:1-11)

12. Branches of the Vine (John 15)

13. Vineyard (Matt. 21:28-41; Mark 12:1-9; Luke 20:9-16)

14. The Fig Tree (Luke 13:6-9; Mark 11:12-14)

15. The Olive Tree (Rom. 11:13-24)

16. God's Planting (I Cor. 3:9)

17. God's Building (I Cor. 3:9ff.)

18. Building on the Rock (Matt. 16:18-19)

19. Pillar and Buttress (I Tim. 3:5, 15-16; Rev. 3:12; Col. 1:23)

20. Virgins (Rev. 14:1-4; Matt. 25:1-13)

21. The Messiah's Mother (Rev. 12:1-2)

22. The Elect Lady (II John 1:1)

23. The Bride of Christ (II Cor. 11:1f; Eph. 5:22-31; John 3:29; Rev.21:2-4)

24. The Wedding Feast (Rev. 19:9; Mark 2:19; Matt. 22:1-10)

25. Wearers of White Robes (Rev. 19:7; Matt. 22:1-14)

26. The Choice of Clothing (Gal. 3:27; Rom. 13:12; II Cor. 5:2-3; I Thess. 5:5-8; Eph. 6:11; Col. 3:12f.)

27. Citizens (Eph. 2:19; Gal. 6:10; Phil. 3:20)

28. Exiles (I Peter 1:1; 2:11; Heb. 11:13)

29. The Dispersion (James 1:1; I Peter 1:1)

30. Ambassadors (II Cor. 5:18-21)

31. The Poor (Luke 6:20; James 2:2-6)

32. Hosts and Guests (Matt. 25:31-46; Rom. 14:3)

33. The People of God (I Peter 2:9-10; Rom. 9:25-26)

34. Israel (Gal. 6:15-16; Eph. 2:12; Heb. 8:8-10; Rev. 2:14)

35. Chosen Race (I Peter 2:9)

36. Holy Nation (I Peter 2:9)

37. The Twelve tribes (I Cor 10:1-10; Rom. 15:8-10)

38. The Patriarchs (I Cor. 10:1-10; Rom. 15:8-10)

39. Circumcision (Rom. 15:8-10; John 7:22; Acts 10:45; 11:2; Rom. 3:1, 30)

40. Abraham's Sons (Gal. 3:29; Rom. 4:16)

41. Exodus (Christians are repeating the communal experience of exile from Egypt, making their exodus through the wilderness to the promised land)

42. His House or Kingdom (correspondence between the Davidic house and kingdom and Jesus)

43. Remnant (Rom. 9:27; 11:5-7)

44. The Elect (Acts 13: 16-33; Rom. 9:1-11; 11:1-12; Luke 9:35; 23:35; Eph. 1:4)

45. Flock (Luke 12:32)

46. Lambs who Rule (Revelation 2:26-27)

47. The Holy City (Revelation, Hebrews and Colossians (4:21-31)

48. The Holy Temple (I Cor. 3:16-19; 6:19; Eph. 2:21)

49. Priesthood (Rev. 1:6; 5:10; I Peter 2:9)

50. Sacrifice (Rev. 15:16, 27; I Cor. 9:12; Phil. 2:25-30)

51. Aroma (Eph. 4:18; 5:2; II Cor. 2:15; Rev. 5:8; 8:3; Rom. 12:1)

52. Festivals (I Cor. 5:7-8)

53. The New Creation (II Cor. 5:17)

54. First Fruits (I Cor. 15:20-23; 16:15; Rom. 8:23; 16:5)

55. The New Humanity (Col. 3:10)

56. The Last Adam (Rom. 5:12; I Cor. 15:21-22)

57. The Son of Man (Heb. 2:6)

58. The Kingdom of God (I Thess. 2:12)

59. Fighters against God (Eph. 5)

60. Sabbath Rest (Rom. 14:1-4)

61. The Coming Age (I Cor. 15:28; Heb. 12:28)

62. God's Glory (I Thess. 2:12)

63. Light (Rev. 21:22-24; 22:5)

64. The Name (Rev. 3:12)

65. Life (Rev. 3:1; John 20:31)

66. The Tree of Life (Rev. 22:1-5)

67. Communion in the Holy Spirit (Acts 2; II Cor. 13:14)

68. The Bond of Love (I John 3:4)

69. The Sanctified (I Cor. 1:2; Heb. 12:10; I Peter 1:15-16)

70. The Faithful (Gal. 3:9; Heb. 11)

71. The Justified (I Tim. 3:16)

72. Followers (Rev. 14:4; 19:14)

73. Disciples (Rev. 14:4; 19:14; Eph. 4:20-21; Heb. 5:8-9)

74. Road (Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22)

75. Coming and Going (Matt. 28:19-20; John 6:33-38; 7:28-29)

76. Witnessing Community (Rev. 12:17)

77. Confessors (I John 1:1-4)

78. Slaves (Luke 4:18; II Cor. 4:5)

79. Friends (John 15:15)

80. Servants (Mark 9:35; 10:43; John 12:25-26)

81. With (Col. 3:3-4; Rom. 8:32)

82. Edification (Eph. 4:7-12; I Cor. 14; I Peter 2:5)

83. House of God (I Peter 4:17)

84. Sons of God (Matt. 23:9; John 1:12; 11:52)

85. Brotherhood (I Peter 2:17; 5:9)

86. The Body of Life (Rom. 5-8; 7:4)

87. Members of Christ (I Cor. 6:12-20)

88. The Body and the Blood (I Cor. 10:16-17)

89. The Diversities of Ministries (I Cor. 12-14)

90. Spiritual body (I Cor. 15)

91. head of cosmic spirits (Col. 2:9-10)

92. head of the Church (Col. 1:12-13)

93. the body of this head (Col. 2:13,18)

94. the unity of the Jews and the Gentiles (Col. 3:9-13)

95. the growth of the body (Col. 2:19; 3:15-16)

96. the fullness of God (Eph. 3:6; 2:14-16)

The ninety six images suggest varied nuances, emphases, facets, perspectives and context of the church. Ecclesiology is called to take into account this richness in order to avoid distancing itself from the patterns of the Bible (images), the explicit biblical understanding of the concept and the input of the context in defining the church.

2.4 Definition of the Local Church

Barackman, in his book *Practical Christian Theology* (1992:381), provides us with a helpful definition of a local church. The present research will espouse this definition because of its broad explication. He defines the local Christian church in its content, its organization, its practice, its mission and its hope: Thus the local church is:

- **In content**

A company of baptized people, belonging to a certain place, who profess to be saved by trusting in Jesus and His atoning work (Acts 2:41, 47; 11:20-26; 18:8-11)

- **In Organization**

Who are in agreement in doctrine, policy, and practice (Acts 2:46; Eph. 4:1-6)(…)

- **In Practice**

Who, recognizing the Lord's presence (Mt. 18:20), assemble regularly to worship God (Acts 2:47; 13:2), to observe the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:42; 20:7; I Cor. 11:23-26), to fellowship together in the study of the Word and in prayer (Acts 2:42; 4:23-31) to exercise their spiritual gifts for the edification of one another (Acts 9:31; 13:1; I Cor. 12:1-31; 14:23-26), to do good works (Acts 11:27-30; Gal. 6:10; Rev. 2:5), and to exercise corrective discipline when it is needed (Mt. 18:15-20; I Cor. 5:4-5);

- **In Mission**

Who bear witness to the gospel…(I Thess. 1:8)

- **In Hope**

And who are looking for the return of Jesus (I Thess. 1:10; Phil. 3:20; Tit. 2:13).

Except some minor details, most scholars will agree that this definition encapsulates most elements of what the local church is. This definition does not deal with the form of church government. This makes it fitting to all, whether Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Congregational, Non-Governmental and even from Apostolic Renewal movement.

Although Jesus Himself, the Founder of the Church (Mt. 16: 18) did not plant a single local church, formation of local churches were direct consequences of obedience to His command (Matthew 28:18-20). The process of how local churches will be established seems to be outlined in the words of Jesus in both Acts 1:8 and Matthew 28:18-20:

"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

After the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, Peter, having received power, stood up as a witness of Christ in front of a crowd, proclaiming the Good News of salvation, thus beginning disciple-making process that saw three thousand people believing and being baptized in the name of Christ (Acts 2:41). The Scripture testifies that "they continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, in breaking bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). It is faith in Christ that summoned the first church to come together (Acts 2:42), and it is the Lord of the church that "called" them in (Acts 2:47).

The planting of local churches, from Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, until the end of the earth is following the same principle of proclamation, baptism, teaching and remaining together in the shared faith in Christ Jesus. Whether it is a three thousand-member

church as that of Acts or a house-church as in the case of Romans 16:5 or I Corinthians 16:19, the same process is followed.

Based on the New Testament portraits of the church, how can we describe the function or role of the local church today? Is there any discrepancy between the role and functions of the church then and now?

2.5 The Functions of the Church

Jesus Christ is the Lord over His church and the one calling people to Himself. This call is a call to allegiance and obedience to His commands. Therefore, the church is called to continue the ministry of the Master as commanded to them. As good disciples, the church must follow in the footsteps of its Master. Thus, the mandate of Christ becomes its mandate (Luke 4:18-19). Matthew 28:19-20 makes it clear: the church is to *make disciples.* This entails going, baptizing, and "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you". This is the continuation of vision and action, from Christ to the disciples, to the early church, to today's church. As long as there shall be faith in Christ, allegiance to Christ, there should be taking on and observing "all things that I have commanded you". It is also to be noted that "we are called to mission, not only as disciples of Christ, but as children of the Father (demonstrating His) love that is compassionate (and) imitating his love of grace toward guilty and undeserving enemies (Clowney 1995:161, parenthesis added).

In this process of observing all things that Christ has commanded, the church is called "to worship God, to nurture the people of God, and to bear witness to the world in mission" (Clowney 1995: 199). These functions flow directly from the nature of the church itself, allowing the church to do what it is (Gelder 2000:128). Thus, evangelism serves as the birth stage, introducing people into the kingdom of God (John 3:3), a place of nurturing and maturing (Ephesians 4:11-16), as they worship God in doing what He has called them to do, both as an expression of the love to God and to their fellow men (Matthew 22:37-39).

Four major functions can be listed as flowing from the nature of the church: Evangelism, Edification, Worship and Social Concern:

2.5.1 Evangelism

Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:47-49; John 20:21 and Acts 1:8 contain the commissioning words of Christ to His disciples, stipulating the task they should carry out after His departure from earth. These words came to be known as the Great Commission. Wilkins (1992:183) refers to the great commission as a "climatic mandate" as it points to the climax of the task left to the disciples and subsequently to the church as a whole. It is "co-mission", "mission with" in the sense that Christ is assuring the disciples to be "with you always, even to the end of the age". This task is "co-mission" also in the sense that it is not bestowed on the shoulders of the first disciples alone, or the church leadership, but upon every Christian who will believe in Christ, becoming a *kuriakos* (he who belongs to the Lord) and ready to observe all that He has commanded

(continue the chain of observance of the command of Christ). It is true that it can be argued that the imperative of Matthew 28: 19-20 was given to the first disciples only. But, even if that was to be the case, the direct recipient of the commission left the church a model to follow. "In their own role as disciples they are paradigms for all disciples", says Wilkins (1992:188). The call of Christ to "go" into the world and proclaim the good news is a call to a movement. This movement is both ideological and geographical. Berkouwer (1976:391) says "the essence of the church cannot be thought of apart from that peculiar movement towards the outside, the world". The church is called to be holy which implies "separation" from the world. But this should not mean that the church and the world have nothing to do with each other. "Rather, there is a centrifugal motive in the church's existence" (Berkouwer 1976:391). The church, in its visible expression, has not yet attained holiness, but has an imputed holiness. It is a body that makes room for new additions. Visibly, it is a mixture of the "holy" and the "unholy". Corporately, it is in the process of becoming a "holy people". The non-compliance to the outwards movement of the church "is an alarming sign that something is decisively wrong in the inward relation of the community to its own basis of existence and that under the cover of sacred zeal there is a process of defection from its Lord" (Barth cited by Berkouwer 1976:393). In the words of Barth, "apart from this movement, the church is not to be thought of as the church of Jesus Christ" (Cited by Berkouwer 1976:393). Therefore, evangelism is not a secondary nor a primary task of the church, but rather together with other functions, they are the outworking of the identity of the church.

Evangelism is the proclamation of the faith in Christ, the Good News of salvation in the Lord Jesus through His death, resurrection and the hope of His return to judge the living and the dead and to welcome the faithful in the presence of God the Father (Acts 2:14-39). It is "to proclaim the gospel message among those who have not yet received forgiveness of sins (Lk 24:46-47; Jn 20:21)" (Wilkins 1992:188).

The ministry of evangelism is called to be "all-inclusive" (Erickson 2001:1062). It is about reaching the local context (Jerusalem), preaching in a context of homogeneous cultural traits as in the case of Judea, and even extend the ministry to Samaria, a part of the ministry that Erickson describes as "perhaps the most distasteful part of the commission" (2001:1062). This is stepping into a territory hostile to you. The disciples are called to extend the love of Christ to the world, even a world they do not like. But the commission does not limit itself to Jerusalem and its vicinities, but rather goes far beyond the territory of Israel. The gospel is to reach the "end of the earth". This is the universal salvific plan of God already in picture in Genesis 12:3b that in Abraham "all the families of the earth shall be blessed".

Mission, whether through the form of evangelistic proclamation or social ministry is driven by a number of motives. The question is why do we do mission? When one looks at the history of salvation, the working of God in history with and through Israel, with a special look at the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ as the church model of mission, one sees underlying two major motives for mission: obedience and love. The church is in mission, as sent by and in line with the missional activity and nature of God.

Therefore, the *missio dei* theology is developed out of the doctrine of the triune God, rather than any other doctrine. As Bosch (as cited by Guder 2005:124) puts it, "mission is not primarily an activity of the church, but an attribute of God. God is a missionary God". The Father, the Son and Spirit are missional; therefore, the church ought to be missional. Speaking of the motives of mission, Berkouwer (1976:408) says, "these motives can never be separated from the directedness, the scope, and the goal of mission". Driven by compassion for the lost and the needy and in obedience to the command of Christ, the church is called to the task of making disciples of all nations and the demonstration of the love of Christ through words and works (Matthew 28:19-20; 22:37-39).

The paramount text supporting the evangelistic function of the church (Matthew 28:19:20), though pointing out the primacy of this function informs us at the same time of an equally important function that has to go hand in hand with evangelism. The imperative *matheteusate* (make disciples) implies both the call to discipleship and the process of becoming a disciple (Wilkins 1992:188). The participle "teaching", in the Great Commission, is suggestive of a continual act of growing in discipleship. Edification is, therefore, a direct consequence of the work of evangelism in the life of the church.

2.5.2 Edification

As people believe in Christ, they become followers of Christ. They identify with their Master in death and resurrection through baptism and continue in the observance of His teaching. The disciples are commanded to teach. This is what is visible in Acts as the

church "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers" (2:42). Thus fellowship and teaching constitute the components of edification. Therefore the church is seen as a place of mutual care, sharing of needs and solutions as well as a place of learning and growing in knowledge both spiritually and intellectually. Ephesians 4:11-12 speaks of teaching offices in the church. These are educational responsibilities to equip, empower, educate, build up "the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ". The goal of the church is not simply to bring people to the saving faith in Christ, but also to teach them "in all wisdom" in order to present them perfect in their relationship with Christ (Colossians 1:28). Not everyone agrees with this understanding. For example, Warren (1995:69-75) speaks of five purposes of the church, distinguishing fellowship from teaching. He makes "discipleship" in the sense of teaching a separate purpose or function of the church. Although there can be a case to be made in this regard, one needs to bear in mind the inter-connected nature of church functions, making it difficult to have clear cut categorization.

2.5.3 Worship

Worship is "in itself fulfilling the major purpose of the church with reference to its Lord" (Grudem 2005:867). Worship is to the Lord and Him alone (Col. 3:16; Exodus 20:1-5). The corporate act of worship unto God is beneficial to the congregation as a consequence of their gathering together in the presence of God. It is to be noted that from the Old Testament already God called people to Himself for the purpose of worshiping Him (Deut. 4:10). In the same way the NT church is called unto the Lord to

worship Him. But the NT presents two dimensions of the concept of worship. Worship is seen in both its horizontal and vertical dimensions. "Christians are urged to worship the living God in every sphere of life (Rom 12:1)" (O'Brien 2004:201). The new lifestyle of believers is worship unto God. This understanding constitutes the horizontal dimension of worship. The vertical dimension of worship is the God-directed praises, prayers and thanksgivings. But although the vertical dimension of worship is directed to God, it "overflows" into edification for the church. O'Brien (2004:201) says in this regard that "prayers and thanksgivings were not to be purely private, God-directed activities when others were present". He goes on to say, "whether inspired or not, they were to be intelligible, for otherwise they would fall short of the fundamental goal of building up other members of the assembly (I Cor 14:16-17)".

2.5.4 Social Concern

This function of the church is probably the most underplayed in evangelical churches. Primacy has been placed on either evangelism or edification and worship so that social concern has been viewed as a distraction for the church. Evangelism has been viewed by some conservative Christians as "the exclusive mission of the church" (Adeyemo In Nicohlls 1985:48).

During His earthly ministry, Christ modeled compassion and mercy for the poor, the sick and the needy, the oppressed and the outcast of society. The examination of the ethic of Jesus is therefore needed in order to understand more extensively the calling of the church in the world and the extent of its ministry. *The Great Reversal*, book written by

Verhey (1986) meets such a need. It traces the ethic of Jesus throughout history, showing that "whenever and wherever Christians have joined together in a gathered community, their intentions have been to discuss and discern their personal and social responsibilities in the light of their shared convictions and common loyalty" (Verhey 1986:1). Simply stated, the ethic of social responsibility can be seen throughout the Bible and directly linked to Jesus Christ Himself. The Scripture testifies that He preached, taught, did good and healed the sick:

Matthew 4:23-24:

And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.

Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them.

Acts 10:38

"how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

Social concern seems to be at the heart of His calling as portrayed in His mission in Luke 4:18-19 (Isaiah 61:1-11):

The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD."

Social concern is described by James as the mark of a true religion (James 1:27):

Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

Jesus stresses the importance of looking after the poor, needy, oppressed in his sweltering rebuke to the Pharisees who observed the Law to the letter but passed by "justice and the love of God", "the weightier matters of law: justice and mercy and faith" (Luke 11:42; Matthew 23:23).

From the life of Christ Himself as presented in the gospels and through the writing of the apostles, social concern stands out as one of the main functions of the church. John Stott says that "it is exceedingly strange that any follower of Jesus Christ should ever have needed to ask whether social involvement was their concern, and that controversy should have blown up over the relationship between evangelism and social

responsibility" (1999:3). It is strange because the evidence of Christ engaging in both ministries is evident in His life. "The emphasis of social concern carries over into the epistles as well" (Erickson 1998:1067). And as Mott (1982:29), elaborating from the words of Karl Barth, eloquently puts it, it is a matter of "grace". Doing social ministry is understanding that "grace demands that we do in our own circle that which God does by Christ", attesting "to God's creating, reconciling, and redeeming acts by deeds and attitudes which correspond to them" (Mott 1982:29). It is a matter of rendering to others what we have received. Because one has received justice from God through Christ, one ought to dispense the same justice to others by standing for what is right (activism), attend to the poor around (mercy), dispensing grace to all that need it. Because in God's grace we "have experienced healing in our life together, we cannot be content in the knowledge that there is brokenness and suffering in the world" says Mouw (1973:91).

It is this neglected function of the church that will form the bulk of this research as we try to look at practical and methodical ways in which local churches can engage in the process of the social transformation of their communities.

The above-mentioned functions constitute the major trends of the mission of the church. But it is to be noted that all four "functions" are loaded with meaning that needs unpacking. The question will always be to define how evangelism, edification, worship or social concern is translated in practical terms. At the same time, one would wonder if there is room for other functions. "With the rise of new schools of theology, it is not

surprising that the mission of the church is being drastically reinterpreted", says Bloesch (2002:32). "Whereas traditional theology envisions the church's mission as the proclamation of the good news of redemption through the cross and resurrection of Christ, the new theology views it in terms of humanization and social liberation" (Bloesch 2002:32). A new emphasis of the mission is placed on the church becoming the *diakonos* of a community in the sense that it becomes the "servant who bends himself to struggle for its wholeness and health" (Cox cited by Bloesch 2002:32). The role of a minister in the new theology approach is also following the reinterpretation flow. "Instead of expounding scriptural truth, ministers now devote their energies to breaking down barriers that impede humanity's progress towards peace and justice" (Bloesch 2002:33). In the same vein, with the influence of the New Age movement on theology, "the kingdom of God is no longer an emerging reign of justice on earth but the transformation of religious consciousness". Bloesch goes on to explain that "it is not a blueprint for new social order but a call to turn inward and find peace through union with the all-encompassing spiritual presence" (2002:33). This new age view has the potential to rob the church of its Bible grounded mission/nature and the message it carries for this world. The question here is whether the church and its minister can do without the Word? Can the nature of the church be separated from its mission? Is the call and need for the reinterpretation of the mission of the church a call to change the nature of the church? How does one better translate its core mission to meet the needs of contemporary society?

In response to the call for the reinterpretation of the mission of the church, it is the view of Bloesch (2002:34) that "the church has a fundamentally spiritual mission…that is realized not in withdrawal or detachment from afflictions and conflicts of humanity but in the very midst of these afflictions". This is a church that faces social problems and tackles them head on.

In his attempt to classify the functions of the church, Visser't Hooft and Neill (Cited by Carter 2005:180) group the activities of the church in three functions. He speaks of witness (martyria), service (diakonia), and communion or fellowship (koinonia). For him, these are not simply clerical functions but functions of the church as a community of people "in relation to each other because of their relationship to God". These functions depict a witnessing, serving, and fellowshipping people, standing in contrast to the world. These marks or functions of the church together with others practical marks (Bloesch 2002:103-109), such as "fire on earth" (missionary vitality), suffering and mobility of pilgrim as advocated by Neill, holy living and brotherly love (Martin Luther), and unreserved testimony and suffering as suggested by Menno Simons, describes what Yoder calls "believers' church ecclesiology" (Carter 2005:180) . These marks will be the source of the effectiveness of the church in the world. This ecclesiology is in contrast with "liberal" ecclesiology of the "World Council of Churches in which the locus of meaning is the world as a whole" (Carter 2005:181). Believers' church ecclesiology sees the church as a way of salvation while at the same time "the primacy of the individual's free response to the preaching of the gospel is maintained" (Carter 2005:181). At this point of an ecclesiology born out of the marks of the church, taking

into account individual salvation and the role of the church as way of salvation, let's look closely at the question of ecclesiology: missional and improvisational ecclesiologies.

2.5.5 Church as Missional Community

What is understood by *missional* church? Guder (2005:116) suggests that the use of the term *missional* is an attempt at broadening the commonly held definition of "mission". Mission is thus not a mere soul-winning activity or "one of the necessary prongs of the church's calling" , but rather "to describe the church as "missional" is to make a basic theological claim, to articulate a widely held but also widely ignored consensus regarding the fundamental purpose of the Christian church" (Guder 2005:116), which was for the apostles of Jesus, "to found missional communities to continue the witness that had brought them into being" (Guder 2005:117). This understanding leads Guder to speak of "*missional ecclesiology*" in his proposed evangelical ecclesiology. As mentioned above, the missionality of the church is a result of the missionary nature of God Himself. Bosch explains that "the classical doctrine of the *missio Dei* as God the Father sending the Son, and God the Father and the Son sending the Spirit was expanded to include yet another 'movement': Father, Son, and Sprit sending the church into the world" (cited by Guder 2005:124). The church is thus in mission to bring healing to the world.

To speak of missional ecclesiology seems to be a combination of missiology and ecclesiology. Gelder (2000), in *The Essence of the Church*, suggests that the pre-

eminence of one discipline over another may cause a problem of understanding the true nature of the church. Thus, when ecclesiology takes pre-eminence over missiology, mission is seen as a mere "function" of the church. And when missiology takes pre-eminence, the church is seen as a mere by-product of mission. The understanding of the church as missionary by nature removes the "pre-eminence" factor and balances missiology and ecclesiology as disciplines addressing the same reality (2000: 32). Mission is, thus, seen as "an inherent aspect of the nature of the church" (2000:33). A missional or missiological ecclesiology will take into account "three aspects of the church life: what the church is –its nature; what the church does –its ministry; and how the church is to structure its work –its organization" (2000:37). This allows the church to be what it is supposed to be, but at the same time, do what it is supposed to do and organize itself in so doing. This view of the church avoids the risk of a pure "functional" (2000:20) or "organizational" (2000:22) definition of the church, defining the church neither in terms of what it does nor in terms of its organizational structures and procedural mechanism.

2.5.6 Evangelical Ecclesiology in Practice: Improvisational Ecclesiology[3]

Wilson (2005:63-72), in an article entitled "Practicing Church", has attempted to suggest an ecclesiology that takes into account how evangelical churches are "shaped" or influenced by various authors. Wilson's observation shows that the evangelical ecclesiology is not formed or influenced by evangelical theologians or theologians in general, but rather by "popular authors, who tend to be other pastors and practitioners

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[3] Ecclesiology suggested by J.R Wilson. It is an ecclesiology that is flexible, adaptable while remaining faithful to the Bible. He suggests that an ecclesiology that is not improvisational will become simply "instrumental".

of church leadership" (2005:63). The ecclesiologies practiced in the churches today, therefore, may be lacking theological substance, but at the same time it is an appeal to theologians to find out what is it that pastors and church practitioners find in popular authors that they are not offering and why?

To further explore the issue, Wilson looks into the publication of four popular and unquestionable evangelical writers that have influenced the evangelical church throughout the world: Francis Schaeffer, Charles Colson, Rick Warren and Brian McLaren. These seem to be the major influence in church practice among evangelicals. Schaeffer roots the church in a particular time and space through cultural analysis of a specific people in the process of doing church. "This cultural critique then becomes the basis for an ecclesiology that recognizes the existence of "co-belligerents" with the church in the course of history, the centrality of truth in preaching and in practice, the necessity of "the orthodoxy of the community" and the New Testament teaching on "form and freedom" of the church" (Wilson 2005:64). Schaeffer calls for a balance between form and freedom in the practice of the church, which is provided through the authority of the New Testament church practices while remaining sensitive to a particular cultural moment. In addition, he calls the church to remain pure, but with a purity that is "observable" (Wilson 2005:65). It is this visibility of the church that creates the link between the church and the world. Thus, Schaeffer "engages the world as the place of mission, not as something to be repelled or walled off" (Wilson 2005:65). For him, the church should not be separated from the world. It must engage the world for mission's sake. The church is thus seen "in the world" (John 17:18). That is in keeping

with the tension in the words of Christ that His disciples are not of the world just as He is not, but called to engage the world in which they are just as He did (John 17:14-18). They must be pure, separate from the world, but at the same time live in and engage a corrupt world.

Charles Colson's ecclesiology, is rooted in cultural analysis with the same "co-belligerents" concern as Francis Schaeffer. But in addition, Colson and Vaughn[4] touch on historical analysis and call for a wider understanding of the church to include various church traditions and learn from them. They hold a high concern for justice and call for the church to please God more than the culture and the community (Wilson 2005:66-67).

Speaking of Rick Warren's ecclesiology, Wilson (2005:67-69) explores the *Purpose-Driven Church: Growth Without Compromising Your Message & Mission*, book published by Rick Warren in 1995. For Wilson, Warren's silence on issues of cultural analysis, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity of the church leaves him to assume that "the relationship between the church and culture is unproblematic", that "there is a cultural and historical naivete" and that this ecclesiology is driven by a tendency to please people.

The fourth influencer of evangelical ecclesiology is McLaren. According to Wilson (2005:69), "McLaren is sensitive to the cultural context for communicating faith but also recognizes, to a degree, the "world" as opposition to the church, and gospel". McLaren's

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[4] Co-authors of "The Body: Being Light in Darkness", Dallas: Word, 1992

look into post-modern matrix to understand the type of church compatible with that culture is suggestive of his cultural sensitivity, though there is a sense of assumption that the reader understands what post-modernism is all about. He sees the church as one and apostolic, but traces of its catholicity and holiness are scarcely visible. The demarcation between the church and the world is not clear. "In contrast to Colson and Vaughn, who begin and end their ecclesiology with the fear of the Lord, McLaren's ecclesiology seems driven by fear of irrelevance" (Wilson 2005:70). Thus, he sees irrelevance as a form of unfaithfulness, since the church is called out to be sent in, or echoing the words of Gelder (2004:87), "the church is created as a called and sent community". "But fear of irrelevance is not the foundation of ecclesiology; the fear of God is", cautions Wilson (2005:70).

It is out of the above expositions that Wilson seeks to find the "basis for a thesis about evangelical ecclesiology that may be able to guide us into the future" (2005:70). This ecclesiology that "guides into the future" must be flexible; but this flexibility must "hold(s) us accountable to the gospel". Wilson goes on to say, "Called into being by the good news of Jesus Christ and empowered for witness to that gospel, the evangelical church needs to maintain a *missional* ecclesiology with its commitment to mission, and concomitant flexibility while remaining faithful to our commission". This is the ecclesiology that Wilson describes as *improvisational*, recognizing "the demands of adaptation and faithfulness, committing us to both". It accepts the church as holy, catholic and apostolic, confessing it in word and deed; and subscribes to a church that is adaptable to the demands of its context (2005:71).

2.6 The Church in Context

What is the relationship between the church and its community? Is there any correlation between the two communities? Clowney (1995:167) asked a similar question in a chapter of his book on the church. He wanted to know "what should be the Christian attitude to the world and its cultures?" In answer to this question, he resorted to history to find out how scholars wrestled with the issue. Some saw the world and culture as a threat to the church and urged "a strategy of avoidance" (1995:168) based on I John 2:15-16. This was known as "Christ-against-culture position". Whereas some churches have embraced this view, others have called for some measure of withdrawal, saying that "avoidance is a matter of degree" (1995:168).

An opposing position was developed, calling for the church to join the world and its culture. They appeal to the writings of Paul in I Corinthians 9:20-21, an appeal to be all things to all men, "that I might by all means save some" (v.22). The danger of this position as observed in history, is the development of syncretistic religious movement.

The third position as presented by Clowney (1995:169) is the Roman Catholic Church's Thomistic Theology "that fallen sinners can build from God's general revelation a structure of theology that is true, though incomplete". Romans 1:20 is used to support the view that general revelation has a measure of truth that can lead to the saving knowledge of God. The idea is that the world is not totally evil. It can be engaged to be made complete.

At the same time, others have chosen to live and flourish in the world while at the same time ignoring it since there seem to be "little application of Christian principles in the market-place or their neighbourhoods" (Clowney 1995:170). Interaction with the world in order to change it, becoming leaven, salt and light in the world (Matthew 13:33; 5:13; 14) was also a position of others who embraced the view of people like Augustine that "culture was to be transformed by the gospel" (Cited by Clowney 1995:171).

In reaction to the above-mentioned positions, Clowney (1995:178) says that "effort to flee from culture will end in building other cultures, often legalistic or mystical". Retracting from the world, one ends up forming another world, potentially creating an unrealistic cycle of withdrawal if one has to remain true to the same principle of "fleeing from the world". The gospel must permeate the world and do that which it was sent to do.

It is important to note that this world context in which the Word is brought may be that of offensive cultural practices such as listed by Stephen Neill (cited by Clowney 1995:181), "idolatry, witchcraft and sorcery, female infanticide, abortion, the killing of twins, cannibalism and head-hunting…private vengeance and blood feuds in Arabia, ritual prostitution in India, even cattle-raiding…among the Masai of Africa" and the like, or social injustices, poverty, political intolerance and other societal evils. "The church has a prophetic role to perceive and expose ethical questions that underlie political issues" (Clowney 1995:193). The church has the responsibility to call the state to righteousness

(1995:193). In the same vein, Clowney quotes John Stott's view on the relationship between the church and the world, the extent of its involvement and at the same time the compelling mandate of its involvement in the following words:

As Christ came into the world to serve, so we, as his disciples, are to serve human need wherever we encounter it, loving our neighbour as ourselves. "Mission" describes everything the church is sent into the world to do, including the political dimension of social concern. While our love of neighbor is first expressed in our desire to share the gospel (II Cor. 5:14, 20), it does not stop there, but extends to all human needs, including political needs.

The church is thus a place of solution to human's problems, an agency providing answers in a specific context, not only spiritually, but politically, socially and other wise. The church is called to widen the scope of its involvement and become real leaven, light and salt, bringing transformation and healing to a dying world. Is it where evangelical churches are? How is the state of its relationship to the world?

2.7 Evangelicalism and Social Concern

Is it possible to speak of evangelicalism and social concern in the same sentence? Many have thought of it as contradiction in essence, as evangelicalism was seen as a movement seeking the progress of the gospel, winning the lost and preparing them to meet their Lord and that any other ministry even though not evil in nature was seen as distraction from the main goal of what the church was called to do. The view of the

Social Gospel movement on salvation and how it is gained or "transmitted", led evangelicals to take a firmer stance, which unfortunately led them into the other extreme of the pendulum. Thus, Social Gospel was seen as denying the place and importance of spiritual and personal salvation and evangelicalism as rejecting the application of the concept of salvation as touching the spiritual as much as the social, environmental and political spheres of life. If this was the position of evangelical churches decades ago, what is its position today? Is there a sense of acceptance of the social ministry as part and parcel of the ministry and mission of the church as expressed through the local church in its direct community?

2.7.1 The Social Gospel Movement

Speaking of evangelicalism and social concern without touching on other Christian movements that have preceded evangelicals in the movement for social transformation would be absurd. One such movement is the "social gospel". When one speaks of "social gospel" one name is automatically attached to it: Walter Rauschenbusch, a Baptist minister and professor of Church History at Rochester Seminary in New York, from 1897 to 1917 (Stott 1999:8). Rauschenbusch published several books to promote his "theology", such as *Christianity and Social Crisis* (1907), *A Theology for Social Gospel* (1917), A *Gospel for Social Awakening* (1950), the last being a reprint collection of his writings.

The basic tenets of social gospel can be summed up as follows (Erickson 2001:904)

- "the basic human problem lies not in a perverted human nature, but in an evil social environment";

- There is no need to try to change human beings as they will return to the same perverted world and be re-infected;

- "Humans are not essentially evil. They are whatever their environment makes them to be";

- The best approach is to change the conditions that led people to corruption – social structures.

This view envisages social transformation as the result of societal reforms and gives very little consideration to spiritual conversion as basis for change. Although, Rauschenbusch himself "stressed the indispensability of personal regeneration" (Carl 1980:109), this was not the position most liberals held. Carl goes on to say that "despite his preliminary insistence on personal spiritual regeneration…"social gospel" viewed political action as a means not simply of promoting and preserving justice, but of actually transforming society" (1980:110). And this "became characteristic of Protestant liberalism", concludes Carl (1980:110). This made "the social gospel of the liberals…no gospel for the fundamentalists, who saw in the Bible only a gospel for saving individuals, not one for redeeming social order" (Moberg 1972:15).

It is against this backdrop that we want to look at the evangelical progressive debate on the issue of social involvement.

2.7.2 Evangelicals and Social action

The issue of social action among evangelicals was born together with the rise of concern for world evangelization in 1961. Pioneered by Billy Graham and chaired by Carl Henry the Berlin Congress, the World Congress on Evangelism was held on 25 October 1966. It "involved a total of 1,100 carefully chosen evangelicals from over 100 countries" (Chester 1993:28). Social action was raised as "it was becoming clear…that the task of evangelizing the world could not be adequately met without facing the issue of social involvement" (Chester 1993: 28). Eminent speakers such as John Stott, Paul Rees and Benjamin Moraes delivered papers in line with the call for social action as the church goes about spreading the Gospel of Christ. The theme of the congress was "One Race, One Gospel, One Task". But what task was it? Was it a multi-dimensional task? The issue of social action was very crucial to most people attending the conference. But unfortunately, it was not high on the congress' agenda. Why? Chester (1993:29) provides us with clarity on why the felt and voiced need for social action did not lend in the agenda of the congress:

> *"Before the Congress Carl Henry and others at the Christianity*
> *Today had wanted more attention to be given to the issue of social*
> *action, but in the end –not least because such an emphasis was*
> *not welcomed by the financial backers of the Congress- it did not*
> *feature greatly on the Congress agenda"*

The "one task" of the church as defined by the Congress was evangelism without social action. Evangelism was thus seen as the "main task" by the Congress, not because this was the conviction of the church based on a careful study of the Word, but as promoted

by "sponsors". This led speakers of the Congress to make some statements that undermined the place and importance of social action. Any other ministry was seen as peripheral and even as "loss of precious time" (Chester 1993:29).

Whereas the issue of social action seems to be undermined in the Berlin Congress, the Wheaton Declaration confessed "an unscriptural isolation from the world" and a failure "to apply scriptural principles to such problems as racism, war, revolution and communism" (Chester 1993:30). This was a Congress on the Church's Worldwide Mission held in April 1966 in Wheaton. This Congress still however maintained the "primacy" of preaching over social concern. Wheaton Declaration became the first "international sign of a growing concern amongst evangelicals for social involvement" (Chester 1993:30).

After Berlin 1966 came other follow-up conferences aimed at continuing discussion on the issue of world evangelization. It is out of these conferences that the issue of social participation of the evangelical church was further raised. This was a call to the church to preach the gospel by any means, translating it through practical action, giving voice to the voiceless and power to the powerless. Latin American Congress on Evangelism (CLADE) called the church "to follow the way of incarnation: not to stand apart from the world but to be involved in it and particularly in social change", knowing that "political activity and evangelism, social responsibility and evangelism, go together, they are inseparable (Chester 1993:32). Samuel Escobar and Rene Padilla played a major role in CLADE. This change of tone and thinking quickly found its way in the declaration of

the Congress in Bogota, calling the church "to take seriously our social responsibility" (Cited by Chester 1993:32). Whereas CLADE took seriously the question of social responsibility of the church, the follow-up conference in Amsterdam, 1971, social responsibility was "given a more minor role in relation to evangelism which was seen as the primary task of the church" (Chester 1993:32).

Lausanne 74 or International Congress on World Evangelization "with nearly 2,500 participants…and 1,000 observers from 150 countries…and representing 135 denominations…" continued the debate and produced a more balanced statement on the issue of social action (Chester 1993:69). It also served as a platform for the launch of reviewed and refined theological positions; with for example John Stott retracting from his previous position denying that social action was part of the Great Commission. He reformulated his view based on John 20:21 to suggest that "the pattern for mission laid down by Jesus is one of service and incarnation", seeing both evangelism and social action as "authentic expressions of the love that serves" (cited by Chester 1993:73).

It is this type of views and revisited positions that led to this statement:

> *"We affirm that God is both the Creator and the Judge of all men. We therefore should share his concern for justice and reconciliation throughout human society and for the liberation of men from every kind of oppression. Because mankind is made in the image of God,*

every person, regardless of race, religion, colour, culture, class, sex or age, has an intrinsic dignity because of which he should be respected and served, not exploited. Here too we express penitence both for our neglect and for having sometimes regarded evangelism and social concern as mutually exclusive. Although reconciliation with man is not reconciliation with God, nor is social action evangelism, nor political liberation salvation, nevertheless we affirm that evangelism and socio-political involvement are both part of our Christian duty. For both are necessary expressions of our doctrine of God and man, our love for our neighbour and our obedience to Jesus Christ. The message of salvation implies also a message of judgment upon every form of alienation, oppression and discrimination…The salvation we claim should be transforming us in the totality of our personal and social responsibility. Faith without works is dead".
(Paragrapg 5 of Lausanne Covenant, "Christian Responsibility", Cited by Chester 1993:69)

The "Salt and Light" consultation of 1988 in Britain, jointly sponsored by Evangelical Alliance, Tearfund and Evangelical Missionary Alliance called for an integrated or holistic approach of evangelism and social action (Stott 1999:13). 1996 saw another evangelical consultation producing the Bournemouth Declaration taking the incarnation and transforming work of Christ as model of engagement, thus committing "to releasing

Christian people for involvement at all levels of society" based on the understanding that "no area of life is outside God's sovereign rule" (Stott 1999:13).

Unfortunately, despite this clarity of statement and its intent "conferences are not always as significant at grassroots level as organizers and participants like to think", conclude Chester (1993:70). One would object by citing the concept of "follow-up conferences". But the question would remain: who are they targeting? Are they touching local churches directly with the aim of translating these statements in practical, methodical and "implementable" actions? Very few filter down to the local church level. One exception worth mentioning would be the "UK Action" which aims at "enabling…local British churches to develop holistic ministries among urban poor " (Stott 1999:13). This is a joint initiative of Tearfund and Evangelical Alliance.

If one is to speak of the history and development of this debate, this would be the sketch of the history of the social concern movement among the evangelicals. But how can one sum it up? There were those who pushed the agenda of the primacy of the preaching of the gospel, seeing it as the "one", "main", "primary" task of the church; and those who called for social responsibility from the church. Chester summarizes the position of those calling for social action by saying that "those advocating social involvement certainly did not question the need of evangelism. Nor did they simply argue that social involvement had a place alongside evangelism. Rather, they argued that evangelism could not be truly effective if it was isolated from the social aspect of the gospel" (1993:33). The gospel cannot be divorced from its social consequences.

This is why theology –and in this case ecclesiology- is called to relevance, addressing social and spiritual issues facing the people it seeks to permeate. Thus, contextualizing the gospel, according to the spirit of those in support of social responsibility must not only look at the language and culture context, but also that of poverty, injustice, underdevelopment and other social vices of communities (Chester 1993:34-35).

2.7.3 Relationship Between Evangelism and Social Action

The question of the relationship between evangelism and social responsibility has raised a fierce debate among scholars. The heading of this section is a suggestion that a relationship does exist. But what is it? And what are the various views expressed by Bible scholars? As noted earlier, Adeyemo (in Nicholls 1985:48-57) outlined nine views:

1. social action is a distraction from evangelism;

2. social action is a betrayal of evangelism;

3. social action is evangelism;

4. social action is a means to evangelism;

5. social action is a manifestation of evangelism;

6. social action is a result or consequence of evangelism;

7. social action is a partner of evangelism;

8. social action and evangelism are equally important but genuinely distinct aspects of the total mission of the church;

9. social action is part of the Good News –Evangelism.

Although these views seem at first glance contradictory, when given a closer attention one finds common ground or non-conflictual relationships between many of them. This may explain why the Consultation on the Relationship between Evangelism and Social Responsibility (CRESR) held 1982, at Grand Rapids in the United States came up with a different categorization of this relationship (Chester 1993:123). Stott (1999:12) refers to the findings as "consensus", and summarizes this consensus is the following way: "Social activity was …both a consequence of and a bridge to evangelism, and indeed the two were…partners". In other words this can be explained in the following three ways (Chester 1993:123):

1. Social activity is the consequence of evangelism, indeed it is one of its aims;

2. Social activity can be a bridge to evangelism, although it should not be a bridge;

3. Social activity is the partner of evangelism.

The consultation's understanding is that "social action…can precede, accompany and follow evangelism" (Chester 1993:123). By this the consultation understood that the sequence does not determine pre-eminence or priority. CRESR's understanding that social action is the consequence of evangelism (word) is in the sense of its incarnational nature. Evangelism takes shape in social activity. It is, thus, a natural consequence as in the "gospel" of James whereby the word becomes "alive" through works (James 2:15-16). An exhortation to "depart in peace, be warmed and filled" that is not expressed through what is "needed for the body" does not profit, argues James. This position is expressed in James' rhetorical question "what does it profit?" to which the context provides a negative answer. For James, any faith without works is dead (2:17).

Consequently, any proclamation with no "social action" consequence is dead. Since it is dead, it cannot "reproduce".

Social action is not just a "consequence". It is also a bridge, "although it should not be a bridge". It is in one sense a "means", preparing the "ground" for the word, although a ministry in its own capacity. The ministry of mercy is a ministry of the church in as much as evangelism is. An African saying conveyed in French goes, "*ventre affame n'a point d'oreilles"* (an empty stomach has no ears for word). In a context of poverty, social action may precede evangelism by serving as its bridge. But when exercised on its own as a ministry, taking into account the context and the agent of the action, social action can be the only evangelism people will ever receive. Adeyemo's categorization calls it "social action is evangelism" (In Nicholls 1985:48), although Sider warns us against this equation (1993:163). This is, though, different from the view held by the social gospel movement that detaches social action from its agent (Henry 1980:110).

The Grand Rapids' Report presents, lastly a third view relying on the concept of "partnership" between social action and evangelism. As in marriage, this concept stresses two crucial facts. First, they are distinct, yet called to co-operate, partner. Secondly, their "union" can be more effective than their "separation".

It should be noted at this point that the Grand Rapids report touched on the issue of the "priority" of evangelism. But their spirit of consensus (Stott 1999:12) led them to a different but somewhat rich and sound conclusion. This "different" priority is defined in

two senses: "first, it has a logical priority since 'Christian social responsibility presupposes socially responsible Christians'…Second, evangelism has priority which stems from the unique nature of the gospel for it 'relates to people's eternal destiny, and in bringing them Good News of salvation Christians are doing what nobody else can do'" (Chester 1993:123). In both senses the priority of evangelism is a-temporal.

The point of social action being a distraction from or betrayal of evangelism as listed by Adeyemo (in Nicholls 1985:48) has lost support with the development of the debate in history. But this was very much a contentious issue during the decade following World War I (Sttott 1999:8). This was the period of the evangelical renunciation of social responsibility also known as "The Great Reversal" (Moberg 1972). John Stott suggests a number of reasons for the "reversal", echoing the opinion of Moberg (1999:8-13): (i) fight against theological liberalism and its neglect of the gospel; (ii) reaction against "social gospel" that sprang out of theological liberalism and its emphasis on social structural reformation to the detriment of individual spiritual salvation; (iii) disillusion and pessimism following World War I -"Human beings and human society appeared to be irreformable" (Stott 1999:10)-; (iv) wide spread premillennial teachings portraying "the present evil world as beyond improvement or redemption" (Stott 1999:10) with the only solution residing in the imminent return of Christ; (v) spread of Christianity among middle-class people who saw it as one and the same with their culture to the neglect of the plight of the poor and the destitute. Moberg (1972:35-36) sees in these reasons, on the one hand, an endeavour by evangelicals to pursue an equally legitimate cause

(gospel proclamation) and on the other hand failure of remaining relevant and scriptural
–totality of Christian gospel- (Moberg 1972:177).

The process of reversing the Great Reversal only began in the 1960s "when young people were rebelling against the materialism, superficiality and hypocrisy of the adult world they had inherited" (Stott1999:11). People like Carl F.H. Henry, George Goyder, Fred Catherwood, Norman Aderson, John Stott, Billy Graham, etc played a major role in the "reversing" process through their writings and the culmination of these efforts in various conferences and congresses. This "reverse" is fully expressed in the break down of the "old dichotomies between salvation and service, changing lives and changing society, proclamation and demonstration, man's vertical and horizontal relationships, personal piety and social service, faith and works, and believing and loving" (Moberg 1972:178). The reversing of the Great Reversal is thus, the return to true, biblical and total proclamation of God's Word to the world.

In his book, *Evangelism and Social Action* published in 1993, Sider deals eloquently with the question of distinction between evangelism and social action. He suggests six reasons for this distinction while acknowledging their correlative nature. While supporting the possibility of mass conversion as taught by Donald McGavran –people movements- and David Gitari –community evangelism-, he stands firm on the view that repentance and conversion are first and foremost personal and requires the proclamation of the Good News of salvation, making of evangelism a sine qua non condition distinct from social action (Sider 1993:162). His second reason is the question

of "outcomes", since only evangelism brings a person to "knowing that your sins are forgiven…and knowing that you are on your way to living forever in the presence of the risen Lord" (Sider 1993:162). Furthermore, Sider (1993:163) sees distinction in the intentions of the two ministries: "In evangelism, the central intention is to lead non-Christians to become disciples of Jesus Christ. In Social action, the central intention is to improve the socio-economic or psychological well-being of people for their life here on earth". His fourth reason lies in the nature of social action. It does not need to be "pre-evangelism". It does not need to have an evangelistic purpose in mind. It is a calling on its own as traced back in the Edenic mandate given to Adam. "Feeding the starving, ending slavery and promoting political freedom and economic justice have their own biblical justification whether or not those who benefit ever accept Christ" (Sider 1993:163). Fifthly, distinguishing evangelism from social action preserves the integrity and practice of evangelism. It is a special mandate on its own and should not be neglected. His sixth reason is that "unlike social action, evangelism is totally impossible unless the Gospel Word is proclaimed" (1993:164).

It is, at the same time, the view of Ronald Sider that even though there is a clear distinction between evangelism and social action, they are called to relate. Although "intention" may seem to be the most distinguishing element of the six, their inter-relatedness makes them distinct but co-operating. This distinction and relationship cannot be made clearer than in the words of Costas (Cited by Sider 1993:166):

> *Not everything that the church does is evangelism. The church is called to undertake several missional tasks. However, everything that*

> *the church is and everything that the church has been sent to do has an evangelistic dimension…One ought not to confuse evangelization with the multiple missional tasks of the church. Nevertheless, we ought to recognize the evangelistic potential of all these tasks.*

For Costas, the church is called to more than just evangelism. But at the same time, everything else that the church does has an evangelistic dimension to it. Yes, the primary intention of social action is the betterment of people's social conditions, but it carries with it an implicit evangelistic dimension because carried out by the church. This is what led to the use of the concept of *mission* as an inclusive, broad concept that speaks not only of evangelism but of social action also, expressing the multi-dimensional nature of the church's mission in the world (Sider 1993:167).

2.7.4 The Biblical Basis of Social Concern[5]

Since Jesus Christ is the Founder and Builder of His church, the best way to determine the biblical basis of social concern should be the life of Christ Himself. One of the greatest quotes that communicate this idea is that of Stott (cited by Wiebe 1979:31):

> "Follow me," he said. "Yes, Lord," comes our glib reply, "we will follow you". But which Christ are we following? The Christ some follow, breathes love but never judgment, brings comfort but never challenge. Others among us are alert to his commission to evangelize, but have somehow never heard his call to care for the poor, the sick, the hungry and the deprived".

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[5] Heading borrowed from John Stott in his book *Issues Facing Christians Today,* Zondervan, 1999:17

Apart from the life of Jesus Himself, the Bible is full of scriptures dealing with the issue of social problems ranging from hunger, poverty, injustice, orphans, widows and other destitute of society. John Alexander counted 750 verses in total dealing with such issues (Wiebe 1979:31). The Old Testament touches extensively on the problem (1979:32). The miracle narratives of Jesus are another example of the concern of Christ for the physical needs of people. Not only did He heal physical ailments (Luke 14:1-6), He also fed the hungry, urging His disciples, the "church" to "give them something to eat" (Matt.14:16), and did not relegate that responsibility to others (Matt. 14:16), acting out of compassion for the destitute multitude (Matt. 15:32).

Stott (1984:19-32) suggests a broader biblical basis for social responsibility, calling for a "fuller" understanding of the doctrines of the church. For him a better, biblical and fuller understanding of the doctrine of God, human beings, Christ, salvation and the church, can but leave one without excuse as to the question of social concern.

A fuller understanding of the doctrine of God informs us that God is concerned with the salvation of the entire universe, with the whole of life. This makes of God "the God of the nations as well as of his covenant people" (Stott 1984:20). He is not exclusively the God of Israel, as his intention is that "in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Genesis 12:3b). This makes of Him a God who goes beyond covenantal parameters to spread his love and intention over the rest of the world. His attribute of justice walks hand in hand with his heart and yearning for the justification of the world (Psalm 146:7-9). "…God hates injustice and oppression everywhere, and …loves and promotes

justice everywhere" (Stott 1984:22). It is because He is moved by justice and compassion that He stretches his arm beyond the territory of Israel to the nations to judge, condemn but also save and bless.

Speaking of the fuller doctrine of human beings, Stott makes a profound statement that calls people to reflection, self-evaluation and a return to the Creator's plan to understand man's worth. "All our philanthropic work (that is, work inspired by love for human beings) depends on our evaluation of them. The higher our view of their worth, the more we shall want to serve them" (Stott 1984:22).

A fuller understanding of the doctrine of Christ is an understanding of the entirety of the ministry and life of Jesus. It is presenting the Christ who "not only proclaimed the good news of the Kingdom of God, but demonstrated its arrival by healing the sick, feeding the hungry, forgiving the sinful, befriending the dropout and raising the dead" (Stott 1984:26). It is this understanding that should shape and affect the church's understanding of its commission, "as the Father has sent me, I am sending you" (Stott 1984:26). "In the person and work of Jesus Christ, the King of God's Kingdom, the eschatological Kingdom has reached back and broken in to the present age, and is present wherever the rule and reign of God exists" (Moore et al 2008:71). Therefore, a church that is living out the fuller understanding of the doctrine of Christ is a church that is reaching back into its social context, establishing the rule of God's Kingdom on earth.

The biblical fullness of the doctrine of salvation, according to Stott, is "a radical transformation in three phases, beginning at our conversion, continuing throughout our earthly life and brought to perfection when Christ comes" (1984:27). From this John Stott makes his case for a fuller doctrine of the church. He states that the church has a "double identity". It is a "holy people" and a "worldly people" at the same time. It is a gathering of people called out of the world to belong to God, while at the same time sent in the world for ministry (1984:31). The church can't, therefore, withdraw from the world. Its nature places it right in the centre of world where it is called to manifest the power of the One who sent it (John 20:21; Matthew 28:19-20). The details of its involvement and engagement in the world are outlined by the ministry and life Jesus Christ, the Sender and builder of the church (John 20:21; Matthew 16:18).

A true and biblical church can but do the work it saw its Master doing (John 5:19). It is that fuller understanding that takes the church back to where it was supposed to be and in what it was supposed to do.

2.8 Conclusion: Towards a Community-Sensitive Church Model

Chapter two has covered in length the debate on the issue of ecclesiology, providing a better understanding of what the church is or the various nuances pertaining the role and function of the church in history, as argued by various scholars. A range of ecclesiological models have been presented. A sketch of the liberal view of the church and its expression in the Social Gospel Movement was given, contrasted by other views drawn from the evangelical perspective. Among evangelical views presented was the

Improvisational Ecclesiology by Wilson (2005: 63-72) emphasizing the flexibility and adaptability of the church as opposed to or complemented by Guder's *Missional Ecclesiology* (2005:116). Guder sees the church as missionary agent in line with the missionary nature of God Himself. The third evangelical view is presented by Yoder (Carter 2005:180). For this view, the marks or functions of the church plays a major role in its definition. The ecclesiology born out of the marks of the church takes into account individual salvation and the role of the church as way of salvation. Yoder calls this ecclesiology *Believers' Church Ecclesiology*.

Although all these ecclesiologies offer elements with which this research agrees, from the broader liberal understanding of salvation and mission of the church to the evangelical view of individual salvation and its nuances, enriched by the marks and images of the church, this research intends to proposes an ecclesiology that holds onto the above views while taking into account the contextual realities of the church. It is this sensitivity of the church to the contextual need of a community that marks the difference in the church model advocated in this research.

This model is called "*Community-Sensitive Church Model*". It is a church model that is informed by the problems of its community and is fully involved in the fight against various social plights, such as crime, drugs, alcoholism, prostitution, HIV/AIDS. The church, in this model, works towards the restoration of the family system and social upliftment. It is a *situational* church. Chapter four of this research will develop this concept further.

CHAPTER III

MAITLAND: COMMUNITY SURVEY AND NEEDS

3.1 Introduction

There cannot be a community-sensitive ecclesiology unless there is a proper survey of that community and a clear assessment of its needs. This will result in a church that is truly informed by the needs of its community and therefore become an agent of transformation in the process of bettering the conditions of that community.

In order to provide the information needed for need assessment, this chapter will analyze various facets of the community of Maitland: people, facilities, education, (un)employment, poverty level, housing and other issues such as substance abuse, HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmissible diseases, teenage pregnancy and school drop-out, crime and places of worship. This chapter will be concluded by an assessment of needs resulting in areas of possible ministries for churches working in the community.

3.2 Maitland Community Survey

The aim of this research is to demonstrate that the church is an agent of social transformation and the vital role it should play in a poor community such as Maitland. The researcher has opted for the use of the survey guidelines suggested by the Community Development Worker Unit in its handbook (CWD 2007). This choice is

primarily motivated by the similarities of roles between the church as an agent of social transformation and the community development workers. Community development workers "are participatory change agents who work in the communities where they live, and to whom they have to answer for their activities. They are required to help people in their communities improve their own lives and change their circumstances" (CWD 2007:14). This approach is very much in line with this research's social contructionist view that sees the church as an agent of social transformation. The "locality" of the church, thus, determines its participatory role. The church is therefore not simply a model community or "counter-community" but rather an integrated part of that community while remaining true to its peculiarity as a model community. The church is thus informed or "evangelized" by the community about its "practical calling", the specific issues it is called to address. In a way the church is answerable to the community in as much as it is ultimately accountable to the Lord.

3.2.1 The People in the Community and Needs

The diagram below based on the 2001 census (Stats SA 2001) gives a representation of the population of Maitland per ethnic group. This dissection of the community helps understand cultural and people dynamics in the community as one cannot speak of Maitland as a homogeneous cultural entity, but rather as an administrative and political one. The church or any social agent working with people needs to be sensitive to this dynamic.

Population of Maitland per Ethnic Group

Legend:
- Black African
- Coloured
- Indian/Asian
- White
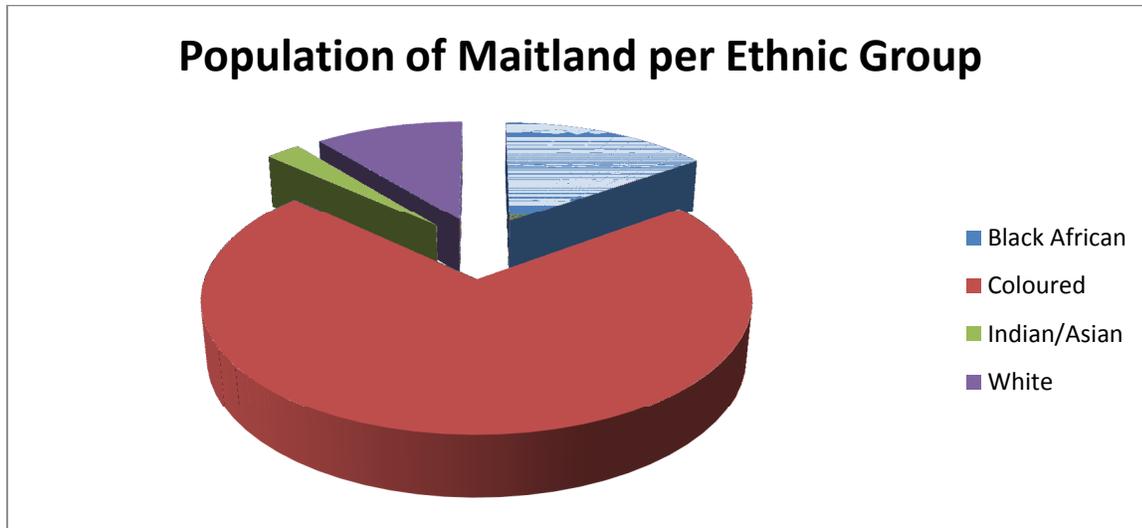
The black Africans count for 15.1% of the population with 8.69% of male and 6.42 of female. The coloured population makes the majority of the Maitland community with 71.5% -32.5% male and 39.01% female- against a declining minority whites (10.8) and Indian 2.5%. These demographics have extensively changed due to various factors. The first factor is the exodus of the white population from the community. Based on the researcher's own observation, there is a clear indication that the number of white has declined whereas that of the black population has increased. Two churches in the community known to have been predominantly white have been seriously affected by these demographic changes. The Apostolic Faith Mission on Koeberg Road was closed and the building solved to join another church in Bothasig (a predominantly white congregation). The second church to be affected is Maitland Community Church, a predominantly white Dutch Reformed Church. This church was and still is at the point of closing down. Although the Dutch Reformed Church's decline is noticeable throughout the country, as a consequence of its association with the apartheid regime, the Maitland situation seems to have been aggravated by a different cause when considering the

quasi-disappearance of whites in Maitland and subsequent change in churches across denominational lines.

As mentioned earlier, the exodus of the white population was compensated by a very noticeable number of black Africans. But at this point it should be noted that the majority of the blacks are non South Africans. The increase in the number of blacks can be attributed to two factors: Firstly, the proliferation of "non South African churches" in the community, making Maitland a hub of foreign nationals. These churches may have drawn the people into the community, closer to their place of worship or the churches may have been drawn by the agglomeration of foreign nationals in the community or the combination of the two possibilities. In sum, the proliferation of foreign national churches is an indicator of a strong and growing presence of foreign nationals in Maitland, explaining the increase in the number of black in the community. Secondly, the tragic xenophobia phenomena of May 2008 have contributed to the increase. One of the communities affected by xenophobic attacks in the Western Cape is Du Noon, a community just a few minutes drive away from Maitland. Because of the integrated make-up of Maitland most foreign nationals moved in for safety. Many "safe communities" like Maitland have noticed similar increase.

Based on observation, it is the projection of this research that the white population decreased to about 2%, the Indian population to 1.2%, raising the black population to about 30.2% of which about 22% would be foreign nationals creating a distinct grouping of population with specific needs and culture, a completely different community.

This would make our pie chart to look as follows:
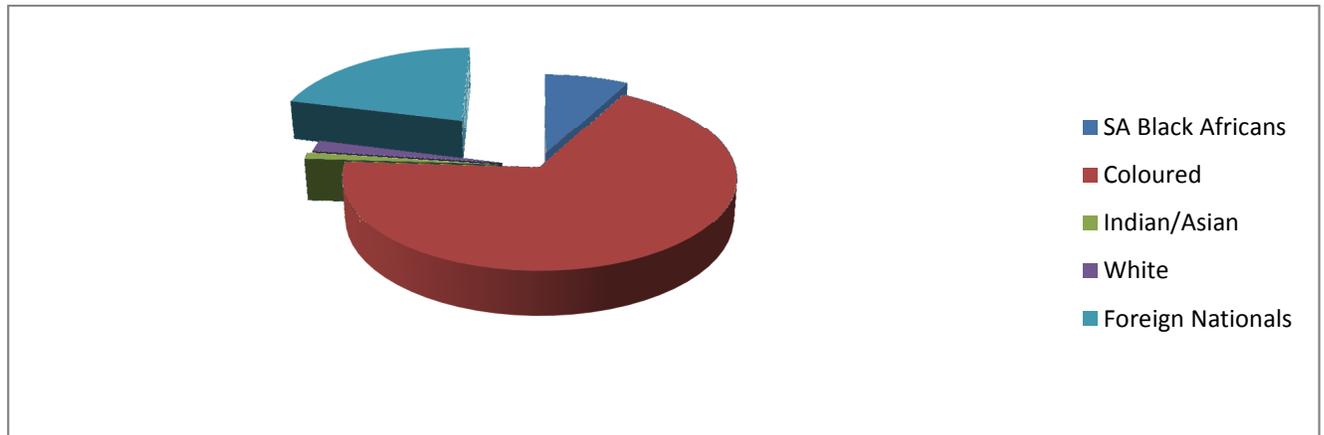
The distribution of the population of Maitland by age group suggests that 32.2% of the population is in the bracket of 18-34 years of age, with the second highest grouping being 35-54 year old counting 25.6% of the total population (StatsSA: 2001 Census). Maitland and its vicinities –Kensington, Maitland Garden Village, Salt River and Woodstock- constitute the broader ministry field of Lofdal Community Church. A look at the population of the broader community suggests similarly that the majority of its population is in the 18-34 years old bracket. This indicator is a call for any church working in area to seriously engage in ministry in this section of the population. These figures are not to be read abstractly. They represent indicators. For example, the 32.2% of the population represent the most vulnerable group of people as far as HIV/AIDS pandemic spread is concerned. Based on the report published by the Department of Social Development taking into account the period of the census used as reference in this research, it has been established that there will be a decrease of the population in

0-4 and 15-25 age groups between 1994 and 2010. This decrease is attributed to "mother to child HIV/AIDS transmission" and the fact that the second group (15-25) is considered to be "the most sexually active population which has unprotected sex" (DSD 2003: 10). This is one example of how statistics can guide church's intervention. What is the future of the young population? What is it that the church is doing about it? Although HIV/AIDS is unevenly spread across South Africa, with the Western Cape standing with the lowest prevalence in the country, the growth of South Africa's HIV/AIDS pandemic – with the highest number of infected in the world- should be reason enough for great concern and concerted action, knowing that the consequence of this spread will be devastating. As a nation, South Africa is expected to face another major problem by 2015. "The total number of children comprised by having lost one or both parents is likely to reach its highest level around 2015, at 5.7 million" (DSD 2003:14, citing the Medical Research Council). The church is therefore called to understand that where there is a need there is a ministry. And in the case of HIV/AIDS alone a range of ministry opportunities is open to the church: biblical sex education and life skills, ministry to people infected and affected by the pandemic (hospice, home-based care programme, orphanage, adoption, foster care programme, etc.). Mark Forshaw in a book by Patrick Dixon, *AIDS and You* (2004), a joint publication of Operation Mobilization and ACET International Alliance, suggests a number of ways local churches and other organizations went about answering the question "What can we do?" (2004:105-136) as they were convinced that it was time for action. People have taken this issue at heart but there' still a lot to be done. And the church must engage this issue more rigorously.

Another indicator for ministry is age and gender of the local population. This indicator will enrich our creativity as we find ways of reaching out to the community. Jesus Christ seems to have had a good balance with this indicator in view. He spent time with women even though the customs of his time did not permit. He engaged a Samaritan woman (John 4:1ff.), spent considerable time with Martha and Mary who were known to be his friends (Luke 10:38-42; John 11:1, 5). He also reached out to Men (Matthew 4:18ff.; 9:9;), rulers and leaders (9:18; 8:5; 12:38) and even children (Matthew 18:1-6; 19:13-15). The ministry of the church is also called to make room for the widows and orphans for "pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit the orphans and widows in their trouble" (James 1:27). The true church of Christ is called to share in this diverse "trouble" in which the community in its complexity is found.

Based on the 2001 census (StatsSA Census 2001), the table below shows the percentages of the population in age groups and gender proportion of Maitland:

Age	Male%	Female%	Total%
0-5	04.57	4.71	09.20
6.12	05.83	6.26	12.00
13-17	04.36	4.20	08.50
18-34	15.95	16.29	32.20
35-54	12.30	13.37	25.60
55-64	03.22	03.54	06.70

65+	02.20	03.54	05.40
Total	48.44 (2 724 people)	51.55 (2 899 people)	100 (5 624 people)

3.2.2 The Facilities in the Community and Needs

The table below will present the various facilities available in Maitland and pin point problems and needs related to these facilities:

Facilities	Number	Problems	Needs
Primary Schools	1	The school has no capacity to absorb all the children in the community.	Need for more capacity to reduce long traveling of children. Additional social work support.
High Schools	3	Very crowded class rooms. Report of many "problem learners" which may result in criminal activities.	Need for more capacity. Additional social work support. Recreational and sport activities. Counseling and family support. Note: 1 of the 3 schools is a Catholic convent school for girls. There is need for similar Christian efforts.
Creches	2	Very expensive for parents; leading parents to seek cheaper options from unqualified care-givers. Limited capacity in the 2 creches.	Community cost-effective crèches to discourage the activities of unqualified care-givers. Financial support to subsidize teenage parents in order to encourage them to return to school.
Sports Field	1	Privately managed for clubs, causing problem for community recreational use. Basketball, Tennis	Opening of the field for community recreational use. Other sporting facilities attended to; community swimming pool reopened.

		courts not maintained. Cricket section unattended. Only soccer pitches are useable.	
Clinics	1	Long hours waiting time. Limited capacity.	Alternative community health centre.
Community Halls	1	With the growing population, the unavailability of the hall can be foreseen.	Alternative multi-purpose community centre.
Library	0	Traveling long distances to have access to books and other facilities.	Urgent need of a well equipped library. Need for well equipped school libraries open to the public and community education to encourage literacy and research among young people especially.

The problems and needs identified in the table above should guide the church in its exploration of possibilities of ministry in the community. Where the local church is not able to work alone in meeting a particular need, an association of church driven by the same passion can be a vital option. Other issues can calls on the church to embark onto some activism, engaging government agencies and other national and international NGOs to come on board. This is a church that sees a need and seeks to address it by whatever means possible. This makes it unacceptable for a pastor not to know the name and office of its local councilor, head of police and influential people in the community.

3.2.3 Education , (Un) Employment and Poverty Level

The level of education in Maitland is very low. Only 1.2% of its population hold a bachelor degree and another 1.1% post-graduates. 23% have reached grade 12 (2001 Census: City of Cape Town). These figures may seem better than the urban nodes functional literacy presented by Everatt and Smith (2008:25), suggesting an average 14.2% in 2006 and 16.1% in 2008. Although their report indicates that the above-mentioned rates are better than those in the rural (37.6% in 2006 and 33.4% in 2008), they also concede that that still means 1 in every 6 URP residents is functionally illiterate (2008:25). Still the question remains whether the level of education of the population meets the expectation of the job market and whether that will result in the improvement of the condition of life of a person and the community.

The level of education of the Maitland population has a direct impact on its income as seen below:
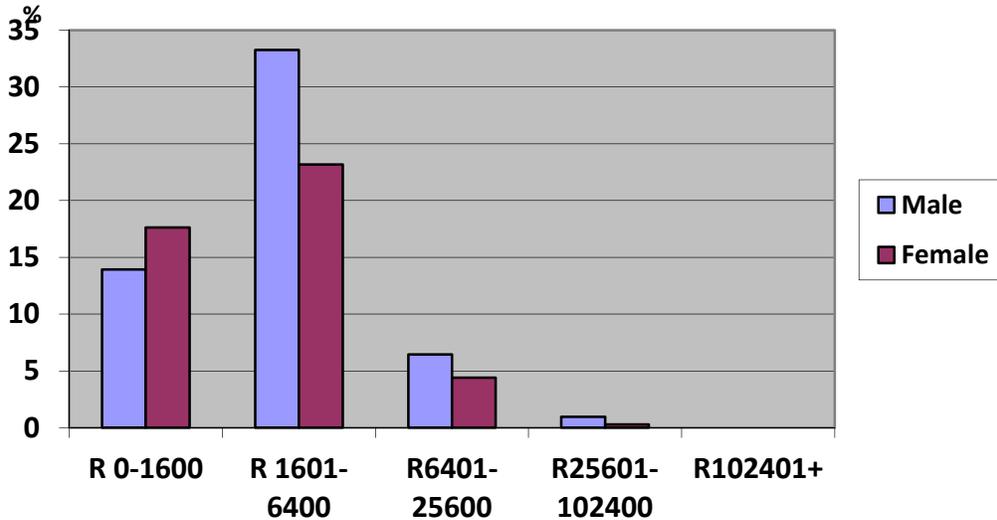
It should be noted that the above chart is based on the 2001 census (StatsSA 2001) and is not reflective of the current situation of the population of Maitland. The demographic change indicated in the previous section has an effect on the population income. With the exodus of the white population from Maitland the high earners of the population have also left. The influx of the foreign nationals does not improve the earning level of the community as most of them are laborers, casual workers, domestic workers or security guards despite their level of education. The level of education may have improved with the influx of foreign nationals, but with no correlative financial consequence. The majority of the Maitland population finds itself in the first half of the second pay bracket, bringing the estimated earning per person per month between R 1500 and R 2500 as supported by Poswa's report (2008). The situation of poverty of the majority of the people in South Africa is further corroborated by Statistics South Africa National Treasury in its report, *A National Poverty Line for South Africa* (2007). Using the 2000 Income and Expenditure Survey data the poverty line has been estimated at R

211 for food and an additional R 111 for non-food items such as accommodation, transport, clothing, etc. This estimate was adjusted to R 431 in 2006. And based on that report 53% of households are estimated to be living below poverty line.

The practical question is whether someone can survive with R 431 considering that accommodation alone costs about R 3000 for a two-bedroom flat and a simple room about R 1500 in Maitland. R 2500 is therefore not enough to support the smallest household in Maitland.

The poverty problem is further exacerbated by the national and global economic situation. The level of unemployment in the country is on the increase. The current global economic meltdown affects poor communities the most. And this is having a knock-on effect on the security of the population. The local police have noticed a 60% increase in car break-ins and petty crime in June 2009 alone compared to the same period last year (People's Post June 2009).

Reports show an increase of the rate of unemployment. The IRSDP nodes studied show an terrifying 73.8% unemployment rate versus a 64.6% in the URP nodes with women being the most affected, 73% against 66% (Everatt and Smith 2008:19). The same report has indicated a worrying high dependency on government grants or pension as source of income. "65.5% of households…had a household income deriving from grant or pension-this comprised 55.8% of URP respondents and rose to ISRDP respondents" (2008:20).

With the income indicators shown above and the growing unemployment rate accelerated by the current global economic crisis, it is important to sketch on the question of poverty in general in South Africa. Everatt and Smith (2008) of Strategy and Tactics, commissioned by the national Department of Social Development (DSD) have written a comprehensive study touching the broader question of *Building Sustainable Livelihoods* in which they have analyzed baseline and measurement survey in 22 nodes in both rural and urban communities of South Africa. The baseline survey questionnaire fell into the following main areas: Poverty, development awareness, social capital, health status, service delivery, gender inequality and sustainable livelihoods (Everatt and Smith 2008:11). In the Western Cape, Mitchell's Plain and Kayelitsha were among the urban nodes under analysis. The poverty index of these two communities, though not reflective of the status of Maitland, will give us an indication of the level of poverty in the community.

Everatt and Smith's research made use of a 10-part matrix in order to measure poverty. This includes incidence of female-headed households, illiteracy, unemployment, lack of household income, over-crowding, informal or traditional dwellings, lack of sanitation, water below RDP standards, lack of electricity for lighting purposes, and lack of refuse removal (2008:16). Their findings were that "the decline in poverty continued and sped up for the ISRDP in 2006 and far more so in the URP. By 2008, ISRDP nodes continued to witness a steady reduction in poverty, while in URP nodes poverty, worryingly, has leveled off" leading to a slowing of the pace of poverty eradication throughout the

country (2008:16)[6]. The chart below provides the state of affairs at the conclusion of the research in 2008.
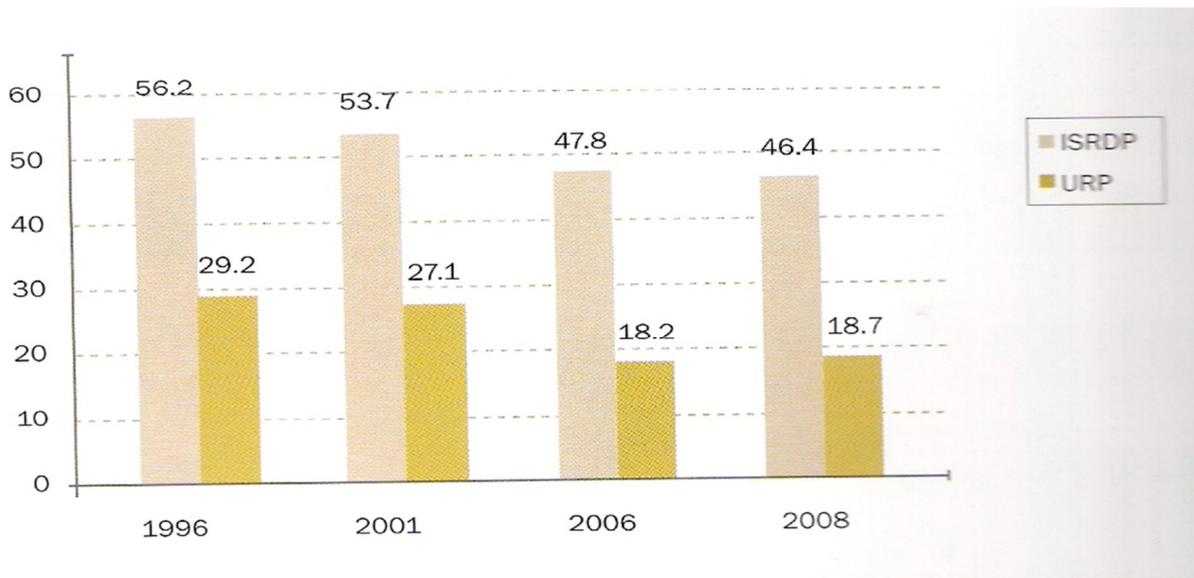
Poverty levels 1996/2001/2006/2008 (Source: Census 1996 and 2001, DSD Baseline surveys 2006 & 2008).

Considering the focus of this study is on poor urban communities, our reference will thus be Khayelitsha and Mitchell's Plain, being both from the Western Cape. Detailed figures provided by the above-cited research show that in urban nodes, poverty dropped in just 3 –Motherwell, Khayelitsha and Mitchell's Plain, but rose in other areas (2008:18). And this is despite concerted effort by the government through its Urban Renewal Programme. Community such as Maitland that were not part of the programme would definitely see a decline. Generally URD nodes are showing a negative increase in poverty level based on the comparison between 2006 and 2008

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[6]RDP: Reconstruction and Development Programme; ISRDP: Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Programme; URP: Urban Renewal Programme

figures with 18.7 in 2008 versus 18.2 in 2006. Overall, poverty in ISRDP nodes dropped by 1.4% while rising in URP nodes by 0.5%, concludes the study (2008:18).

On the other hand, a research published by Woolard and Leiddrandt of the University of Cape Town Development Policy Unit (1999), taking into account a range of definitions of poverty correlated with the per capita consumption definition found that 75.8 % of household consumption, 90.8% per capita income, 79.3 % per capita food expenditure, 69.0% food ratio and 64.8% adult attainment in 1995 could be classified as "poor" (1999:8). The same research also found that the coulored community –constituting the majority of the community of Maitland- were at 25.3%, 21.1%, 19.2%, 35.2%, 57.2%, 20.5% and 27.8% "poor" taking into account the above-mentioned indicators respectively. It should be noted that the figures in the black community is almost double that of the coulored community in every definitional indicator (1999:6). These figures may have changed since then, but not dramatically as acknowledged by Harker (2008:18). A combination of people living under the five dimensions of poverty suggested by Chambers are visible throughout Maitland (Woolard et al 1999:5):

- *"Poverty proper"*: lack of adequate income or assets to generate income;

- *Physical weakness*: mal-nutrition, sickness and disability.

- *Physical or social isolation*: peripheral location, lack of access to goods and services, ignorance or illiteracy.

- *Vulnerability*: vulnerable to crisis and risk of becoming even poorer.

- *Powerlessness*: lack of social, economic, political and cultural power.

The "2006 General Household Analysis for Cape Town" published in 2008 (Small 2008:49-50) presents another indicator of problems across the city of Cape Town, hunger experienced by adults (18 years and above) and children (17 years or younger). The above cited survey shows "Black African households had the largest percentage of adults who had gone hungry in the past 12 months…16.6% of adults sometimes went hungry, 5.7% seldom went hungry, 3.0% often went hungry and 1.7% always went hungry. In Coloured households 5.9% of adults sometimes went hungry, 3.8% seldom went hungry, 2.5% often went hungry and 0.7% always went hungry. Only 0.3% of adults in White households often went hungry". Among children, the situation was even more serious, taking into account that 43.3% of households surveyed did not have children (Small 2008:49). "Black Africans have the highest …with 18.1% sometimes going hungry, 5.2% seldom going hungry, 2.4% often going hungry and 1.9% always going hungry", whereas "Coloured children in 6.9% households sometimes go hungry, 3.0% often go hungry and 0.6% always goes hungry. For children in White households 4.5% sometimes go hungry and 1.0% often goes hungry" (Small 2008:50). This is true of the City of Cape Town as much as the community of Maitland. The situation is not getting any better as noticed in the increase of number of households living below poverty line between 1996 and 2005 as reported by Poswa's report of recent years (2008) suggesting an increase from 24.7% in 1996 to 38.9% in 2005 (2008:8). To corroborate this fact a simple look at the Service Levels Indicators by Ward (Stats SA:2001 Census) will dissipate any doubt in people's mind. Furthermore, the 2001 census of Ward 55 –Maitland's Ward- indicates: 48.32% of adults population (20 years and above) with highest qualification below Matric; 12.80% of economically active

population is unemployed; 24.73% of households earn below R 19300 per year (R 1608 per month); and a Socio-Economic Status index (S.E.S) of 23.24% (Stats SA: 2001 Census), making the Ward one of the poorest in the city. In many communities such as Maitland the reason why people go hungry is because they do not have food to eat; and in overcrowded households there is not enough food for children as well as adults (Poswa 2008:7).

With the combination of literacy rate, unemployment, income level, poverty, female-headed households (very prevalent in Maitland) and other indicators, it can well be said that Maitland can still be classified as a poor community. Not only can the community be considered poor but also facing various problems touching the social fabric of the community as in other urban communities: such as crime, substance abuse, school drop-outs, dysfunctional family life, etc or as Everatt et al would describe it as "weaker social capital and greater crime" (2008:28).

The understanding that "people are defined as poor when they lack the command over the resources to meet some absolute needs" (Woolard et al 1999:9) should call the church out to find those in need and to meet those needs.

3.2.4 Dwelling Type and Infrastructure

Dwelling type can be used as poverty indicator of poverty matrix (Everatt and Smith 2008:16). It measures incidence of informal or traditional dwelling types (2008:26). In the case of Maitland and the surrounding –target of the present study- apart the three

main informal settlements –Royal Road, Intersite and 6th Avenue Kensington- there is a growing phenomena of backyard dwellers living in caravans, wendy houses and make-sheets. Over-crowding, "multiple households sharing a single room" or house is very prominent in Maitland. This is corroborated by the findings of Everatt and Smith (2008:27) indicating that over-crowding was twice as likely to occur in URP (6%) as in ISRDP (3%) households. Most foreign nationals and migrants from other provinces and rural communities in search for better life in Cape Town live in similar conditions. This is more prevalent among low income people.

Infrastructure and service delivery is not of a great concern in Maitland except for people living in informal dwelling. This is an indication of a better service provision in the urban nodes than the rural nodes.

Here is a global indicator of service delivery based on the 22 rural and urban nodes studied by Everatt and Smith (2008:29):

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Water/Sanitation access (2006, 2008 surveys)

Source: David Everatt & Matthew Smith (2008)

3.2.5 Other Community Problems

A number of social problems that affect Maitland as much as many other communities are worth mentioning or repeating. These are: substance abuse, prostitution, sexually transmissible diseases and HIV/AIDS, school drop out and teenage pregnancy, etc.

3.2.5.1 Substance Abuse

In his research in 1998 Parry (1998:10-11) has hinted on a number of factors supporting the increase already observed in the use of illicit drugs. He cited among other things the falling real price of many drugs, poverty, family breakdown, increase in single parent households, increased availability, etc. These factors have bearing on gender and race of the population as well. The Western Cape requires a specific look on this regard. A study conducted in the Western Cape entitled "*Substance Abuse Trends in the Western*

Cape" (Harket *et al* 2008) indicates that alcohol remains a significant substance of abuse in the Western Cape (2008:4) with the coulored population being the most affected (2008:9). The report also points out the growing trend in the use of other stimulants such as methamphetamine –locally referred to as Tik- and cocaine (2008:4) as well as Cannabis and Mandrax. A recent study commissioned by the United Nations (WHO/UNDCP Western Cape 2009) has confirmed the findings while confirming that methamphetamine has become the drug of choice among young people. All these drugs pose health as well as social problems. Quoting the South Africa Stress and Health (SASH) study conducted between 2002 and 2004, Harker et al (2008:12) indicate that "compared to other provinces, the Western Cape had the second highest (7.1%) 12 month prevalence of substance use disorders and the highest (18.5%) lifetime prevalence of substance use disorders as far as alcohol is concerned". These facts are substantiated by other research groups such as South African Demographics and Health (SADHS) and the Medical Research Council's South African Community Epidemiology Network on Drug Use Project (SACENDU) (Morojele 1997). On the other hand, methamphetamine (MA) is growing as a primary or secondary drug of abuse. A study by Simbayi et al as quoted by Harker et al found that "individuals who had ever used methamphetamine were (i) significantly younger than those who have not used methamphetamine; (ii) men were more likely to have tried methamphetamine than women, (iii) and persons who identified as coloured were more likely to have tried methamphetamine than black/Africans or persons from other races" (2008:12). Community-based research provides us with an indicator in the consumption of MA

among the coulored population with 38% compared to a rising 13% among black/Africans (Harker et al 2008:12).

These racial implications of a higher levels alcohol and drug abuse in coloured communities help bring this issue to the researcher's local context. With the coulored community constituting 71.5% of the population of Maitland with a higher proportion in the surrounding communities, the above-mentioned alarming figures are a serious cause of concern. A simple observation in the community is another confirmation of the above findings. Alcohol and drug abuse are a real problem in Maitland.

3.2.5.2   Prostitution, Sexually Transmissible Diseases (STD) and HIV/AIDS

The 2009 news bulletin of the International Organization for Migration, *Eye on Human Trafficking* (Barnes 2009:1), starts with the following shocking words right on its front page: "The five-week school break during the 2010 FIFA World Cup could lead to hundreds of children being recruited into child prostitution rings and thousands more being trafficked". There is an increasing fear that prostitution will be on the increase. The government is already considering the legalization or what is referred to as decriminalization of prostitution as a deterrent or regulatory measure. Research show that "in South Africa, four million episodes of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are treated annually, half of which occur in adolescents and young adults" (DSD 2003:20), a figure that must have increase as did the prevalence of HIV/AIDS infections.

There is already an observable increase in prostitute presence across the City of Cape Town. An increase is also noticed daily on Voortrekker Road, Maitland main artery as

well as on Koeberg Road. This is an indication that the question of prostitution and its increase and community consequences are not removed from the people of Maitland. With the increase in drug abuse and alcohol in the community and sexual activity among the young people, this can only be cause for concern and a call for ministry as we notice more and more young people involved in the "industry".

There is no single community in South Africa that is left unaffected by HIV/AIDS pandemic. Reports from Lofdal Community Church field workers confirm these claims although no comprehensive survey of the community is available. Ministry response should not be determined by the level of prevalence, but rather where possible play a preventative role in response to trends observed elsewhere and nationally. There is reason enough for every church to be involved in HIV/AIDS and sex education ministry even if there was only one infected person in that particular community.

3.2.5.3   Teenage Pregnancy and School Drop-out

With about 2 millions of sexually transmitted infections annually among young people, the risk of teenage pregnancy is very high as this is an indication of the level of unprotected sex practice in that age group. This is further revealed by the fact that "the average age for the first sexual experience is 15 for girls and 14 for boys, although many young people only become active in their middle to late teens" (DSD 2003:24). The consequence of this is that "early sexual experience increase the number of life partners that individuals have and therefore their chances of exposure to HIV. It also significantly increases the risks of pregnancy for girls, as well as their chances of exposure to other sexually transmitted infections" concludes the research.

The direct consequence of teenage pregnancy in a poor community where the support system is very limited for young girls who are still in school is the risk of school drop-out. Here again the question is not whether this phenomenon is on the increase or not, but rather that of pin pointing the situation as a social problem that needs addressing.

3.2.5.4   Crime

The following tables are aimed at providing an idea on the crime situation in Maitland. Almost every single category in the classification of crime is perpetrated in Maitland. There seem to be a constant fluctuation with indicative alarming figures in 2008 in "common robbery" (213), "robbery with aggravating circumstances" (107), "malicious damage to property" (264), "burglary at residential premises" (139), "burglary at business premises" (238), "theft of motor vehicle and motorcycle" and "theft out of or from motor vehicle" (124 and 294 respectively), "drug related crime" (105), "all theft not mentioned elsewhere" (921), etc. Maitland may be better than some communities is terms of crime, but the point is to show how depraved our community is and through these worrying statistics the church can possibly hear the community crying out for help. A good, informed and prayerful interpretation of these figures can be helpful in developing a church response in the situation. These are not mere numbers, but speak of sin, lack of self-worth, lack of respect for self and others, crisis in role modeling, dying dreams and potentials, hopelessness, dysfunctional social system, fatherlessness, motherlessness, etc. These are issues to be addressed.

Crime for the Maitland Police Precinct in the Western Cape for the period April to March 2001/2002 to 2007/2008

Crime Category	April 2001-March 2002	April 2002-March 2003	April 2003-March 2004	April 2004-March 2005	April 2005-March 2006	April 2006-March 2007	April 2007-March 2008
Murder	11	9	6	7	6	5	8
Attempted murder	13	23	11	5	4	13	4
Rape April to December	19	7	17	14	9	10	19
Indecent assault April to December	15	17	14	8	13	9	9
Assault with the intent to inflict grievous bodily harm	91	94	89	72	62	93	57
Common assault	222	235	240	245	271	253	213
Common robbery	92	114	87	52	58	58	60
Robbery with aggravating circumstances	128	117	102	82	85	129	107
Carjacking (subcategory of aggravated robbery)	3	7	5	4	1	1	7
Truck hijacking (subcategory of aggravated robbery)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Robbery at residential premises (subcategory of aggravated robbery)	-	1	0	0	0	0	0
Robbery at business premises (subcategory of aggravated robbery)	-	1	0	0	0	0	14
Arson	2	7	5	5	2	4	3
Malicious damage to property	156	219	191	174	198	245	264
Burglary at residential premises	228	210	174	141	132	178	139
Burglary at business premises	438	453	320	272	240	261	238
Theft of motor vehicle and motorcycle	139	207	162	148	132	166	124

Theft out of or from motor vehicle	392	381	310	225	246	300	294
Stock theft	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Illegal possession of firearm and ammunition	9	11	11	7	8	11	5
Drug-related crime	155	162	165	247	262	234	105
Driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs	24	17	10	33	42	47	23
All theft not mentioned elsewhere	791	1,012	966	962	799	954	921
Commercial crime	144	97	89	90	64	74	89
Shoplifting	30	55	45	37	55	70	61
Culpable homicide	11	15	15	19	13	15	17
Kidnapping	4	2	1	1	1	0	0
Abduction	4	6	2	2	0	7	3
Neglect and Ill-treatment of children	1	6	5	3	1	3	0
Public Violence	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Crimen injuria	59	43	63	75	74	35	39

(Source: Crime for the Maitland Police Precinct: SAPS Report 2008)

A quick glimpse at the latest crime statistics of 2009 of Maitland (SAPS Report 2009) shows that a lot still needs to be done: Sexual crime is on the increase (107 to 277), murder (4 to 8), assault with the purpose to cause grievous bodily harm (57 to 80), business burglary (238 to 250), drug-related crime (105 to 185), etc. Although this increase can be seen as good work on the part of the police (arrests), it is at the same time a sign of a more decaying society in need of healing. Hendricks (People's Post, 29

September 2009:1), chairperson of the Maitland Community Policing Forum, speaking on the increase of sex crimes, says that the 2009 crime picture calls for "resource facilities…where people can go and ask for assistance and advice when they are in these situations". This appeal should be heard by the church.

3.2.6 Places of Worship and Other Organizations

Places of worship in Maitland are diverse. There is a strong presence of churches. Majority of churches would be described as "independent charismatic churches" (17), most of whom led by foreign national leaders with a majority foreign national congregation. Amongst traditional or mainline churches are the Dutch Reformed Church with the Maitland Community Church, the Roman Catholic church, Moravian church, Church of England as well as a Presbyterian church. The Muslim faith is represented by a mosque on Coronation road.

It is the observation of the researcher that of all churches, main line congregations seem to have lost touch with the social needs of the community. For some reasons they have ceased to be relevant. As a result they are losing members at fast pace. On the other hand, the charismatic independent churches seem to appeal to the youth and the community in general with the vibrancy of their services, but seem to be more concerned with the spiritual well-being of the people than anything else.

Maitland is not a strong hub of Muslims, but its mosque seems very much alive, imposing the presence of Islam in the community especially on Fridays and during the Ramadan period. With the growing number of Somalis in the community, the local

community's population attending the mosque is also growing. Except some sporadic social actions of the mosque, its engagement in social activism in Maitland is still very limited.

A government run drug-rehabilitation centre has just been opened in Maitland. The facility is there but not yet fully operational. It is difficult to assess its contribution to the question of drugs at this point. Although the approach used by this centre may not be holistic –considering the approach of other similar facilities- and in line with a biblical model for dealing with such issues, it is our expectation that it will contribute in combating drug-abuse and related problems in the community. The centre is situated on Kensington road, in Maitland.

3.3 Conclusion: Towards Emerging Ministry Possibilities

Based on the survey of the community, what would be possible ministry venture that a church operating in Maitland may consider pursuing? The intention here is not to provide an exhaustive list of possible ministries a local church may embarking on, but rather an indication of possibilities that can be developed into ministries and practical programmes. Some of these ministries do not require many people on board. It is a matter of starting somewhere, with what one has as would Dixon advice (2004:105). "You need neither funds nor large team to start. It costs nothing to care for a friend or neighbor, nor to talk to your own children and colleagues about HIV and AIDS (or any other social issue in line with your new ministry), nor to include (the) issues in your

church teaching programme, or work training schemes, or school curriculum" (Dixon 2004:105, parenthesis added).

Here is the list of ministry possibilities:

3.3.1 "Traditional" Church Ministries

- There is a need for a Bible-studying, Bible-believing, Spirit-filled church for the community;

- vibrant and multi-cultural, providing a sense of belonging to all irrespective of nationality, race, gender, age or social status;

- a "family church", ministering holistically to the families of the church and modeling family life to the rest of the community;

- a church meeting the needs of a person as a whole, spirit, soul and body.

3.3.2 "Social" Church Ministries

- HIV/AIDS ministry to the affected and infected, providing awareness, education and a community-based response to the pandemic;

- Orphanages and programmes aiming at providing family security and love to orphans and abandoned children;

- Children and youth adventure programmes for mentoring and discipleship in the community;

- Community parents education: seminars, conferences and "get together" programmes.

- School ministry: educational support to local schools; feeding and mentoring programme.

- Community crèche: providing love and a safe place for the nurturing of preschoolers and infants.

- Sports ministry: Mentoring through sport, fitness and sport career development, scouting and motivation of young talents;

- Family clinic providing primary health care;

- Multi-purpose community hall;

- Library;

- Christian School offering quality Christian education;

- Employment and training agency: getting the "unemployable" ready for work-market;

- Business development programme: developing and teaching biblical business principles and entrepreneurship;

- Feeding, clothing and shelter programmes for the needy;

- Advocacy group dealing with gender-based violence, poverty eradication, service delivery and refugee cause;

- Rehabilitation centre offering a holistic biblical programme to people (Substance abuse, prostitution, anger management and other trauma);

- Participation in other community efforts: Community Policing Forum (CPF), Police Trauma Unit, volunteer, etc.

- Active politics: encourage and guide those who sense a call of God in that area and provide them a biblical understanding of public service and politics.

CHAPTER IV:

DOING THEOLOGY IN COMMUNITY:

COMMUNITY-SENSITIVE CHURCH MODEL

4.1 Introduction

Chapter Two of this research has extensively discussed the question of ecclesiology. Can one speak of an ecclesiology that is both community-sensitive and biblical at the same time? Which ecclesiology do we embrace, taking into account our socio-constructionist approach? Is it possible to define the church as an institution whose definition is informed by both the people inside and outside the church; both the world of saved and unsaved; both the church and the world; Bible and society? It is this ecclesiology that we define as "*community-sensitive*" and that we suggest as church model in poor communities such as Maitland. Lofdal Community Church is here presented as an attempt at applying such a model in Maitland.

4.2 Understanding Community-Sensitive Ecclesiology

The 21st century church is facing cultural challenges that the church is called to respond to whether in poor communities or not. The church is thus called to "adapt" to those changes. These changes can be in terms of new social problems facing the people. Why do ministry in the 21st century as though one is the 1st century Palestine? Where is relevance? Where is "adaptation"? Is the church really missional and community-sensitive? The question is whether the church's response is effective and transformational. In the context of a postmodern world the same question is posed for the church to do ministry in a "new way", "doing church" in a way that is relevant while

remaining biblically sound. The question at the core of the issue is, "is it possible?" This model is suggesting that it is.

Community-Sensitive church model is both a "community" church and a "Bible" church. It seeks to be true to both worlds and values. It holds both in tension without trying to antagonize them. Because "salt of the earth" (Matthew 5:13), this model seeks to bring preservation of the man God created in His image and likeness (Genesis 1:26) and help that man reach his full potential in managing the community around him, having "dominion over the fish of sea… over all the earth…", being a good steward of his local community (Russell 2004:25). It is a mission of restoration of all that God has made and a vision of multiplication of the vision of God in the heart of men. It is about bringing the community to Christ-likeness, in mind (Philippians 2:5-11), in word (Matthew 28:19-20) and in works of teaching, healing, compassion and good deeds (Matthew 4:23-24; Acts 10:38), because this is true and pure church (James 1:27), a church that does not neglect the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith that ought to be done (Matthew 23:23).

"If the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men" (Matthew 5:13). It is this "preservative" role or the question of "wisdom" (Nixon 1986:822) that is in question. And wisdom being the proper application of knowledge through understanding (Delph 2005:289), this raises the question whether the wisdom of the church is visible in society today. And more specifically: is it present in the community of Maitland? Wisdom engages the community (Delph 2005:289). A church with wisdom will "contribute its part to a community, and to

take a strong hold of the strongholds of opportunity of our community" (Delph 2005:289). If the church is no longer relevant in its community by preserving it from decay, then its place is "out and trampled underfoot by men". Is it what is happening today when one notices that the church is losing credibility and authority in the world?

A community like Maitland, under a thick darkness -of alcoholism, drugs, sexual immorality, robbery, dysfunctional families, etc- needs the light of the church (Matthew 5:14), needs the church to be visible to serve as testimony to all. This light is visible to men through "your good works" and these lead them to glorify the Lord (Matthew 5:16). Believers - the church- are exhorted to allow their light to shine. Because Christ –the true Light- lives in them, they have light (John 8:12; Romans 2:19). And the light they have should not be hidden (Matthew 5:15), but be profitable through doing good works: justice, mercy and faith (Matthew 5:16; 23:23).

At the heart of Community-Sensitive ecclesiology is the need for social transformation. And, as Delph so eloquently puts it, "a key to community transformation is the church having answers, not religious rhetoric for the problems in today's communities" (2005:308). These answers are a result of living in and engaging the community and understanding its needs –the needs of the saved and unsaved, the found and the lost.

A Community-Sensitive Church is a Bible-believing and practicing church that is informed by the problems of its community; a church that combats crime, drugs, alcoholism, prostitution; a church that takes seriously the HIV/AIDS pandemic and

works towards the restoration of the family system and social upliftment. It is a Christ-like church.

It is important to understand the process of building a community-sensitive church. Here is the process.

4.3 Community-Sensitive Model Process

4.3.1 Integration Process: Church-Community

Biblical values integrating the local community

Local community needs understood and received by the church
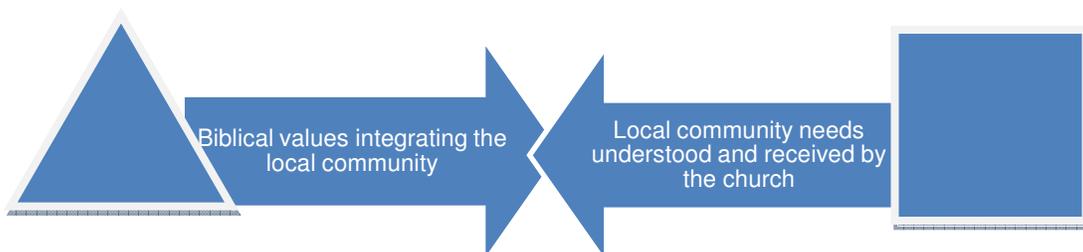
Diagram 1: Integration Process

The start of a community-sensitive church model is conceptual. A socio-constructionist view of the church calls for a definition of the church that is participatory. The community is therefore engaged in defining what the church is. But because there are "absolute" values intrinsic in the concept church itself, this integration is not a fusion, but a process whereby values that are not mutually exclusive can be brought together to form an enriched value of the concept to be redefined.

In this case, biblical values of the church and the absolute definitional nature of the church are understood and redefined in light of community needs and community expectation of the concept church that is not in clear contradiction with clear teaching of the Bible.

4.3.2 Building Relationships

After redefining what the church is all about, a community-sensitive model is about relationship building with the local community. Knowing where people are at helps in understanding one-self and how best to go through the process of social transformation in that particular community. Andrews (2006:129) calls it a "non-game-playing approach", a relational approach characterized by:

1. The actual practice of compassion

2. A genuine concern for the other person

3. An authentic heart-to-heart communication

4. A commitment to seek a win-win resolution of problems

5. A determination not to win at the expense of anyone else

6. Should anyone lose, everyone should share the loss.

It should be noted that building this kind of relationship is a process that takes a lot of commitment and self-abnegation. It is a growing process into a self-less person, overcoming selfish ambitions through imitating Christ, knowing oneself, having the attitude of Christ, making the right choice, living out an unselfish life, expressing an unselfish love for others, loving through services, serving sacrificially and glorifying God the Father (Emedi 2003:87), becoming a true disciple of Christ.

This process can be illustrated as follows:

Relationships   Relationships

Relationships   Relationships

Relationships
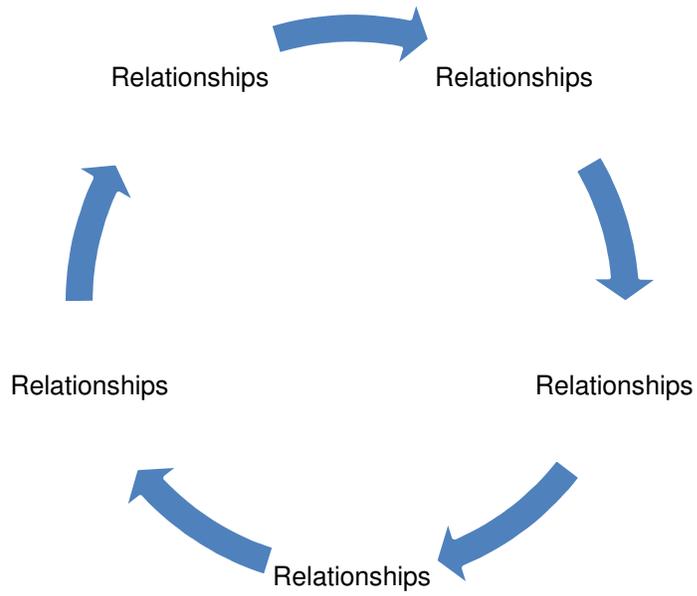
Diagram 2: Circular relational process

"A" Relationship

"B" Relationship

"C" Relationship
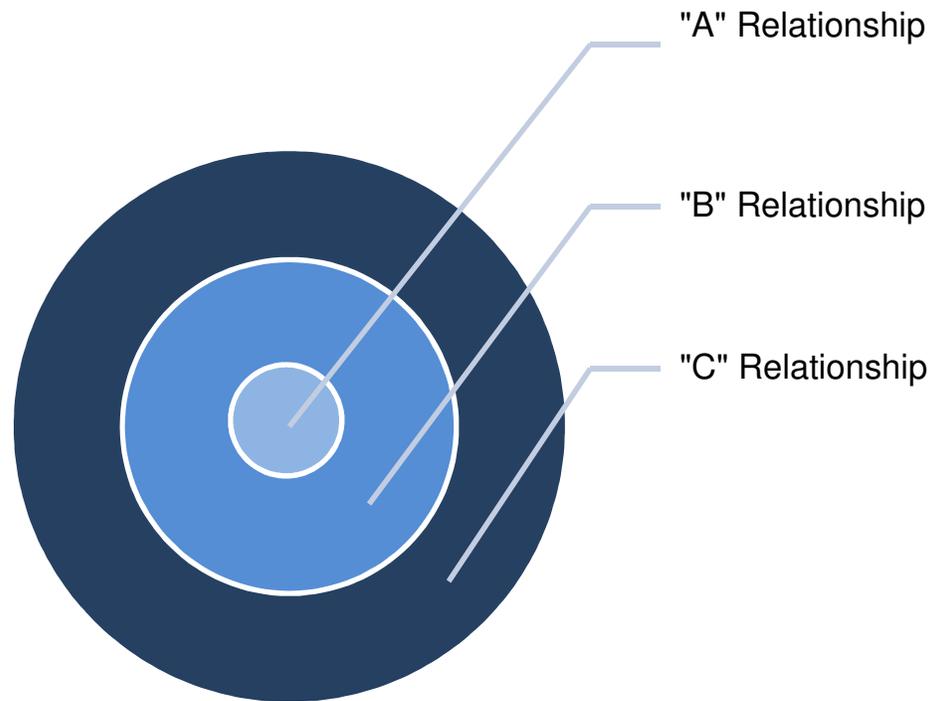
Diagram 3: Circular Progressive Process

Diagram 2 illustrates the circular relational process that takes place in the community. The contact might be made with one person or a group of people, but the intention is to reach the entire relational circle of that person or group of people, i.e. family, friends, work colleagues, etc. This should be done tactfully and as naturally as possible. The formed or forming relationships must also grow in intensity. This means that those relationships must become meaningful as a result of the "genuine concern" and "heart-to-heart" communication between parties. The change of colours in Diagram 3 seeks to indicate that intensity. This intensity must be observed in individual as well as in relationships. The "A", "B" and "C" labeling of circles in Diagram 3 serve as illustration of that progressiveness.
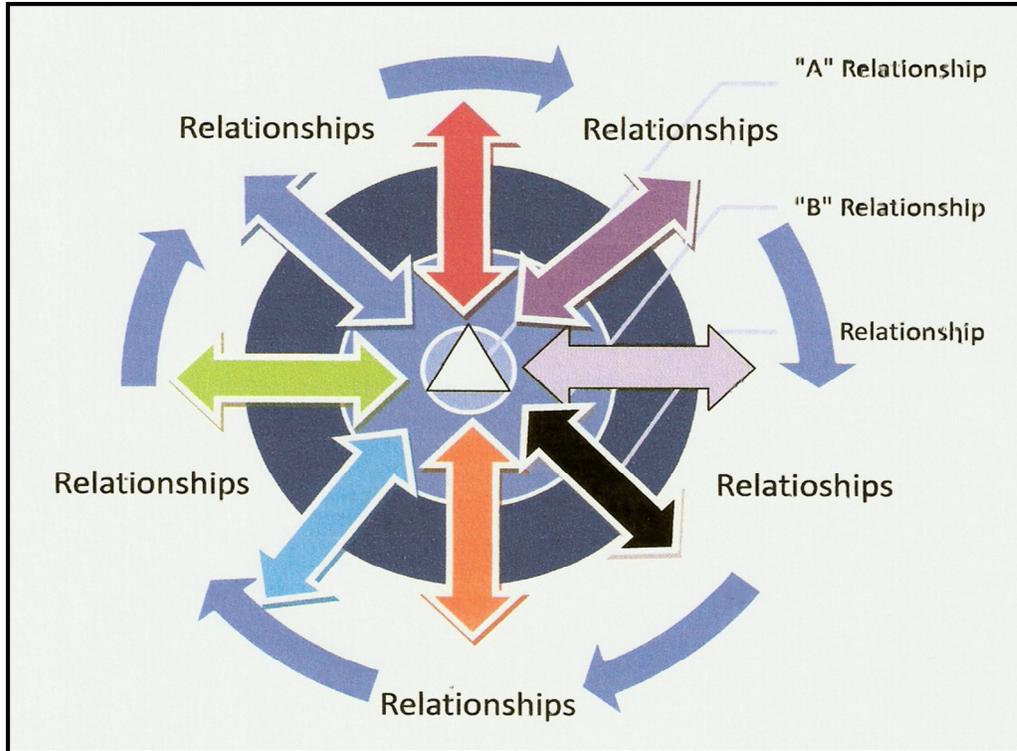
Diagram 4: Community-Sensitive Church Model

The circular arrows around the community represent relationship building process undertaken by the church in the community. These relationships are built at every level of society, even in a level deemed not directly connect to the actual ministry of the church. This process helps foster relationships and mutual trust between the church and the community. This creates a mutual understanding and defines expectations as well.

The multi-directional arrows around the triangle point to multiple areas of need/ministry the church should consider in the development of its practical missional calling in the local community. These range from evangelism, sports, relief, recreational, medical, politics, education, advocacy, counseling, job creation, worship, youth, etc as informed by the emerging ministry possibilities in 3.3. The emerging ministry possibilities will then

be developed into programmes and activities that engage the whole community around the church –represented by the triangle in the centre of the diagram-, with the multi-directional arrows indicating that they are a result of interaction between church and community.

Because these programmes were born out of relationship and trust between the community and the church, the mission of the church will be therefore viewed, not as an imposition or interposition on the community, but rather as a "mission-response" acknowledged by both parties.

For example:

- Ministry possibility: Drug-Rehabilitation centre offering a holistic programme to the community.
- Ministry: Drug-Rehabilitation Centre (Home for Boys)
- Programme/Activities: Six-month intern programme, Bible study, counseling, sports and recreational activities and family support system.

The community of Maitland will embrace this programme only when they know that it is a need of the community. Parents and community members will be ready to support it and volunteer their time. It will not be seen as a church project but rather as a community one even though the church plays a considerable part in it. The facilitating role of the church will guarantee that the project does not swing in a direction that will

discredit its image and cause a break-down of the relationship and trust developed between the church and the community.

In the same way, evangelism, though aiming at a purely spiritual need of the community will follow the same process. Through relationship building, trust and understanding, the evangelist is called to bring a sinner to a point of expressing his/her need for the Saviour, Jesus Christ. The church will not force salvation on the community, but help the community establish its need for salvation and transformation. The church must be trusted enough to stand as an agent of transformation bringing what is needed by the community. This is not censorship of the ministry of the church, but re-establishing the authority and role of the church. The church must regain its role as "moral compass" of society.

It should be noted that community-sensitive model is not about programmes. But these serve as "instruments" of the model to reflect its practical and methodical nature. But, it is based on the centrality of the church in the community and fostered through relationships. Relationships are therefore "veins" that supplies blood, nutrients to the system, without which the system will collapse. Relationships give birth to ministries and at the same time sustain and bring them to maturity and reproduction.

Ministries or programmes are inter-dependent. They are mutually sustaining. Therefore, relationships developed in the confines of a specific programme are needed for the birth

and development of another programme. This is shown in diagram 4 through relationship circles passing through various programme/ministry arrows.

4.3.3 Building Programmes/Ministries

The logical framework (Andrews 2006:275) will be used in developing programmes in every area of ministry following the above model.
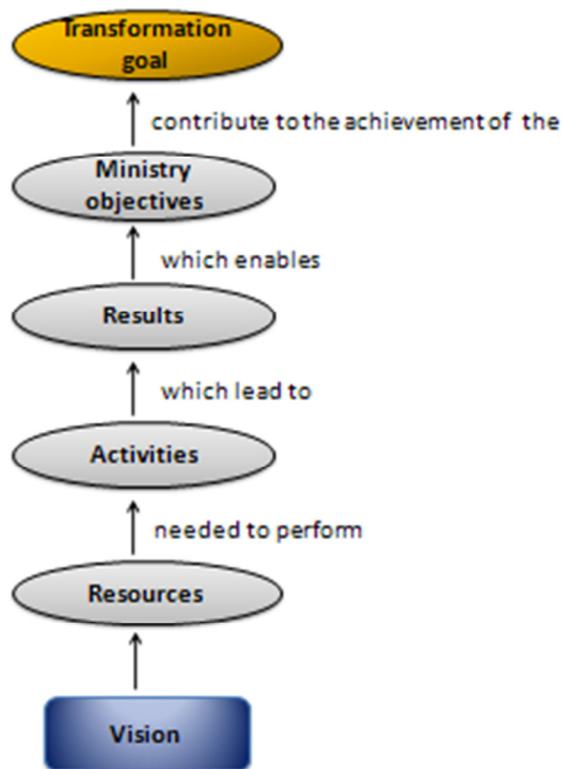

Diagram 5: A flow chart of the logical framework (Andrews 2006:275)

Every need is met by a vision. The first step to solving a problem is seeing that problem solved. It is about finding "the way of escape" (I Corinthians 10:13) without which any attempt will be futile. Resources will then become part of the provision for that vision.

Vision is then the insight, idea, perception of the goal in mind. The resources are everything that is required to get the ministry up and running as driven by the vision. They range from human resources to finances, equipment, etc. Whereas the activities will consist of the tasks put in place as objectives translated into tasks. The results are then the outcome or output of the resources through activities of the ministry. The ultimate objective is to reach transformation or change in the community.

This process is an adaption of the "elements of project planning" proposed by Dave Andrews in his book *Compassionate Community Work* (2006:275).

The process presented in this research has been used in the planting process of Lofdal Community Church (LCC) in Maitland, Cape Town. Though this church was based on an embryonic concept of "community-sensitive church", the essence was followed in its inception and development for the past three years. This research has also been designed to serve as a scholarly argument of what is being practiced in Lofdal Community Church (Lofdal Community Church 2006 and Emedi 2006).

4.4 Model Implementation: Lofdal Community Church

Lofdal Community Church is a Non-Profit Organization with the vision of restoring hope in the lives of people in Maitland and the surroundings. This ministry was born as a direct result of the Lord's call to the researcher and Jennifer Emedi to launch an annual conference called "Extending Borders Conferences" in 2006. The aim of these conferences was to encourage local churches to step beyond the four walls of their

churches, bringing the brokenhearted and the lost a message of hope and restoration. This challenge led to the start of a ministry to the people of Maitland called Lofdal Community Church.

Yielding this call meant meeting the needs of the community of Maitland. And, the only way to know what the needs of the community were, one needed to be "in" the community. It is this interaction –sometimes physically relocating in the community as in the case of the researcher- that will enable a better assessment of the needs and ultimately effectiveness of the ministry. In the case of Maitland, it was about bringing to the community spiritual as well as social transformation. It was apparent that Maitland needed help. And the church was the best agent of channeling that help as it is both part of its nature and mission. This is about human capacitation (Speckman 2007:xxv), placing mankind back at the centre without going back to humanism (Coetzee 1989). This approach of being sensitive to the community means the agent of transformation must affect the people both economically, politically, socially and personally (Burkey 1993:36). This will therefore have an impact on both people and structures as notes Speckman (2007:38) and as was the case during the fight against apartheid in South Africa. This is also being true to the spirit of *The Kairos Document* (1986) *The Road to Damascus: Kairos and Coversion* (1989) calling for a reinterpretation of the Bible for the relevance of the church in South Africa and local communities. The church should therefore remain a transformation agent for "full liberation and life" (West 2003:xviii) as it was during the "struggle" asserts. West (2003:xviii) deplores the failure of the church to embark on the "new struggle", saying that "now is not the time to return to comfortable

certainties, rather now is the time for recognition and articulation of the subjugated and incipient resources of our struggle…for the poor and marginalized…for survival, liberation and life".

This is the spirit that drives Lofdal Community Church and its ministries since its inception in September 10, 2006.

Mission Statement

The mission of LCC is to reach out to the lost with the message of hope and love in Christ Jesus, proclaiming restoration of lives, families and the community through wonders, word and work.

This is the mission of Restoration and Multiplication in Maitland and the vicinity.

As part of the implementation process of this model, LCC has the following ministries in operation:

4.4.1 "Traditional" Ministries of LCC

The term "traditional" is referring to the spiritual ministries of the church in the traditional sense. As a teaching church LCC places the Bible at the centre of its life. There is considerable time allocated to the teaching of the Word in every single programme of the church. It can be described as a "Bible-Studying, believing and praying church" (Acts 2:42). This is also reflected in its tag-sentence: LCC is "*where the Word is*

preached and power is demonstrated". The second part of this tag-sentence is a reflection of its *charismatic/Pentecostal* doctrinal inclination.

In expression, LCC is "*vibrant"* and multicultural. It is contemporary is style of worship, reflecting music and expressiveness of the people of Maitland. With a majority black African and coloured population, "non-vibrancy" will be "cultural irrelevance" in Maitland. The church community is a real reflection of Maitland and the surrounding. It comprises Black Africans, Coloured and foreign nationals (DR Congo, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Zambia, etc). The multi-ethnicity of the church is as well reflected in its worship style and emerging "Church culture". Songs in Swahili, Lingala (DRC), Shona (Zimbabwe), Afrikaans (SA), French, English are regularly sung as a reflection and expression of the new church culture and style. This is an integration in the church that if well fostered will have a meaningful impact in the community for foreign nationals as well as various races of South Africa as an answer to the issue of racial tolerance in the new South Africa.

As a "family-church" LCC ministers to men, women, youth and children, seeking meaningful ways of translating the Gospel of salvation to all. The high rate of single parent families calls the church to rethink its ministry to the family. The "dys-functionality" or "abnormality" of many families is both a challenge and motivation for the church. The challenge is that the task is gigantic and complex, but the motivation is that the family must be transformed. If one wants to see transformation of the community, then considerable effort and resources must be deployed in ministering to families.

Children and women's ministries are LCC's greatest effort in this regard. Children are placed back in a relational environment where they can experience love –loving and being loved. This is done through Sunday's children's church as well as recreational outings.

The women are ministered to through *"African Women Rising Ministries"* (AWR Ministries), through its monthly meetings and workshops and its annual conferences aimed at equipping women, calling them to arise above their circumstances and be the people God called them to be. AWR Ministries is proving to be a source of help for many women, even beyond the local community of Maitland. Both the children and women ministries reach out to the community and the church.

LCC's *Men's Impact* is a ministry seeking to address the "men crisis" in the church and the community. It is once again motivated by men's abdication of their responsibility in family, the church and the community. The increase in female-headed (Everatt & Smith 2008:25) households in Cape Town and South Africa is indicative of that abdication.

Note also that these ministries, tied by relationships and common vision of the church, have overlapping activities and goals. And because the spiritual expression of the church should be translated into deeds of mercy (James 2:14-16), "spiritual matters" will then overlap with the "social". This is why LCC believes in the "interconnectedness" of the functions of the church.

4.4.2 "Social" Ministries of LCC

As part of its social involvement, the following ministries give an idea of what is being done in the community of Maitland:

- **HIV/AIDS**: LCC observes the international HIV/AIDS Day as part of its social responsibility to educate the community. A Sunday church service focusing on the pandemic stresses the fact that the church takes the issue very seriously.

- **LCC Feeding Scheme**: It is a relief programme of the church, providing food, clothing, counseling and spiritual support in the scatter camps of the community. This programme feeds close to 500 people a week in two informal settlements (Intersite/Kensington and Royal/Maitland). LCC intends to adopt a local Primary School from year 2010 and launch a learners' breakfast programme.

- **Back to School Campaign**: LCC has succeeded to raise funds as part of its "back to school campaign 2010" and sent 87 children from disadvantaged background back to school. This meant providing them with uniform, stationary and where possible school fees. This is intended to be a regular ministry of the church.

- **Christmas Parties**: An effort to spread a smile on the face of the least fortunate of our community. On December 16, 2008, 120 children were offered a smile through food, special gifts, love and above all a special and memorable moment in life. This is a tradition LCC wants to keep and improve on every year.

- **Kings Kids Foundation**: 7 of LCC's hundred and more children form part of a trip to Disney World in the United States of America. All the seven children are

from the scatter camp. The purpose of this trip is to ignite their dreams, give them an opportunity to be children -"again"- and experience love.

- **Soccer Club**: A junior soccer club with a strong mentoring dynamic was launched. The objective is to mentor community children, get them off the streets, help them with class work and have fun through soccer. This ministry will not only meet their educational needs, but also their fitness, health and keep their dreams for a better future alive. Most children forming part of this project are from the most disadvantaged families of the community.

- **Sista2Sista**: Young women's forum of the church in the community. This is a year long mentoring programme in which young women undergo preparation – spiritual, beauty, life skills, etc- with a focus on sexual purity which culminates with a "coming out ball" where the graduates will be acknowledged before their peers and families.

- **Events@LCC**: Event@LCC is a business venture for the financial empowerment of church women. It is a catering company put together by the women with the help of the church. It is part of the church's effort to fight against poverty, unemployment, debt bondage and promotion of entrepreneurship in the church community. This is one of the initiatives LCC intends to put in place as part of its Business Development Programme.

- **Helping Hands Club**: A church women club. Aims: Help church ladies pay off their debts, buy house appliances and develop a saving culture. Financial and business management seminars and workshops are offered to both church as well community women.

4.5 Conclusion

The pages of this research were an attempt at redefining the church or regaining a better understanding of what the church is and is called to do. By its nature and mission the church is a gathering of the "called out ones" for an allegiance to Christ that will "call them in" the world to manifest the Kingdom of God on the earth. This means that a local church cannot be detached from its locality. And its presence and calling for ministry in that portion of the earth is the same as the calling of the universal church to the entire universe. For, as Jesus taught his disciples to pray: "Your Kingdom come soon; your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10, NLT), the rule of Christ as King must be seen in every area of life wherever the church is.

Because of the place of Christ in the life and ministry of the church and its connectedness to its locality, the church should be understood as being both "christo-centric" and "community-centric" in its operation. A community-centric church is what this research describes as community-sensitive church model. It is a church that captures the heartbeat of God, His love for the world and its people (John 3:16). Just as Christ was sent by His Father as an agent of social transformation, salvation of the world, the church is sent into all the world to make disciples and live as true disciples of Christ (Matthew 28:19-20; 25:34-36; 23:23; James 1:27). This is the call to be salt and light of the world (Matthew 5:13-16).

Lofdal Community Church has been implementing the community-sensitive church model since its inception three years ago. Its broader understanding of the church and its social involvement is one of the reasons that can be attributed to its success:

1. Numerical growth: the church has grown from 17 people in attendance on September 10, 2006 (first service) to an average of 90 people on Sundays and 180 on special services. LCC counts about 150 Covenant Partners (members) and regulars. The ministry of LCC reaches out to hundreds more people through its social ministries. These are considered as part of the Lofdal family even though they are not official members of the church. They may not come to "church" but LCC brings the "church" to them through its social and evangelistic ministries.

2. Spiritual growth of its members: the spiritual growth of LCC can be measured through the commitment of its Covenant Partners (members). Their dedication for the vision is proof of their maturing process in the Word.

3. Acceptance in the community: LCC is becoming more and more known in the community because of its relevance and attempt to come alongside the community and provide a "transforming" solution to the plights facing the people.

4. Ministries meeting the need of the church as well as the community: every single ministry of LCC is designed with the community in mind.

5. Influence to other churches in and outside the Maitland community: An informal network of churches is developing around this model and is already active in the Intersite Informal Settlement in Maitland. LCC is also becoming influential in the

community and with other ministries in the broader Cape Town area and beyond through its monthly newsletter and network events.

CHAPTER V:

CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

The following chapter will serve as a conclusion, highlighting major findings of the research as well as its recommendations and further research prospects.

5.2 Summary and Conclusions

The church, its definition, nature and functions are clearly spelled out in the Bible, but their interpretation and application have resulted in polarization and immergence of diverse views of what the church is. Considering that the local church is the place where theology is "consumed" and applied, concerted time and effort should be invested in reflecting on what the church is and what it is called to do in its local expression. The "redefinition" or "re-understanding" of the place and role of the church should be a continual exercise by both pastors and academics.

"The Local Church as an Agent of Social Transformation in a Poor Community: a Practical and Methodical Approach" is such an effort of re-placing the church in its social context and calling. This is about shading light onto a dark world and salting a decaying world both spiritually and socially. It is going beyond the matter of "relevance". It is more a matter of being true to its nature and function. This means that social transformation is not simply a matter of the relevance of the church but rather more a

matter of the re-activating of a neglected function of church, especially among evangelicals at the local church level.

This thinking has resulted in an ecclesiology described in this research as "community-sensitive church model". This is a symbiosis of "community" and "Bible", making of the model both socially constructed and biblically grounded. The words of Jesus concerning His disciples –the church- being in the world but not of it (John 17: 14, 16, 18) and their calling to be light and salt of the world (Matthew 5:13-15) are echoed in this model, calling for a visible and palpable demonstration of that light through good works for the glory of God the Father (Matthew 5:16). This understanding, supported by other biblical scriptures such as the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) reinforces the need for the church to integrate the community through relationship building processes, allowing the church to "know" the community, its needs and potentials, and help regain its authority, credibility and its voice and wisdom needed for social transformation.

For this end, the researcher made use of library to review related literature on the question of church and social transformation. Observation and the case study of Lofdal Community Church, a church that was planted and developed with the principles developed in this research in mind, served to enhance the findings of this research. The research made use of related scriptures to justify its biblical reliance and theological foundation. In order to re-enforce the place of social action in the ministry of the church, the researcher opted for a socio-constructionist approach in methodology. This means that the ecclesiology highlighted in this work is post-foundationalist in praxis while

remaining foundationalist in essence. This allows the interaction of church and society to surface in a more pronounced way, making room for mutual "evangelization" between the two entities. In the context of this research, a socio-constructionist approach forces the church to understand "the gospel from the point of departure in the poor" (Boff 1992:87).

This research is made up of five chapters of which chapter one served as general introduction to support the need and reason for this research. There is need for evangelical local churches to embrace and rediscover a seriously neglected function of the church, social action.

Chapter two dealt with literature review. Out of this review came a broader understanding of the church, its functions, nature and especially its place in social transformation process. Various ecclesiological models were discussed in order to justify the need for a new approach of doing theology in a poor community.

Chapter three looked at the community of Maitland as the research's moment of praxis, reading and interpreting statistical data related to the community.

Chapter four touched on the crux of this research. This chapter presented the model that emerged out of this work. The model is called "Community-Sensitive Church Model", a model that is informed by the problems of the community, both spiritual as well as social. This is about "re-placing" the church where it is supposed to be, at the

centre of the community, as agent of social transformation. This is a church that sees poverty eradication as its problem, not the community's or the government's sole responsibility. Because it is Christ-centered, it's a "Batho Pele[7]" church in its drive.

Chapter five served as conclusion, providing summary, conclusions and recommendations as well as prospect for further research.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the conclusions reached by this research, the researcher would like to make some recommendations:

1. The broader understanding of the concept of church is paramount in social transformation endeavour. Pastors and scholars must propagate the definition of the church in its totality, taking into account all the facets or images reflected in the Bible. It is this broader view that will help the church to move without resistance into the community and make a transformational impact.

2. With a broader understanding of church comes a broader understanding of the concept of salvation. The church has the mandate to seek to save people spiritually as well as socially. This is about preaching the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27). It is the "whole counsel" that informs the "whole application" of that "counsel". The result of this will be a church that sees politics, poverty, health, social ills, etc as its sphere of ministry.

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[7] Batho Pele means people first. Eight Batho Pele principles were developed by the SA government to serve as policy and legislative framework regarding service delivery in public service. These principles are applicable is any social work whether done by the church or the government. See A Handbook for Community Development Workers, pp.80-82, compiled by CDW Unit, Ministry of Public Service and Administration (2007)

3. Because the question of social action has been neglected by the church, especially among evangelicals at the local church level, there should be a deliberate effort from the part of the church in dealing with social problems of the community.

4. Every local church should conduct a survey of its community and develop a strategic plan of responding to the problems reflected in the social analysis of the community. This is part of the deliberate effort to be socially engaged.

5. The preacher should consider reading the Bible from the point of departure in the poor (Boff 1992:87), an approach embedded in a three-fold commitment: first a commitment to begin with reality as perceived by the organized base; second, a commitment to read the Bible in community; and third, a commitment to socio-political transformation through Bible reading (West 1995:217).

6. Denominations, network of churches and other consultations and conferences such as the Lausanne conference should do more in spreading "the gospel of social transformation" and filtrate it to the local church level.

5.4 Further Research Prospects

There is need to explore further the question of a theology of social transformation. Following the trend of liberation theology and other liberating theologies that have evolved from it, it is imperative to think more extensively on issues of social transformation, provide doctrinal legs to practical theology of social transformation as already practice in a number of churches.

Theology as a broad discipline has to be thought transformationally. There is a need for a biblical hermeneutics of social transformation for example. It is this deliberate exercise of theologizing transformationally that will bring back the church to its full mandate.

A lot is being done in Latin America in the area and practice of social transformation that needs to be "Africanized". Authors such as Ed Silvoso (2007), J.S. Croatto (1978, 1983 and 1987), C. Rowland and M. Corner (1990) give us a glimpse in Latin American scholarship, encouraging Africans to pursue similar quests.

It is the researcher's intention to further this research on a PhD level by engaging into a transformational reading of the Gospel of Luke. This is motivated by the nature of ministry portrayed in this book –ministry of mercy and compassion (Tidball 2008:54). "For Luke…God's mercy is conveyed not only by words but by kind actions to the most unlikely people…poor, marginalized, insignificant no-hopers…great unwashed and the great unwanted" (Tidball 2008:55). The "Nazareth Manifesto" (Luke 4:14-30; Isaiah 61:1-2; 58:6) which should also be adopted as "church Manifesto" pushes the church in the direction of a deliberate effort towards the marginalized and outcast as opposed to the restrictions of Pharisaic religious teaching –prevalent in the church today. It is in this context that the apostles, sent ones, the church is expected to operate. Has the church moved from Pharisaic persuasion to Christ's? Is the church transformational enough in its thinking, teaching and praxis? This is what the researcher would like to look into.

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